

Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED**  
All Wards

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**

Housing Management Board  
Housing Scrutiny Committee  
Cabinet  
Council

4<sup>th</sup> August 2005  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2005  
26<sup>th</sup> September 2005  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2005

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**HOUSING STRATEGY (2005 – 10) AND  
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2005**

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**Report of the Corporate Director of Housing**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 Housing Management Board, Housing Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council are asked to endorse Leicester City Council's Housing Strategy for the City and its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan covering the management and maintenance of its own housing stock.

**2. Summary**

- 2.2 The Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan have been prepared in the context of the Corporate Plan and its key priorities.
- 2.3 All local authorities are required to submit a Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan to their local Government Office, in our case the Government office of the East Midlands (GOEM). GOEM will assess both documents against their 'fit for purpose criteria'.

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 Housing Management Board, Housing Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council are asked to endorse Leicester City Council's Housing Strategy for the City.
- 3.2 Housing Management Board, Housing Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council are asked to endorse Leicester City Council's HRA Business Plan for the Council's housing stock.
- 3.3 Housing Management Board, Housing Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council are asked to note that the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan are considered as part of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

**4. Financial Implications (Rod Pearson ext 7108)**

4.1 This report reflects financial decisions taken during the annual capital and revenue budget cycles and following the housing options appraisal completed earlier this year.

**5. Legal implications (Joanna Bunting ext 6450)**

There are no legal implications

**6. Report Author/Officer to contact:**

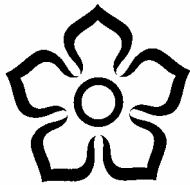
Ann Branson, Service Director, Housing Renewal & Options (ext. 6802)

Rod Pearson, Head of Finance and Strategy (ext 7108)

Sally Atkinson, Strategy & Performance Officer (ext 7113)

**DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Reason</b>	Part of budget and policy framework
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	Yes
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	Council



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**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**

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**Cabinet**  
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**4<sup>th</sup> August 2005**  
**1<sup>st</sup> September 2005**  
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**HOUSING STRATEGY (2005 – 10) AND  
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

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**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**1. Report**

- 1.1 All local authorities are required to submit a Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan to their government office, in our case the Government Office of the East Midland (GOEM), by July 2005. GOEM will assess both documents against their 'fit for purpose criteria'.

The Housing Strategy outlines the Council's priorities for achieving 'a decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester'. The HRA Business Plan deals with the Council's plans for the management and maintenance of its own housing stock. Both documents are lengthy and the purpose of this report is to summarise the main findings. Copies of the full documents are available from the Members' area.

**2. HOUSING STRATEGY (2005 – 10)**

2.1 Background

The Government requires all Local Authorities to submit a Housing Strategy that is assessed by their Government office, in our case the Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM). A Housing Strategy is required every five years to demonstrate that Local Authorities are fulfilling their obligations as a landlord and discharging their duties as a Strategic Housing Authority. The purpose of a Housing Strategy is to demonstrate what actions have been completed over the previous years and the Local Authority's clear direction of travel with achievable objectives for future years.

2.2 Outline of the Housing Strategy

The structure of the Housing Strategy is formed around the Government's 'fit for purpose' requirements. A summary of the main points is shown below under the

document's chapter headings:

### 2.3 Introduction

This details the key objectives of the strategy and how it contributes to LCC Corporate plan and other key LCC strategies. There is an explanation of the regional structures and the reporting mechanisms to the Regional Housing Board. Information about the consultation undertaken on the strategy is included together with the completed actions from previous housing strategies.

### 2.4 Meeting the Decent Homes Standard in LCC housing

This gives an overview of the 2004 Stock Options Appraisal and demonstrates how LCC will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Contained in this chapter is information about the management of LCC stock and the mechanisms in place to improve rent collection and provide customer-focused services to tenants.

### 2.5 Meeting the Decent Homes Standard in Private Sector Housing

This provides an analysis of how many properties do not meet the Decent Homes Standard and measures that have been taken to address this over the last 3 years in renewal areas. There is information about the progress of the City Wide Home Maintenance Service, Crime and Community Safety Initiatives and Leicester Accident Prevention and Safety Scheme. This also details the number of grants awarded to homeowners and how LCC housing will increase the number of private sector properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

### 2.6 Preventing & Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

This outlines new mechanisms in place to prevent homelessness and the numbers of people accessing LCC's Housing Options Service. There is an overview of all Homelessness accommodation, outreach and floating support service. New initiatives, including the Multi Disciplinary Centre and future plans to prevent and tackle homelessness are covered.

### 2.7 Meeting Affordable Housing Need

This gives an analysis of the number of properties needed to meet the housing deficit in Leicester over the next few years and the types of affordable housing that have been built over recent years. There is an outline of plans to reach affordable housing targets over the next five years. Information about the inception and progress of HomeCome and its impact it has had on improving the supply of affordable rented housing is given. The work of the Empty Homes team over the last 12 months and its plans to bring back more properties into use is detailed.

### 2.8 Housing Services for Older People

This contains information about the current range of services that are provided by LCC housing and what capital developments have taken place over last three years. It shows

how the development of an Older Person's Housing Strategy in 2006 will produce key targets for the next five years.

## 2.9 Community Cohesion & Sustainable Communities

This is a compilation of LCC housing work that has been undertaken in the areas of – Equality issues, services for Black and Minority Ethnic groups, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, tenants' and residents' participation, Community Cohesion projects funded by the voluntary sector and Crime Reduction and Community Safety. The wide variety of work undertaken in partnership by LCC housing is outlined together with future developments over the next five years.

## 2.10 Supporting People

This provides an overview of the successful implementation of this programme and its current position derived from the Supporting People Strategy (2005-10). It also gives information about the new supported housing schemes that have been developed over the last three years and plans for the next five years.

## 2.11 Braunstone New Deal for Communities

This chapter outlines the work undertaken by Braunstone Community Association in partnership with LCC Housing and plans for future joint-working.

# 3. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

## 3.1 Background

The Government requires all local authorities to produce an annual HRA Business Plan to be submitted, together with the Housing Strategy to its local Government office. The HRA Business Plan deals only with the Council's own stock of dwellings ie those within the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account. The purpose of the Business Plan is to ensure local authorities take a long term view with regard to the management and maintenance of the housing stock; taking account of resources available.

More recently there has been a government requirement for all local authorities to carry out an appraisal of the options available to secure sufficient investment in their council housing to meet the Government's 'decent homes standard' and beyond that to meet the aspirations of tenants. The available options are:

- Stock retention (the council continues to own, maintain and manage its stock)
- Setting up an Arms Length Management Organisation to manage and maintain the stock
- Private Finance Initiative
- Stock Transfer

The Council decided earlier this year on stock retention following a full analysis of the options and an in-depth consultation exercise with tenants on their aspirations and priorities. A lot of the work carried out as part of this options appraisal is directly

relevant to the HRA Business Plan.

## 3.2 Outline of the HRA Business Plan

The structure of the HRA Business Plan is formed around the Governments 'fit for purpose' requirements. A summary of the main points is shown below under the document's chapter headings:

### 3.2.1 Consultation

This describes the Council's consultation frameworks including Council Committees, the Housing Management Board, the Leicester Federation of Tenants Associations and Tenants and Residents Associations. It also describes methods of consultation including surveys.

### 3.2.2 Strategic Context

This describes how the HRA Business Plan fits with the Council's Corporate Plan, Government policy and a variety of other related policies and plans including the Crime & Disorder and Community Cohesion Strategies.

### 3.2.3 Demand

This highlights the strong demand for Council housing in Leicester as evidenced by long waiting lists and low voids with a major contributory factor being stock loss through 'right to buy'.

### 3.2.4 House Condition

Leicester City Council's dwellings are overall in good condition. Contributory factors include its 'worst first' repairs policy and its practice of disposing of properties which it cannot afford to bring up to standard. The chapter describes the Government's 'Decent Homes Standard' and the higher 'Leicester Standard' and how that was agreed in conjunction with tenants and councillors.

### 3.2.5 Financial Resources

The Council has sufficient resources to meet the Decent Homes Standard and the Leicester Standard by the Government deadline of 2010. It also has sufficient resources to maintain it over thirty years. Financial projections over such a long period can be affected by changes in Government policy and many other factors so need regular review.

### 3.2.6 Options Appraisal

This describes how the Options Appraisal was carried out, what its findings were and reports the decision of the Council to retain its stock.

### 3.2.7 Progress and Performance

This describes the Council's performance in meeting earlier targets.

### 3.2.8 Future Priorities

This describes future main priority areas for the Council as a landlord set by tenants, Councillors and the Government. These are:

	Government Priority	Important to Tenants	Performance	Corporate Priority
Meeting Leicester Decent Homes Standard	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving SAP Ratings	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving tenant satisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dealing with harassment/ASB	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving access to services	✓	✓		✓
Achieving the Equality Standard	✓	✓		✓
Increase HRA Income	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reduce Empty Properties	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increase availability of larger properties		✓		✓
Improve opportunities to participate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental Improvements	✓	✓		✓
Improve efficiency inc Gershon agenda	✓	✓	✓	✓

The report also contains a list of actions to be undertaken to meet the priority areas.

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **1. Financial Implications (Rod Pearson Ext 7108)**

This report reflects financial decisions taken during the annual capital and revenue budget cycles and following the housing options appraisal completed earlier this year.

### **2. Legal Implications (Joanna Bunting ext 6450)**

There are no direct legal implications resulting from this report.

### **3. Other Implications**

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within Supporting Information
Equal Opportunities Policy	Yes	The Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan are concerned with the provision of social housing and deal throughout with these issues.
Sustainable & Environmental	Yes	
Crime & Disorder	Yes	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	
Human Rights Act	No	

#### **4. Details of Consultation**

Consultation on the Housing Strategy included the People's Panel, the Housing Theme Group of the Leicester Strategic Partnership, members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, tenants' representatives and the Braunstone Community Association. There was a 50% response rate from questionnaires distributed to tenants' representatives and members of the People's Panel with very high levels of agreement with the key objectives of the Housing Strategy.

The HRA Business Plan is the result of many consultation exercises involving particularly tenants representatives and elected members. Much of the consultation took place as part of the Options Appraisal. This included major surveys to identify tenant aspirations and their opinions on the future management of the housing stock.

#### **5. Aims and Objectives**

These reports are directly concerned with the Housing Department's aim of 'a decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester' and the council's overall aim 'to make Leicester more attractive for our diverse communities to live, work and invest in'.

#### **6. Local Govt (Access to Information Act)**

##### **Background papers**

Budget Book 2005/06  
Capital Strategy  
Housing Subsidy Claim Files  
"A New Financial Framework for Local Authority Housing – Guidance on Business Plans" DETR Publication  
Housing Management Business Plan  
Housing Maintenance Business Plan  
Community Plan  
Leicester Housing Strategy  
Leicester Estate Condition Survey  
Housing Options Appraisal – Report of Chapman Hendy  
Braunstone Community Association/Leicester City Council Housing Strategy

#### **7. Author of Report**

Ann Branson, Service Director Housing Renewal and Options, Ext 6802.  
Rod Pearson, Head of Finance & Strategy, Ext 7108.  
Sally Atkinson, Strategy & Performance Officer Ext 7113