

## HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, 23 June 2021**

**6.00 pm**

**Committee Rooms 1-2, City Hall**

Membership:	Councillors Gary Hewson (Chair), Pat Vaughan (Vice-Chair), Liz Bushell, Christopher Reid, Edmund Strengiel and Loraine Woolley
Substitute member(s):	Councillors Biff Bean
Lincoln Tenants Panel member(s):	Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Caroline Coyle-Fox (Vice Chair of LTP), Steven Bearder (Member of LTP), Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP) and Sheila Watkinson (Member of LTP)
Officers attending:	Francesca Bell, Simon Colburn, Democratic Services, Yvonne Fox, Matthew Hillman, Chris Morton and Daren Turner

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### **A G E N D A**

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1. Confirmation of Minutes - 8 March 2021	<b>3 - 10</b>
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
3. LTP Matters	
4. Scheduled Repairs Pilot Feedback	<b>Verbal Report</b>
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10. Exclusion Of Press and Public	<b>33 - 34</b>

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of exempt or confidential information.

**PART B**

- |   |                        |                |
|---|------------------------|----------------|
| 11. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4 2020/21 | <b>[Exempt Para 3]</b> | <b>35 - 42</b> |
| 12. Anti Social Behaviour Update 2020/21            | <b>[Exempt Para 1]</b> | <b>43 - 50</b> |

**Present:** Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Liz Bushell, Christopher Reid, Edmund Strenziel and Loraine Woolley

**Also Present** Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Pat Vaughan

**Also in Attendance:** Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Steven Bearder (Member of LTP), Caroline Coyle-Fox (Vice Chair of LTP), Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP) and Sheila Watkinson (Member of LTP)

**109. Confirmation of Minutes - 25 January 2021**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 be confirmed.

**110. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**111. LTP Matters**

Mick Barber, Chair of LTP updated Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the activities of the Lincoln Tenants Panel, which included:

- Involvement in the new work programme for Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee 2021/22 which was in the process of being drafted.
- Work on scheduled repairs which was going well.
- Involvement in the new complaints procedure.
- Fire safety walks
- Regulators were due to attend the next LTP meeting.
- Inspections of communal areas had been carried out by Mick Barber with Keeley Johnson and Ben Jackson, housing officers in Moorland Ward which had proved most satisfactory. They had all been very impressed with the cleanliness of communal areas. The only issue seemed to be fly tipping. It was not just the case for the Council to take away the rubbish. It was for tenants to be educated of their responsibilities in disposing of unwanted waste carefully which had to be addressed.
- Estate inspections were being arranged. These were difficult times but we were getting there.

RESOLVED that the content of the verbal report be noted.

**112. Annual Report from Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing- Councillor D Nannestad**

Councillor D Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

- a) presented his report regarding activity and the achievements within his portfolio
- b) reported that the City of Lincoln Council Housing Strategy 2020-25 had been approved by Executive and Council following a pleasing consultation process with the next step to be the implementation of the business plan
- c) advised that his report covered the following main areas:
  - Homelessness
  - Tenancy Services
  - Housing Repairs
  - Voids
  - Housing Investment
  - New Build/Allocations
- d) highlighted that the Scheduled Repairs Pilot Scheme had driven down carbon reduction with mileage by operatives having been reduced by 4,200 miles a month
- e) reported that although the effect of Covid 19 had been quite severe, repairs were still ongoing with the percentage of repairs fixed first time at the end of quarter 2 standing at 90.11% and 99.95% of appointments kept
- f) praised housing staff for their extreme flexibility during the pandemic being involved in jobs they had never known would be asked of them
- g) thanked members of LTP for their involvement in the new complaints procedure
- h) invited questions from Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the content of his report.

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail. The following comments/questions emerged:

- Question: Were we currently building more Council houses than we were losing through Right to Buy?
- Response: The cumulative net gain stood presently at 293. It was also a function for housing associations and other housing providers. From 2014 to date in terms of our own stock there had been an increase of 18 properties.
- Question: What were the plans to build more pure Council houses?
- Response: In terms of plans for the future:
  - The scheme was on schedule at Dewint Court to build 70 units for tenants requiring different levels of care.
  - A planning application would shortly be submitted for 40 new houses on Rookery Lane.
  - There was further progress to be made at Queen Elizabeth Road.
  - The Western Growth Corridor if it progressed forward would offer an element of social housing.
  - The council was also buying flats under the Next Steps Programme having secured 5 already with another 10 still to come forward.
  - Members of the public desired council houses as they offered security of tenure.

- The Authority would always look at ways forward to provide more council houses in the future.
- Comment: It must be careful not to attribute carbon reduction entirely to scheduled repairs. Once things were more back to normal in relation to the pandemic a measure could be taken.
- Comment: Repair times were at detriment to the tenants as there could be a 3 month wait for a leaky tap. Tenants were paying rent for this service.
- Response by Mick Barber, Chair of LTP: There was an update report to come forward on scheduled repairs which would highlight savings to the service and improvements going forward.
- Question: In respect of housing staff having been redeployed to other work which was not related to the Housing Revenues Account due to Covid 19, was the cost of this work repatriated to the appropriate area?
- Response: The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) did get repatriated for non HRA roles and vice-versa.
- Comment: The council had a statutory duty to support homeless people although this was at a loss to the General Fund. Those provided with accommodation automatically joined the housing waiting list.
- Response: It was not the case that clients presenting to the authority as homeless were automatically housed by us. They were advised to return to their home town or referred to private sector housing associations. As a landlord the Council needed funds to cover homelessness, hence it used the General Fund. It was not making money elsewhere.
- Comment: Collection of rent arrears would be less the following year due to the impacts of Covid 19 on local residents' ability to pay. This would be at the detriment to those people paying full rent in terms of the Authority having less cash to spend on repairs/improvements/new council houses.
- Response: The increase in rent arrears was mirrored by the amount of people awaiting Universal Credit payments to be processed. The collection of rent was a priority to the Council, and it was doing everything it could to recover rent arrears in very challenging circumstances. Indeed it was performing better than other local authorities. There were people with no income at the current time. Officers encouraged people in difficulty to engage with them to offer support and help. A new 'Right to Breathing Space' scheme would give legality to any tenure whether private rented or owner occupier a period of time to evaluate their options, with all further action suspended. This would further impact on rent recovery. It would take a few months after lockdown ended to achieve improved rent arrears collection.
- Comment: It may be useful to obtain comparisons with other local authorities in other aspects of HRA including rent arrears performance for inclusion on the work programme for this Committee in the new Council year.
- Response: He had met with various Council leaders. Our rent arrears collection figures were much better than others. Only a like for like comparison with authorities having similar housing stock would prove be useful.
- Question: What about the arrangements when the Kier contract came to an end on 31 March 2021. Would the majority of the work be done in-house?
- Response: Reasons for making this change had been considered by Executive, for example, less travel, using local companies, engaging more directly, using local employees who then spent cash in the City. Essential Decent Homes work already being completed in different areas of the

Authority would not be compromised, however corresponding savings would be realised. The gas contract was not affected.

- Question: Why was the planning application for new homes Rookery Lane pulled from Planning Committee a month ago?
- Response: The planning application had been deferred for further testing by the lead local flood authority to take place up to the end of February 2021 and was due to be considered by Planning Committee anytime soon.
- Question: Would the 'Right to Breathing Space' scheme affect rent payments or ASB cases as well?
- Response: Only rent.

RESOLVED that the content of the report and discussions held be noted.

### **113. Costs of Voids**

*(It was noted that Councillor Woolley had lost connectivity during the discussion of the last item.)*

At the request of the Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee, Councillor Hewson, an extract from quarter three financial report presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on 18 February 2021 in relation to the Housing Revenue Account was made available to give members an insight into expectations for losses on void properties.

RESOLVED that the content of the associated extract report be noted.

### **114. Update on Allocations Policy 2021**

Yvonne Fox, Assistant Director of Housing:

- a. presented a report to update Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the introduction of the Council's amended Allocations Policy from January 2021
- b. advised that an amended Policy was agreed by members in March 2020 with an initial target date for implementation of June 2020, however due to the outbreak of Covid 19, our IT suppliers were unable to complete the IT amendments and testing as anticipated which had resulted in slippage in the implementation of the new Policy until January 2021
- c. reported on one of the main changes being the introduction of a 24 month residency qualification having taken advice from our MHCLG Homelessness Advisors and in line with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011
- d. provided a summary of the current position including the number of active applicants allowed to bid on the Waiting List as at 23 February 2021 and details of 40 properties having been allocated to households with a local connection to the City as summarised at paragraph 3 of her report
- e. reported that in total, we housed 28 households from Band 1, 11 from Band 2 and 1 from Band 3

- f. noted that the majority of properties becoming available to let were 1 bed units as a result of the ongoing pandemic encouraging people to stay at home and only move in exceptional circumstances
- g. added that customer enquiries continued to be high particularly from family households who would like to move but we continued to experience reduced turnover of stock particularly for 3 and 4 bed houses and it was difficult to predict when the supply of family accommodation would change
- h. highlighted that we also continued to experience low demand for independent living properties, in part due to the reluctance of older people to move during the pandemic
- i. requested members' comments on the content of the report.

Members discussed the report in further detail. Questions and comments were made as follows:

- Question: There was a long waiting list for four bed accommodation with ground floor bedrooms. Did we have any at all?
- Response: There were very few properties in this category. This type of accommodation would probably be required for families with disabled children. Workable solutions could involve creating downstairs bedroom/bathroom space and/or installing adaptations to the property.
- Comment: It was noted that 21 people were homeless at Band 1 and 6 at Band 2, this amounted to 27 people associated with the City which was disappointing.
- Response: The Authority did everything it could to try to prevent homelessness. There was the option of utilising other accommodation projects/private rented sector accommodation. The majority of homeless people were currently single people having been successfully removed from the streets. This may change as we moved out of the pandemic. In those circumstances where the authority had a statutory duty to homeless people it could not refuse to provide accommodation. Band 1 housing criteria required people to be statutorily homeless and Band 2 housing for people who must have a local connection.
- Question: So people coming into the city were still given priority over local people having 24 months residency?
- Response: Government legislation required the authority to house homeless people as a statutory duty. Everyone on the waiting list had a local connection.
- Question: Where did the figures for sofa surfers fit in?
- Response: These were categorised within Band 2 Homeless.

RESOLVED that the implementation of the new Allocations Policy and information regarding the waiting list since the change in policy as detailed within the officer's report be noted.

#### **115. Target Setting 2021/22**

Yvonne Fox, Assistant Director, Housing:

- a. provided a report to advise Members of the proposed performance indicator targets normally reported to Scrutiny for 2021/22, to agree the

targets and consider how performance information could be monitored and reported throughout the year as Covid restrictions eased

- b. reported that performance information was reported to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on a quarterly basis, and targets reviewed on an annual basis with both tenants and the Committee at the March meeting
- c. highlighted that throughout the lock down period normal management information had been collated however performance against targets had not been formally reported as this had not always been possible due to changes in service delivery, although management information had been provided wherever practically possible and members made aware of reasons for any changes to service and performance during this challenging year
- d. noted that as it was likely that Covid restrictions should be lifted at the end of June 2021, we were now considering how this may impact on our services
- e. reported that throughout 2020/21 there had been delays in repairing and allocating empty properties due to the pandemic and Government restrictions on non-essential moves and holding properties for homeless households, therefore the council was currently reviewing voids performance and procedure considering these measures against external restrictions on performance
- f. added that discussions with the Portfolio Holder regarding Scheduled Repairs had taken place to allow amended performance measures to be brought forward once the Working Group had concluded its work
- g. referred to proposed realistic targets for 2021/22 based on current performance, national guidance and benchmarking with similar authorities as detailed at Appendix A to her report for members consideration
- h. reported that LTP members had also been consulted on the proposed indicators, expressing some concerns regarding changes to the voids target and the requirement to ensure the complaints response target fell in line with the new national ombudsman target for complaints resolution, as a result of which the Director of Housing had given assurances that the voids target would be reviewed at 3 and 6 months and if required would be brought down
- i. highlighted that the Portfolio for Quality Housing had agreed the proposed targets and the review of targets after quarter 2
- j. requested members' feedback on the content of the report.

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail. The following questions, comments emerged:

The Chair commented that he was happy with the input given by LTP in respect of the proposed targets. He noted that LTP had raised concerns regarding the voids target and the requirement to ensure the complaints response target fell in line with the new national ombudsman target for complaints resolution. He also noted assurances received from the Director of Housing that the voids target



would be reviewed at 3 and 6 months and brought down if necessary. The Tenants Panel represented the rent payers and we must be realistic.

The Chair continued by saying that the situation of not keeping check of performance could not be continued. He expected people working from home to provide the same service as when they were working at City Hall. Tenants expected a service and a duty for rents to be collected. Moving forward he wanted to see the same service as that delivered before the COVID outbreak and a successful Sustainability team at the end of the year.

Mick Barber, Chair of LTP Chair, responded that meetings had been held with the Tenant's Panel and he understood the difficulties being experienced. It would be different when things got back to normal but it was not right to put figures forward that were not realistic at the current time. Hopefully things would return to normal. Meantime the situation continued to be monitored.

Yvonne Fox, Assistant Director, Housing emphasised how hard officers had been working. She highlighted recent success with achieving £70,000 of Discretionary Housing Payments for tenants in arrears. It remained the council's priority to offer support to people to enable tenants to arrive in a position to be able to pay their rents. The Tenancy team was doing all it could to keep rent arrears as low as possible in difficult circumstances.

Councillor Reid queried in relation to the New Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code targets:

- Why the logging and acknowledgement of repairs was set at 5 days although the target was currently 1 and 3 days for priority/urgent repairs.
- The target for repair appointments with 1 in 20 being missed. Was the target perhaps a bit low
- Whether the 10 day complaints target referred to the time to respond or acknowledgement of the complaint

Yvonne Fox, Assistant Director for Housing explained that

- The repair target applied to working days. The 5 day indicator was used to take into account a weekend period.
- The proposed repair target for appointments was still performing well with actual performance Q3 being closer to 100%. The target proposed was to take into account monitoring/review during the COVID period.
- The complaints target at 10 days represented a local offer agreement period to respond to tenants. However, an extension could be agreed with the customer if the complaint was likely to take longer to resolve.

Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director, Housing and Investment confirmed that on average it was taking the Council 6 days to reply to complaints. Repair targets would be reviewed at the end of Quarter 1 as the Council's roadmap for services through the COVID period became clearer.

RESOLVED that

1. The proposed performance targets for 2021/22 be approved.
2. The agreed review of all targets post Quarter 2 October 2021 be approved.

## The Chair

- a. advised members that a draft work programme for 2021/22 had been circulated to officers for comments and had been forwarded to the Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel today for individual input/comments ready for use as a working document at the first meeting of the new Municipal Year
- b. reported that the work programme 2021/21 would be regularly updated in consultation with the Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel
- c. highlighted that the work programme included those areas for scrutiny linked to the strategic priorities of the Council and housing matters, to ensure that the work of this committee remained relevant and proportionate

RESOLVED that the circulation of a work programme for 2021/22 to officers, Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel for individual input/comments ready for use as a working document at the first meeting of the new Municipal Year be noted.

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON HOUSING DEPT OPERATIONS POST COVID 19**

**DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**

**REPORT AUTHOR: DAREN TURNER, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the position on the operating position of the services within the Housing Directorate during current national lockdown arrangements.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Following the national guidelines relating to the easing of the lock down position and then the re imposition of lockdown at the end of last year the department, like all others at the City of Lincoln Council, constantly reviews and adapts its service offer in order to protect our customers, our staff and our partners staff. We have always tried to keep elements of service in place, sometimes only responding to emergencies, for our most vulnerable customers.
- 2.2 Initially lockdown in full commenced in March 2020, then government moved to a further lockdown in November 2020 as infection rates climbed again. In March 2021 the cabinet office released a “road map” that gradually moved the country to a fully “opened” position potentially by June 21<sup>st</sup>. At each stage of the road map certain tests needed to be passed before the next could be taken. At the time of writing the new DELTA variant is causing a spike in case numbers across the country and this, it is thought, will have an impact on announcements due to be made on 21<sup>st</sup> June. A verbal update will be given at the Committee meeting should the situation change.
- 2.3 At each key date, 12<sup>th</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> May (to date) we have adjusted our service offer and operations to fall in line with guidelines (some services have not needed to change). The detail below shows the position from 17<sup>th</sup> May easing (IE current) and what is expected if all tests are passed for the final easing on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **3. Summary of Current Position**

- 3.1 Housing Strategy and Investment: -

- Housing Strategy.
  - May – Largely working from home with limited site visits to individual properties or construction sites (De Wint Court). Sincil Bank office now open two days a week.
  - June – Continue with site visits, Sincil Bank Office open (initially still two days). Staff generally working to agile workstyles.

- Safety Advisory Team.
  - May - Continue to work mix of remote working and site visits where required. Contractor support in place.
  - June – Continue as above with agile working arrangements.
- Resident Involvement –
  - May - Continue with remote meetings with limited outdoor visits.
  - June – LTP meetings recommence. Staff working with agile arrangements.

### 3.2 Maintenance and Investment: -

- Maintenance (Repairs/Aids & Adaptations/Fire compliance)
  - May - HRS have continued with priority, urgent and the scheduled repairs process. HRS completed 1,398 priority, urgent and scheduled repairs. Office staff on a rota for Hamilton House with a dedicated Welfare unit on site.
  - June – HRS continue with priority, urgent and scheduled repairs. 803 completed repairs in June so far. Staff on a rota for Hamilton House. Business as usual with safety restrictions.
- Hamilton House
  - May – Open with safety measures. Managed stores take over underway. PPE stocks available.
  - June – Open with safety measures. New ways of working implemented. Rota for office days. PPE stocks available.
- Voids
  - May – Safety measures in place to ensure working bubbles. 39 voids completed.
  - June – Safety measures, LFT’s issued. 16 voids completed so far.
- Investment
  - May – Staff working from home with an office rota.
  - June – Staff working from home with an office rota. Focus on direct to site.
- Aarons
  - May – Office Rota in place. All electrical and gas inspections and repairs underway.
  - June – Office Rota in place. All electrical and gas inspections and repairs underway.

### 3.3 Housing Management: -

- Homelessness/Housing Solutions

- May – continue to provide service remotely with Officers working from City Hall as required
- June – continue as above with agile working arrangements.
- Rough Sleeper Team
  - May - continue to work from City Hall with agile working arrangements.
  - June – as May
- Tenancy Services/Voids Support
  - May – continue to provide service remotely with duty officers and an area manager working from City Hall.
  - June – continue as above with agile working arrangements.
- LinCare/Supported Housing
  - May – Lincare continue to work remotely and from CH/ Supported Housing, telephone calls and urgent visits.
  - June - continue as above with agile arrangements.

#### **4. Organisational Impacts**

##### **4.1 Finance**

The services outlined above are being delivered within the current Department for Housing and Investment budget.

##### **4.2 Legal Implications**

All current services are being delivered following government guidance.

##### **4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Council is compliant with all requirements.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 That members note the current operating conditions and those proposed post the announcements on June 21<sup>st</sup>.
- 5.2 That members agree to receive verbal update at the meeting due to the impending changes to the governments lock down easing road map scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

<b>Is this a key decision?</b>	No
<b>Do the exempt information categories apply?</b>	No
<b>Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?</b>	No
<b>How many appendices does the report contain?</b>	0
<b>List of Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Housing Management Team

**SUBJECT: HOUSING FINANCE**

**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**

**LEAD OFFICER: COLLEEN WARREN, FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee the Council's Housing out-turn position for 2020/21.

## **2. Summary**

2.1 This report will provide members with the provisional summary of actual income and expenditure compared to revised budget for the HRA and HRS services and shows how any surpluses have been allocated to reserves.

2.2 The full out-turn report for the Authority will be presented to Executive on the 24 June 2021.

## **3. Housing Revenue Account**

3.1 For 2020/21 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set at (£75,000), resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £1,000,141.

3.2 The financial performance quarterly monitoring report for the 3rd quarter predicted an underspend of £772,391. The provisional outturn for 2020/21 now indicates an underspend of £74,512. This would result in HRA balances at 31 March 2020 of £1,074,653.

3.3 The movement from Q3 to provisional outturn position includes:

- the final outturn position in the HRS, which was previously forecasted to be an underspend – movement £526,758,
- interlinked to this is a reduction in the cost of repairs and maintenance following completion of billing process for HRS – movement £779,492,
- the outturn position on rent arrears was improved resulting in a lower contribution being required to the bad debt position – movement £374,460,
- Contribution to the Repairs Reserve (£750k) and the Strategic Priorities Reserve (£550k), as due to Covid19 there were delays in the delivery of schemes in both of these areas, which will be delivered in future years – movement £1,300,000.

3.4 The out-turn summary is set out in the table below:

<b>HRA PROVISIONAL OUTTURN - 2020/21</b>				
		<b>Revised Budget £'000</b>	<b>Outturn £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
Gross Rental Income	A	(28,666)	(28,761)	(95)
Charges for Services & Facilities	B	(306)	(294)	11
Contribs towards Expenditure	C	(50)	(194)	(144)
Repairs & Maintenance	D	8,959	7,575	(1,385)
Supervision & Management:	E	6,828	7,315	487
Rents, Rates and Other Premises	G	95	127	32
Increase in Bad Debt Provisions	H	297	279	(18)
Insurance Claims Contingency	I	106	2	(104)
Contingencies	J	516	0	(516)
Depreciation	K	6,637	6,696	58
Impairments	L	0	0	0
Debt Management Expenses	M	12	5	7
HRS Trading Deficit/(Surplus)	N	(136)	322	458
<b>Net Cost of Service</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>(5,707)</b>	<b>(6,928)</b>	<b>(1,221)</b>
Loan Charges Interest	P	2,530	2,427	(104)
Investment/Mortgage Interest	Q	(43)	(23)	20
<b>Net Operating Inc/Exp</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>(3,219)</b>	<b>(4,525)</b>	<b>(1,305)</b>
Capital Accounting Adjustments	S	0	0	0
Major Repairs Reserve Adjustment	T	3,184	3,184	0
Transfers to/from reserves	U	111	1,254	1,143
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit in Year</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>(874)</b>	<b>(162)</b>
Pension Reserve	W	0	0	0
<b>Balances b/f @ 1st April</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>(1,075)</b>	<b>(988)</b>	<b>88</b>
(Increase)/Decrease in Balances	Y	75	(87)	(162)
<b>Balances c/f @ 31st March</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>	<b>(1,075)</b>	<b>(75)</b>

#### 4. Housing Repairs Service

- 4.1 For 2020/21 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net revenue budget was set at zero, reflecting its full cost recovery nature.
- 4.2 The financial performance quarterly monitoring report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter predicted a £204,670 surplus outturn for 2020/21. The provisional outturn for 2020/21 shows a trading deficit of £322,088. The deficit has been repatriated to the HRA, which is the major service user. This is reflected in the HRA outturn within this report. The movement is as a result of the delay in billing as highlighted at Quarter 3 which made forecasting the outturn position difficult. Now that billing is up to date the full financial impacts of Covid19 have resulted in a loss to HRS.



4.3 The out-turn summary is set out in the table below:

	<b>Revised Budget £'000</b>	<b>Outturn £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
Employees	3,223	3,005	(218)
Premises	44	45	1
Transport	367	323	(44)
Materials	1,415	721	(694)
Sub-Contractors	1,916	2,302	386
Supplies & Services	214	352	138
Central Support Costs	336	522	186
Capital Charges	0	2	2
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>7,515</b>	<b>7,271</b>	<b>(244)</b>
Income	(7,514)	(6,948)	566
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>322</b>

## 5. Resource Implications

5.1 The financial implications are contained within the report.

5.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## 6. Recommendations

6.1 That the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee review and note the provisional out-turn position for HRA and HRS for 2020/21.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**Does this report contain appendices?** No

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Colleen Warren, Financial Services Manager Telephone (01522) 873361



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017 - STATUTORY DUTIES</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND INVESTMENT</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>ALISON TIMMINS – COUNTY HOMELESSNESS PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Performance Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the Council's statutory duties in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act placed new duties on English Councils so that everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness has access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status or local connection to the authority they approach.

- 2.2 Several new duties were introduced including:

- Duty to assess all eligible applicants' cases and agree a Personal Housing Plan
- The Prevention Duty: in cases of threatened homelessness
- The Relief Duty: in cases where the applicant is homeless

In addition, there are new duties on Public Authorities; the Public Duty to Refer, and on applicants. Any applicant who fails to co-operate may mean that they cease to be eligible for further assistance

## 3. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- 3.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act, which came into effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, placed new duties on English Councils so that everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness has access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status or local connection to the authority they approach.

- 3.2 The definition of homeless or threatened with homelessness also changed. The Act extended the number of days before a person becomes threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days.

- 3.3 This change was introduced to enable people to apply for help and advice at an earlier stage and to give the local authority time to prevent homelessness or give advice to enable the applicant to secure alternative accommodation

- 3.4 The duty to provide advisory services requires the authority to provide advice on:
- Preventing homelessness,

- Securing accommodation,
- Advice on legal rights
- Any help that is available from other agencies for example, debt advice

- 3.5 If a local authority believes that a person is threatened with homelessness within 56 days and is eligible for assistance, the Prevention duty is triggered. The council has a duty to assess every applicants circumstances, and housing and support needs, and reach an agreement with the applicant on a Personalised Housing Plan which sets out what the authority will do and what the applicant must do to ensure accommodation is secured or retained. There is no requirement for the applicant to have either a local connection to the area or a priority need to be eligible for this advice and assistance.
- 3.6 If a person is or becomes homeless, then the Relief duty is triggered and will continue for up to 56 days. The council has a duty to help all homeless applicants to secure accommodation for at least 6 months if they have a local connection with the authority. If there is no local connection their case will be referred to the relevant authority to progress. If the applicant has no local connection to any particular local authority, then the first receiving authority must accept the Relief duty. There is no requirement for the applicant to have a priority need to be eligible for this assistance/duty.
- 3.7 Where the Relief Duty is triggered and the local authority has reason to believe the applicant is or may be in priority need, then temporary accommodation must be provided.
- 3.8 At the end of the 56 day Relief period, if attempts to secure accommodation have been unsuccessful then the Council must accept a Full Duty to secure suitable accommodation provided that the applicant is eligible, in priority need, not intentionally homeless and has a local connection to the area (or has no local connection to any other area).
- 3.9 If an applicant fails to cooperate with the council in order to prevent their homelessness or secure accommodation, then the council can serve a notice on the applicant explaining the consequence of continued non-cooperation. As a consequence of non-cooperation, the council could choose to decide that the person is no longer eligible for assistance.
- 3.10 On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the Duty to Refer was introduced which requires a number of public bodies to notify the council if they are working with someone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

#### **4. Organisational Impacts**

- 4.1 Finance - budgets have been identified and adjusted to meet the costs of compliance with The Act.
- 4.2 Legal Implications - the council is fully compliant with the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- 4.3 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights – the Council is compliant with all requirements.

**5. Risk Implications** - not applicable

**6. Recommendation**

6.1 For Members to note the contents of the report relating to the Council's statutory duties in relation to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** none

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Alison Timmins, County Homelessness Partnerships Manager

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**SUBJECT: COUNTY WIDE COVID 19 HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE**

**DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**

**REPORT AUTHOR: DAREN TURNER, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the work of the Homelessness Cell which forms part of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) response structure for Covid 19.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 When the Covid 19 crisis started in early March 2020 the LRF set up a structure of meetings/group to help coordinate the response to the Pandemic.
- 2.2 The Homelessness/Rough Sleeping Cell was part of that structure and was commissioned as a sub cell of the Health and Care Cell (the upper cell).
- 2.3 The cell initially had a set of terms of reference developed by the LRF and upper cell and it was proposed to be chaired by an officer from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). The cell was to meet weekly and report homelessness number and related C19 issues to the upper cell as well as escalate any issues that could not be resolved directly by the group.

The group was made up of delegates from all Local Authorities across Lincolnshire, NHS colleagues, Public Health Colleagues, voluntary and community sector representatives, commissioned and none commissioned services (by LCC), Probation Services, Lincolnshire Police, Domestic Abuse County leads, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) colleagues and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). The group was added to over time, interested parties joined and left as the group developed.

## 3. Current Position

- 3.1 The group has now been meeting for 15 months. Meetings moved from weekly to bi-weekly as a "battle rhythm" was established. The Chair was immediately moved to City of Lincoln (COL) due to the pressures in the City and established connections. Terms of reference were changed as the group developed and its role morphed from being a reactive body. This was initially triggered by the letter all councils received in March 20 from Luke Hall (MP) calling for Councils to respond over the initial lockdown period by getting everyone in off the streets. What's now known as the 'everyone in' campaign.
- 3.2 Driven by that call to arms and lead by the COL the group were able to achieve that initial critical milestone of taking virtually everyone off the street during the initial stages of lockdown. Everyone, across the county, had been offered

accommodation and in many cases additional support. Rough sleeping numbers were quite high in the urban areas at the start of the pandemic, the City, the East Coast and Boston had consistently higher numbers. For a period of time these numbers were brought down to almost zero; unfortunately, there are always cases where rough sleepers refuse accommodation and actively chose to be on the streets this may be as a result addiction and or mental health issues.

- 3.3 Linked to the concerns of transmission of the virus in such a vulnerable group the cell also sought to tackle gatherings of any type that tended to happen again in urban areas. The police supported the cell and intelligence was shared across the group that enabled the police to act quickly and intervene and also to develop police tactics alongside local providers (such as the DC's) which had more success in preventing regular gatherings again specifically in urban areas. However, due to the network created, specific police issues such as disruptive behaviours in hostels and criminal activity in third party provider properties was able to be reported and tackled. As the weather has improved and aspects of the lockdown eased gatherings have become more evident, particularly in Lincoln. Whilst working with the police they cannot be continually prevented; the Cell forum gives delegates the opportunity to raise the issue and hear a police response (EG YMCA and the St Rumbold Street area)
- 3.4 The group also tackled the related health issues that the pandemic enhanced or brought about. With the NHS and Public health colleagues on the call we have been able to ensure better coordination between the NHS neighbourhood teams and the District councils, enabling uniform access to health responses and an escalation process where resources had been denied. PPE logistical issues were resolved, and funding was levered from different sources to aid organisations struggling with demand as a result of the pandemic. The group were able to intervene in specific cases that had essentially fallen between providers and gain a resolution for people who had struggled to get a response in the past.
- 3.5 Perhaps the most positive outcome from the formation of the cell is the network it has created and the partnership working that it has enabled. Closely working together, in order to respond to the pandemic, has led to the creation of trust amongst not only the public bodies but also all the organisations involved in the homeless rough sleeping response. This had led to successes across a range of areas: -
- Housing Related Support – the contract funding for this service was reduced by £1m at the start of 2020/2021; the reduction was delayed until October 2020 due to the pandemic. Once new contracts were in place the group regularly gave feedback and worked with County colleagues on tweaks to the contract to allow better outcomes including changing the triage arrangements so more people could access the service. The commissioned providers now provide vacancy/void details in their properties so Districts needing provision can more readily see what's available and ensuring where possible all available units are used.
  - Prison releases – coordination with local and regional home office representatives ensured that councils were aware of planned releases earlier and were also told about any early releases in the first stages of the pandemic. The group, working with health colleagues, were also able to ensure a proper testing regime was in place for prisoners being released.



- Hospital releases – greater coordination with health colleagues enables better palling for hospital releases – specifically with NFA. More recently WellBeing Lincs have joined the group and are able to step in quickly with patients, with additional needs leaving Hospitals locally.
- No recourse to public funds – Rough sleepers who have NRPF are an ongoing issue. Some specific interventions in the south of the county have closed due to funding ending which has added pressures. Specific cases have been resolved with the help of Lincs CC and the county led by ELDC has enabled engagement with the home office and immigration services on the issue and that issue is now recognised by government. Lincs CC have set aside additional funds in the short to help with this problem. There seems to be no medium or long term solution for this.
- Deaths in the cohort – we have actively pursued the introduction of a case review process for those people who sadly pass away whilst homeless or rough sleeping. This has been extremely difficult to achieve and has required interventions by the local CCG, LPFT and local neighbourhood health leads.
- C19 Vaccination programme – due to pressure and escalation from the group and the support of local NHS neighbourhood leads we have been able to ensure the creation of a targeted vaccination programme for the homeless cohort.
- Cooperative funding – the cells success has enabled an agreement between DC's to fund the provision of a county wide homelessness coordinator for three years who will be managed from NKDC in Sleaford. This is a hugely important step forward which will hopefully enable to the networking and joint working to continue.

(Note: these are just a few examples of what the group has achieved)

- 3.6 Looking forward we have many challenges left to face if we are to secure the governments desired outcome of no rough sleepers on the streets by the end of this parliament. We have the end of furlough, the end of the moratorium on evictions and also the end of initiatives like mortgage payment holidays etc. All of these will place additional pressure on already stretched resources. The Homeless Cell has been pressing through channels such as the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group, for longer term thinking and solutions to the rough sleeping problem. There is a sense that the way the issue is managed and the way that management is funded by government is very short term and essentially puts a sticking plaster on the issue. The Cell, from learning over the last year, feel that research should be done into why people get into the rough sleeping system in the first place and then measures be put in place earlier to prevent the move to rough sleeping.
- 3.7 The LRF has now altered its structure slightly as it moves towards a recovery basis. The Upper Health and Care Cell has been stood down. We have been advised that the Homelessness Cell should continue but report to a newly formed Community & Voluntary Sector Engagement (CVSE) Recovery Cell. The Cell, moving forward, will likely be chaired by the new county wide homelessness coordinator (see para 3.5 above)

#### **4. Organisational Impacts**

##### 4.1 Finance

No direct impact.

##### 4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

##### 4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Council is compliant with all requirements.

#### **5. Risk Implications - not applicable**

#### **6. Recommendations**

##### 6.1 That members note the contents of the update.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** None

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Yvonne Fox  
Assistant Director – Housing Management

**HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE****23 JUNE 2021**

**SUBJECT: WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2021/22**  
**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**  
**LEAD OFFICER: ALI HEWSON, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER**

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present Members with the work programme for 2021/22 (Appendix A).

**2. Background**

2.1 The work programme for 2021/22 is provided for information to ensure members are aware of the forthcoming business at future meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee. The work programme is regularly updated in consultation with the Chair of the committee and Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel.

2.2 The work programme includes those areas for scrutiny linked to the strategic priorities of the Council and housing matters, to ensure that the work of this committee is relevant and proportionate.

**3. Recommendation**

3.1 That Members agree the work programme and recommend any necessary amendments.

**Access to Information:**

Does the report contain exempt information, which would prejudice the public interest requirement if it was publicised?

No

**Key Decision**

No

**Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply**

No

**Call In and Urgency:** Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

No

**Does the report contain Appendices?**

Yes

**If Yes, how many Appendices?**

1

**Lead Officer:**

Ali Hewson, Democratic Services Officer  
 Telephone 873370

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**Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2021/22****23 June 2021**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	Lincoln Tenants Panel	Regular Verbal Update
Housing Department Service Update – COVID19	Daren Turner	
Breakdown of ASB Data -Council Houses	Yvonne Fox	Requested by Chair pre meet 22 Feb 2021
Housing Finance - Council's Housing Out-Turn Position for 2020/21.	Coleen Warren	Annual Report
Quarter 4 (2020/21) – Performance Report	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
6 Monthly Update on Homeless Cell	Daren Turner	Six Monthly Report Requested by Chair Meeting 2 Nov 2020
Legal Responsibilities in Response to Homelessness	Alison Timmins	Requested by Chair
Scheduled Repairs Pilot Feedback	Matt Hillman	
Work Programme 2021/22	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

**9 August 2021**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	Lincoln Tenants Panel	Regular Verbal Update

Updated 8 March 2021

Allocations Policy Update – Update on Implementation of New Member Policy	Yvonne Fox	
Analysis of Housing Register – Update on Numbers in each Band	Yvonne Fox	
Performance Indicators Update – Quarter 1	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
Work Programme 2021/22	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

**1 November 2021**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	Lincoln Tenants Panel	Regular Verbal Update
3 Quarter 2 (2020/21) – Performance and Finance Report	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
Voids – Update on Numbers and Costs	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
Update NSAP Scheme- Delivery Costs	Yvonne Fox	Requested by Chair at meeting 25 01.21
Work Programme 2021/22	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

**24 January 2022**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	<b>Lincoln Tenants Panel</b>	Regular Verbal Update
Homelessness and RS Update	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
LTP Review Update Report	Mick Barber Chair of LTP	Annual Report

Updated 8 March 2021

Schedule Repairs Project Update	Matt Hillman	
6 Monthly Update by Director of Housing on Homeless Cell	Daren Turner	Six Monthly Update Req by Chair Meeting 2 Nov 2020
Work Programme 2021/22	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

**14 March 2022**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	Lincoln Tenants Panel	Regular Verbal Update
Tenancy Sustainment Project Update	Keeley Johnson	12 Oct 2020 Meeting Min 86 Update
3 Quarter 3 (2020/21) – Performance Report	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report Quarterly
Allocations Policy - Update	Yvonne Fox	New Allocations Policy commenced in Jan 2021
Setting of Performance Targets 2022/23	Daren Turner	Annual Review
Report from PH Cllr Nannestad to Performance Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Nannestad	Annual report
Work Programme 2022/23	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

**Future topics: 6 Monthly Update by Director of Housing on Homeless Cell: Requested by Chair at meeting on 2 Nov 2020.**

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS &amp; PUBLIC</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>CAROLYN WHEATER, MONITORING OFFICER</b>

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To advise members that any agenda items following this report are considered to contain exempt or confidential information for the reasons specified on the front page of the agenda for this meeting.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1 It is recommended that the press and public be excluded from the meeting at this point as it is likely that if members of the press or public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt or confidential information.

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