

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 March 2022

6.00 pm

Committee Rooms 1-2, City Hall

Membership:	Councillors Pat Vaughan (Chair), Loraine Woolley (Vice-Chair), Liz Bushell, Jane Loffhagen, Christopher Reid and Edmund Strengiel
Substitute member(s):	Councillors Biff Bean
Lincoln Tenants Panel member(s):	Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Caroline Coyle-Fox (Vice Chair of LTP), Mike Asher (Member of LTP), Steven Bearder (Member of LTP) and Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP)
Officers attending:	Democratic Services, Yvonne Fox, Matthew Hillman, Keeley Johnson, Andrew McNeil and Daren Turner

A G E N D A

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1. Confirmation of Minutes - 24 January 2022	3 - 10
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.	
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Present: Councillors Councillor Pat Vaughan (*in the Chair*), Liz Bushell, Jane Loffhagen, Christopher Reid, Edmund Strengiel and Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: None.

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

32. Confirmation of Minutes - 1 November 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2021 be confirmed.

33. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

34. LTP Review Update Report

Members of Lincoln Tenants Panel gave an update on the following areas:

- Contributed to work on fire safety engagement
- Agreed objectives and assisted in the development of the Tenant Involvement Strategy and revised Lincoln Tenant Panel constitution
- Involved with complaints monitoring and had worked with the regulator regarding the complaints procedure
- Completed a review on gardens
- Contributed to the schedule repairs pilot system
- Completed consultation on off street parking
- Had been involved with the recruitment of a new Resident Involvement Manager
- Pleased with the Annual Report to Tenants.

The Sub-Committee discussed in detail the issue of scooters being stored in communal areas and asked how the issue was being addressed.

The Director of Housing responded that an issue had been recognised and a dedicated social media campaign had taken place alongside a letter to every tenant who had a communal area. This exercise could be repeated to remind tenants not to block communal areas as they could cause a fire safety issue.

Members of LTP highlighted the issue of train wiring for scooters in the communal area and also the issue of storing scooters as tenants feared theft or vandalism if they were left on the street. It was stated that storage pods at Broomhill had been successful and asked whether these could be replicated in other areas.

The Director of Housing responded that the storage pods at Broomhill had been successful, however, it was difficult to replicate in all areas due to space, power points and also there would be a significant cost to the Council.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

35. Resident Engagement, Building Safety

Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director, Housing Strategy:

- a. presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee the draft Resident Engagement Strategy for building safety for comments prior to referral to Executive.
- b. gave the background to the Strategy as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and advised that following the Grenfell tragedy in 2017 the government launched a review to improve building safety in Higher Risk Residential Buildings.
- c. advised that the Resident Engagement Strategy for Lincoln had been developed in consultation with elected members, staff and the Lincoln Tenants Panel. It was also in line with the best practise from the housing sector.
- d. explained that the strategy set out the Council's approach to engaging with residents and had three main strands:
 - Information and understanding
 - Resident and landlords' responsibilities
 - Action to take in the event of a fire
- e. referred to the Action Plan at Appendix 2 of the report and advised that to deliver the Engagement Strategy the Council would need to meet all of the actions contained within the action plan.
- f. invited committee's questions and comments:

Question: Asked if the fire certificates covered all council properties.

Response: The fire safety certificate was for higher risk properties such as high rise buildings and did not cover all individual properties owned by the council.

Question: Commented that the fire service could only reach to floor 10 and asked if this was an issue for the high rise buildings in the City.

Response: The high rise buildings were compartmentalised and had fire doors therefore access to higher areas was via the corridors. There was no flammable material on the outside of any of our buildings.

Question: Asked how residents felt regarding the stay put policy.

Response: Having spoken to residents there was some fear regarding the stay put policy. Residents had been reassured that the circumstances would be different to the Grenfell fire and it was explained to them that each flat was a safe fire zone and that it was the best place to stay should there be a fire.

Question: Asked if sprinkler systems had been fitted in all low lying sheltered accommodation.

Response: They had been fitted in the new Derek Miller Court but were not in all sheltered accommodation as these were compartmentalised buildings.

Question: Asked if the fire station was automatically alerted to a fire in Council properties.

Response: The alarms automatically alerted the fire service for high rise and sheltered accommodation but it was not standard in all Council properties.

RESOLVED that the Resident Engagement Strategy for building safety be supported and referred to Executive for approval.

36. Next Steps Accommodation Programme Delivery

Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director – Housing Investment & Strategy

- a. presented an update on the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) including delivery costs.
- b. gave the background to the report as detailed at paragraph 2 and advised the key element of the programme was the provision of capital and revenue funding to facilitate move-on accommodation for rough sleepers who were being housed in emergency temporary accommodation following the 'Everyone In' Initiative in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- c. advised that the City of Lincoln Council successfully submitted a capital and revenue funding bid and had been under contract to deliver 15 units of dispersed accommodation using a purchase and repair model since 22 December 2020.
- d. referred to paragraph 3 of the report and gave an overview of the delivery of the NSAP Scheme advising that all 15 units had been delivered and were being used to accommodate previous rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping.
- e. explained that the total capital scheme cost was £1.65m, which was £150k/ 10% over the original bid award from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) of £1.5m. The increase in cost had been funded by City of Lincoln Council and the key issues which led to the increase were detailed at paragraph 4.3 of the report.
- f. advised that although on average the Council received an average reduction in grant rate, this was still a 97.66% return rate across the project and it had not affected the financial viability of the scheme.
- g. referred to paragraph 9 of the report and gave an overview of the benefits and successes of NSAP including a case study.
- h. gave an overview of round two of RSAP and advised that work continued on the programme and a further 3 properties had been purchased.
- i. invited questions and comments:

Question: Referred to the Housing Waiting List and asked how people on the list would be affected by this accommodation.

Response: These properties were temporary accommodation for rough sleepers and were separate from the Housing Waiting List, they would not add anything to the waiting list or take away from it.

Question: Referred to paragraph 7 of the report and asked if the revenue that was still to be claimed from Homes England had been allocated.

Response: The revenue claim could be up to £51k and would be used to pay for support staff.

Question: Asked if the properties would be refurbished every time they were vacated.

Response: There would be some work that would need to be completed and this would be paid for by the scheme.

Question: Asked if residents in these properties would receive help with bedroom tax.

Response: The properties were for temporary accommodation therefore the rules were slightly different and they would not be affected by bedroom tax.

RESOLVED that

1. the implementation of the NSAP scheme and its delivery be noted.
2. the update on the NSAP two scheme be noted.

37. Performance Report -Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director – Housing Investment & Strategy

- a. advised members on the current performance of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Teams
- b. reported on continued prioritisation of homeless households and former rough sleepers for accommodation in line with Government guidance as detailed at paragraph 2.4 of the report
- c. advised that the Annual Official Rough Sleeping Count (undertaken on 19 November 21) found 14 rough sleepers in the city; however the team had fully complied with the Government Initiative of 'Protect and Vaccinate' introduced the week before Christmas in response to the Omicron variant and had offered suitable temporary accommodation to every rough sleeper in Lincoln. An informal routine count on 5 January 2022 found zero rough sleepers in the city
- d. detailed the current position in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping at paragraph 3 of his report
- e. reported on anticipated challenging times ahead for the teams during quarter 4 as detailed at paragraph 4 of his report
- f. requested that members note the current position relating to homelessness and rough sleeping.

Question: Referred to paragraph 4.3 of the report and asked how people who were eligible for the homelessness prevention funding had been identified.

Response: The funding was for people that had been referred as at risk or likely to be homeless shortly. Each case was looked at on its own merits and would have to prove that the loss of tenancy was directly linked to Covid-19.

Question: Referred to the Government announcement to end plan B response to the pandemic and asked if it would have an effect on how the team would operate.

Response: No, everyone who had needed help during the pandemic had received it. Staff would continue with the current way of working.

Question: Asked if the figures contained within the report included sofa surfers.

Response: They would be included in the report if they were at risk of being homeless.

Question: Asked how long someone would be homeless before they were housed.

Response: The Council would never leave anybody whose only option was to sleep on the street. We had a duty to house them.

Question: Asked how the Council helped those people that would not engage.

Response: Officers built up trust with individuals over a period of time, it generally took longer to get them accommodated.

Question: Asked if sofa surfers could be included within the report.

Response: Officers would look to see if this data could be included in future reports.

RESOLVED that the current position in relation to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in the City be noted.

38. Update on the Schedule Repairs Trial Extension

Matt Hillman, Assistant Director of Investment:

- a. presented an update on the Scheduled Repairs project delivered during the extended trial period
- b. advised that the extended Scheduled Repairs trial period began on 9th August 2021 and would be completed on 4th February 2022
- c. gave the background of the Housing Repairs Service as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report
- d. outlined the potential advantages and benefits to delivering Scheduled Repairs when compared to service delivery via the previous system. This included:
 - Tenant satisfaction
 - Operational efficiency and performance
 - Financial savings
 - Environmental impact
 - Housing stock standard
- e. referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report and explained why the trial had been extended and highlighted the factors that had influenced the data so that a like for like comparison of previous years was not possible.

- f. gave details of the issues encountered during the trial period extension in the following areas:
- Labour issues
 - Material issues related to follow on referrals
 - Booking in of repairs
- g. advised that the Scheduled Repairs trial had identified several improvements that could be introduced to further refine service delivery, these were detailed at paragraph 4.5 of the report.
- h. invited committees questions and comments:

Question: Commented that there were no contractors available for kitchens and asked when would those that need a new kitchen have it installed.

Response: New kitchens were still being referred and fitted if needed. There were the contractors in place to fit the kitchens.

Comment: Tenants were being given 1 weeks' notice for a repair, this was not enough time to rearrange time off from work.

Response: The current process was that Customer Services would log the repair and later on a Resource Planner would make the appointment.. This system was a priority to be looked at, the appointment for a repair would be booked by Customer Services which would give more notice for the tenant.

Comment: There was still an issue with duplicated appointments.

Response: The Resource planners had worked through the back log and closed any duplicates that were identified, this could be looked at again.

Comment: The red ring showers that were being installed were not fit for purpose.

Response: Occupational Therapists were advising that red ring showers should be fitted. The Council were trying to move away from electric showers altogether. If a red ring shower could not be repaired it would be under warranty.

Question: Asked if the kitchen and bathroom splash backs would be going ahead.

Response: Yes, the training had been completed and fitting could now go ahead.

RESOLVED that

1. the contents of the report be noted.
2. a further update be reported to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee in March 2022 when the pilot process had been completed.

39. Voids and Sheltered Communal Areas Update

Matt Hillman, Assistant Director of Investment gave an update on voids:

- a. advised that at the end of quarter 3, the current rent lost through vacant dwellings stood at 1.37% against the target of 0.9%, an increase of 0.07% compared to last quarter. The current void turn-around time for void requiring minor works was 51.94 days against the target of 32 days. The

current void turnaround time for all properties was 59.98 days against the target of 38 days

- b. explained that the Voids Team had experienced significant pressure throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on the number of staff able to work within properties at any one time, shortages in labour and materials and limitations on completing pretermination inspections
- c. explained the difficulties in recruiting staff and updated that five additional contractors had been appointed and additional staff had been allocated to voids. Subsequently, an increase in the properties being completed and relet were on track to bring performance more in line with target next quarter
- d. noted that re-let times may increase initially as some of the long standing voids were returned, once these had been returned there would be a reduction in rent loss and relet times

Daren Turner, Director Housing gave an update the impact of Covid-19 on communal areas in Sheltered Housing Schemes. He gave an overview of the general measures put in place as well as the specific measures if there was a covid outbreak.

The committee discussed the contents of the report and asked the following questions:

Question: Asked if the contractors were local.

Response: Yes they were from Lincolnshire.

Question: Asked if private empty and derelict buildings could be utilised.

Response: This was an issue in the City. There were a number of tools that could be used to address this such as the Council's Empty Property Officer worked with owners to bring properties back into use, compulsory purchase orders and incentives such as Council tax charges on empty properties.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

40. Work Programme Update 2021-22

The Chair:

- a. presented the work programme for Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee for 2021/22 as detailed at Appendix A of the officer's report
- b. advised that this was an opportunity for committee to suggest other items to be included on the work programme.

RESOLVED that the content of the work programme be noted

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HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2022

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR DONALD NANNESAD, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR QUALITY HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

The last 12 months have continued to be a challenging time for housing. The various levels of Covid restrictions have had their effect on housing performance but we have also experienced issues in the supply of materials with the additional problem of a shortage in the labour market. The performance of voids, notable for the amount of red in the quarterly performance report, has further been affected by the fact that the contractor we were using at the start of the financial year went into administration. That said there have also been some excellent areas such as rent collection while the imminent completion of De Wint Court extra care home is a flagship development for us.

The City Council has just under 7,800 properties of which 45% are houses and 42% flats with the remainder made up of maisonettes, bungalows, and sheltered housing. The ratio between houses and flats has been skewed out of proportion by Right to Buy which has seen us lose a significantly higher number of family homes compared with the number of flats bought by tenants. In addition, eight out of 10 of our homes were constructed before 1974 which creates challenges – in particular when it comes to improving energy efficiency.

In this report I set out the various performance data. It is clear that some areas, particularly voids, need improvement and changes have been made with the anticipation of the required improvement being made although some factors are out of our hands.

Finally, many thanks to all the staff who have not only assisted with this report but given me tremendous support during my period of illness. I also thank the Lincoln Tenants Panel for the valuable work they have done and continue to do to improve the lot of tenants. The Social Housing White Paper emphasises the fact that the voice of tenants must be heard. The Charter sets out seven key commitments all of which have been adopted by the City Council and are included in our Tenancy Involvement Strategy as well as in the refreshed 30-year Housing Business Plan which was approved by the executive committee on 21 February.

HOMELESSNESS

Significant work has been done over recent years to reduce homelessness in the City with Government funding being directed at Lincoln amongst other cities and towns across the country. In relation to this we were able to draw down funding to purchase 15 flats for move on accommodation as part of the Next Steps Accommodation Project. We were the first Council in the country to acquire a property under this programme and were successful in purchasing the required number. A further three flats have been purchased with money from a second phase of Government funding. Regular checks on street homelessness have, on occasions, produced a nil head count which is the first time this has been achieved.

Homelessness remains an issue. There is a particular pressure as a result of the availability of suitable move-on accommodation and general needs housing in both our own stock and in private sector housing. Up to the end of Q3 707 people had approached the Council as homeless this year. Of these the housing solutions team were able to successfully prevent 43% from becoming homeless. We have, at this time, unprecedented numbers of homelessness applications. The number of people approaching us as homeless by the end of Q3 is almost identical to the number for all of 2020-21 which was 709.

TENANCY SERVICES

Tenancy Services staff have worked extremely hard to ensure rent collection has been maintained. Emphasis has been placed on direct contact with tenants through visits and calls with targets in place for staff. This is a success story with both performance indicators (125B and 126) showing green. The target of 96.5% for rent collected has been exceeded in each of the first three quarters of this financial year with a collection rate of 100.52% of in the third quarter. This has resulted in a decrease in arrears compared to 2020/21. At the end of Q3 rent arrears were £1.052 million which is a reduction of £78,000 compared to 12 months ago. Arrears as a percentage of rent debit was 3.68% at the end of Q3 which is an improvement on 2020/21 when the end of year figure was 3.74%. A number of challenges remain not least of which is the impact of Universal Credit. The number of tenants claiming UC has increased by 1,028 year on year and arrears on UC claims totals almost £670,000 which is 63% of the total arrears. The cost-of-living issue which tenants, as well as everyone else, face is another matter which has the potential to seriously impact on rent collection but how serious that impact is will only become apparent in the coming months.

VOIDS

In contrast to the success of rent collection it is fair to say that the performance in voids is not where we would like to be, but we are working to rectify the situation. A number of matters have affected performance with the most significant being the fact that the contractor we started the financial year with went into administration. We have experienced delays in ordering kitchens, plastering products and some timber lines while recruitment of new staff has been affected by the high national demand for labour. Covid restrictions have also played a part. The target remains at 32 days for properties needing minor works and 38 days where major works are required. Currently performance is at 46.4 days and 57.6 days respectively which means both performance indicators are red. Since the initial contractor went into administration the work has been picked up by our own DLO, who have been allocated extra staff, and additional private contractors have been taken on for this work. I anticipate that performance will improve in Q4 and during this quarter a number of long-term voids are expected to be completed. We have just finished a procurement exercise to replace the voids contractor who went into administration. We have done this in lots around the city to give more resilience. The number of voids is reducing very quickly and has fallen by 25 since the start of the year. We have realigned working practices, dedicated more team leader time, and changed team structures to help resolve the position. At one point we were 25% down in our labour force but this is improving and, for example, in January six new joiners came to work for us. This should put us in a

better position in Q1 of 2022/23. However just a brief caution about the performance indicators. Long-term voids only become counted when they are completed and so the fact that we are completing a number of long-term voids will initially make the data look worse.

HOUSING REPAIRS

Out of the six performance indicators relating to housing repairs four are green, one amber and one red. The sole red indicator is the percentage of urgent repairs carried out within the three-day time limit and the amber indicator relates to priority one-day repairs. There is now closer management of one- and three-day repairs and a repairs co-ordinator has been appointed. One- and three-day repairs are being prioritised over 100-day tickets. As with voids there have been issues with obtaining materials, but performance does need to improve to an acceptable level. However, 99.3% of priority repairs (one day) are being carried out within the time limits and 99.3% of priority and urgent repair appointments are being kept. In the long-term the recently introduced policy of improving the standard of kitchens and bathrooms that we fit should have an effect in reducing the number of repairs.

HOUSING INVESTMENT

Two key areas in this section which were red at the time of last year's performance report are now amber which is an improvement although further improvement is now needed to take this into green. 82 of our Council properties currently do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. 58 are in a programme for a replacement door and in a further 22 properties we have been unable to gain access to undertake the five-year electrical inspection. We also currently have 178 properties which are considered 'not decent standard' as a result of tenants refusing us entry. This figure has shown continued improvement over the last six quarters from a peak of 216 in Q1 of 2020-21.

99.14% of properties have a valid gas certificate which is better than 2020/21 but still below the target. Cases where the tenant refuses access for the gas safety inspection are, as a matter of course, referred to legal services for the appropriate action to be taken to ensure we gain access.

NEW BUILD/ALLOCATIONS

De Wint Court, our flagship extra care home, will be officially opened later this month. In addition to the opening ceremony there will be an open day on 25 March to which all councillors have been invited allowing those who wish to look around what is an excellent project. Although the completion has been slightly delayed due to issues out of our control it is within budget. Homes England and Lincolnshire County Council both contributed funding towards this project which is our first extra care home.

Construction work is now well underway at Rookery Lane which will add 42 new homes to our housing stock and work on the redevelopment of Hermit Street flats is anticipated to start later this calendar year. This involves remodelling the existing properties with a number of additional new-build homes.

In addition, we are working with Barnardo's to provide supervised accommodation for care leavers.

We have continued to acquire properties under the purchase and repair scheme using Right to Buy receipts (RTB). In the first three quarters of this financial year, we purchased 8 properties under this scheme with a further 10 due to be completed in Q4. This has ensured our RTB receipts are spent within the required time. RTB receipts will be used towards the funding of the new properties which form part of the Hermit Street project.

The demand for Council housing remains high with 1,448 on the housing register at the end of Q3 which is an increase of 30 compared to my report to Performance Management last year.

DECARBONISATION

The Council in July 2019 approved a resolution declaring a climate and environmental emergency and resolved to deliver a carbon neutral vision for Lincoln by 2030. The role housing is to play in this is set out within the Council's Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan approved by the executive in December of last year. This commits the Council's new build properties to be either net zero carbon or EPC A rated in projects commenced from 2022-23 and to raise the standard of all Council homes to an average of EPC C rating. Recent new build projects such as the Markham House site and Rookery Lane have been low carbon and have EPC B ratings. Rookery Lane includes sustainable urban drainage. All recent new homes have been fitted with EV charging points.

In terms of our older stock (80% of which was built pre-1974) we are committed to review the Lincoln Homes Standard to improve energy performance. We will also consider retrofit solutions for our existing stock with trials to commence subject to funding.

Our Council together with all other housing stock authorities and registered housing providers, faces many challenges to achieve the progress we need to make. For instance, achieving EPC A ratings/net zero carbon on new build properties significantly increases the cost. The logistics of installing ground-source or air-source heat pumps and solar panels to many of our properties produce real challenges which in some instances cannot, at the moment, be overcome.

What we have done already is introduce a number of changes in the way housing repairs operates which have significantly reduced our carbon footprint. The introduction of scheduled repairs has led to a reduction in mileage travelled by our workforce. The result has been a 44% reduction in CO₂e emissions from fleet vehicles since the baseline year. A higher standard of kitchens is being fitted which should reduce the number of repairs while splash boards are now fitted in bathrooms rather than glazed tiles. Currently no housing repair waste is sent to landfill. 37% is recycled and the remainder goes to RDF (Refuse Derived Fuel).

HRS are in the tender process for a new fleet provision which will continue to reduce the CO2 emissions with more electric vehicles becoming part of the fleet in five years.

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

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Appendix A

Directorate of Housing and Investment Performance

Service Area	Measure	Current Value	Status	Direction
Housing Investment	Percentage of council properties that are not at the 'Decent Homes' standard (excluding refusals)	1.06	R	▲
Housing Investment	Number of properties 'not decent' as a result of tenants refusal to allow work (excluding referrals)	178	V	▬
Housing Investment	Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.14	R	▼
Control Centre	Percentage of Lincare Housing Assistance calls answered within 60 seconds	98.30	A	▲
Rent Collection	Rent collected as a proportion of rent owed	100.52	G	▲
Rent Collection	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit	3.68	A	▲
Housing Solutions	The number of people currently on the housing list	1,448	V	▬
Housing Solutions	The number of people approaching the council as homeless	707	V	▬
Housing Solutions	Successful preventions and relief of homelessness against total number of homelessness approaches	43.70	R	▼
Housing Voids	Percentage of rent lost through dwelling being vacant	1.44	R	▼
Housing Voids	Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings - standard re-lets	51.94	R	▼
Housing Voids	Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (including major works)	59.88	R	▼
Housing Maintenance	Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	92.66	R	▲
Housing Maintenance	Percentage of repairs fixed first time (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	92.91	A	▲
Housing Maintenance	Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	99.30	G	▼

Service Area	Measure	Current Value	Status	Direction
Housing Investment	Percentage of council properties that are not at the 'Decent Homes' standard (excluding refusals)	1.06	R	▲
Housing Investment	Number of properties 'not decent' as a result of tenants refusal to allow work (excluding referrals)	178	V	▬
Housing Investment	Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.14	R	▼

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SUBJECT:	TENANCY SUSTAINMENT UPDATE
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	KEELEY JOHNSON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Members on the current position with tenancy sustainment.

2. Background

2.1 Tenancy sustainment continues to be a key priority within the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI), and we are working towards the implementation of the Sustainment Team on 1 April 2022. This is later than anticipated, due to delays with recruitment during Covid-19 and then securing a job evaluation panel due to lack of Union representation.

2.2 Three offers of employment on two-year contracts have been made to two external and one internal individual with a wealth of experience across the support and voluntary sector.

2.3 The initial plan is for a robust process to be put in place for pre-tenancy work, with a focus on vulnerable applicants. The aim will be to ensure that tenants are set up to thrive in their tenancy with assistance with welfare benefits forms, signposting to necessary support and assistance with furniture through local charities. The team will be an advocacy and signposting service for the vulnerable tenants who require help with support in times of crisis.

2.4 As soon as the pre-tenancy work has been established, the team will start to take referrals for further assistance through the lifetime of tenancies.

3. Current Position

3.1 Tenancy have succeeded in maintaining the rental income stream with 100.34% in year rent collection as of the end of January. The eviction hiatus was lifted in October 2021, and we have worked hard to ensure there has not been a significant increase in evictions, with only 6 being carried out since the ban was lifted.

3.2 The Eviction Prevention Panel meets to discuss any potential eviction warrant to ensure that all avenues have been exhausted before a tenant is evicted. This panel includes Housing Solutions, Revenues and Benefits, Legal, Area Housing Managers and the Tenancy Services Manager.

3.3 All enforcement action must be supported by a full Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment in line with the Equality Act 2010 and these are required by the courts to ensure consideration has been given for protected characteristics and vulnerabilities and are carried out by the Housing Officer.

3.4 We do still proceed with eviction where appropriate, but we ensure that all the necessary actions are taken before doing so to ensure a One Council approach.

3.5

- Current tenancies – 7,585
- Annual rent debit - £28,619,622.50

- % in receipt of HB (partial and full) – 38.22%
- No. affected by under-occupancy charge - 275
- Live UC cases – 2,417 (avg. balance - £285.00)
- Current arrears as of end of Jan - £1,100,730.90
- Current rent as % of debit – 3.85%
- Current in year collection – 100.34% excl. arrears/credits, 97.11% including arrears/credits
- Number of evictions 2021/22 - 6

4. Finance

- 4.1 The MTFs provides budget provision for the three additional posts of £107,340, which has been funded from the HRA Invest to Save Reserve. Funding for the second year will also be made available through HRA earmarked reserves.

5. Legal implications (including procurement rules)

- 5.1 No further considerations at present.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

- 6.2 The Project is in accordance with the equality duty impact assessments required from local government.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That members note the current position relating to Tenancy Sustainment.

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: Keeley Johnson
Tenancy Services Manager

SUBJECT: REVISED TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2022 TO 2025

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: PAULA CADE, INTERIM RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek approval for the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022 to 2025 which replaces the 2018 to 2021 strategy.

2. Background

2.1 The revised Tenant Involvement Strategy for 2022 to 2025 (Appendix A) has now been developed.

2.2 The regulatory Framework for social housing and the social housing white paper requires social housing landlords to have a transparent Tenant Involvement Strategy in place.

3. What we have achieved over the last three years

3.1 Since we launched our last tenant involvement strategy, despite the coronavirus pandemic, we are proud of what we have achieved to improve our tenant involvement service and the willingness of tenants and leaseholders to participate in this.

3.2 Our annual report to tenants and Home magazine continues to be published so tenants and leaseholders can keep up to date with our achievements and performance. They detail house building, improvements (Decent Homes and Lincoln Standard of housing), scheduled and responsive repairs, tenancy management including tenancy breaches, anti-social behaviour, rental income, and the estate environment, as well as tenant involvement in these activities.

3.3 Tenants and leaseholders have contributed in many of the ways set out in our menu of involvement. The pandemic has encouraged the use of digital communication, such as Facebook and Zoom, and made it easier for people to get involved.

3.4 We have also reached out to people through fun days and roadshows, which has allowed even more people to get involved and find out more about effect of service changes and gain their views on our agreed future plans.

4. Objectives of the Revised Tenant Involvement Strategy

4.1 We have agreed five objectives for our Tenant Involvement Strategy. These are:

1. Co-design services with residents
2. Facilitate community engagement
3. Communicate key messages to residents
4. Co-regulate with Lincoln Tenants' Panel
5. Expand the ways residents can get involved.

4.2 By involving tenants and leaseholders in these ways will help us to jointly deliver the top priorities identified.

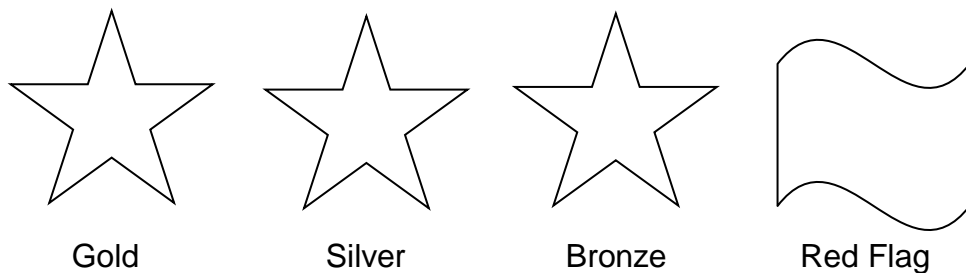
5. **Delivering the Action Plan and Monitoring Outcomes of the Strategy**

5.1 The resident involvement team will take the lead in the delivery of the strategy and action plan. The action plan is shown at Appendix A to the strategy.

5.2 Throughout the lifetime of the strategy the resident involvement team will review the strategy with Lincoln Tenants Panel to ensure the objectives are being met and activities are providing value for money.

5.3 Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and housing managers will receive updates about progress and have the opportunity to provide input into the strategy.

5.4 The Lincoln Tenants' Panel will assess the progress of the strategy using a rating system as follows:



5.5 As part of the launch of our strategy Lincoln Tenants Panel will carry out an initial assessment to give us a starting position against which we can monitor outcomes.

6. **Let's Deliver Quality Housing**

6.1 The revised Strategy will mean that tenants have tenants continue to have a range of opportunities to get involved to shape housing services.

7. **Finance**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications.

8. **Legal Implications**

8.1 There are legal implications.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 9.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.
- 9.2 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been carried out. There are no issues arising from this.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

10. Risk Implications

- 10.1 (i) Failure to deliver effective tenant involvement

11. Recommendation

- 11.1 This committee is asked to approve the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022 to 2025

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? 1

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Paula Cade, Interim Resident Involvement Manager

Paula.cade@lincoln.gov.uk

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Appendix A

Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022- 2025

Foreword from the Tenants' Panel Chair

“The Lincoln Tenants' Panel support this Tenant Involvement Strategy and welcome the many opportunities it brings for tenants and leaseholders to have their say about how services are provided over the next three years and beyond. The information used to develop this strategy has been sourced based on our joint experience with tenants, best practice, legislation and guidance from our government.”

“Lincoln Tenants' Panel has dedicated a lot of time in shaping services and will to continue to do this.”

Foreword from the Council's Portfolio Holder for housing

We are grateful to our Tenants' Panel for the time and effort they have given in helping understand the needs and aspirations of tenants. We continue to work closely together, sharing information and developing our housing service. Transparency with our tenants is very important to us and we have a very challenging future ahead of us. “

Introduction

The delivery of an excellent housing service requires high levels of performance, value for money and tenant satisfaction. In 2018 (the year the latest our tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken) 86% of tenants reported that they were either very or fairly satisfied with the overall service received.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused major disruption and has led to a range of lock down measures to tackle the spread of the virus. These restrictions have changed the ways in which we operate and have limited our ability to interact with and serve customers.

Many of our contractors and suppliers have been affected and this has led to delays in many projects and programmes of work. We continue to monitor and respond to the situation. However, it is unlikely that we will return to the 'old normal' and will need to develop new and better ways to deliver housing services.

The new Tenant Involvement Strategy works closely with the Vision 2025 document, the City of Lincoln Council's strategic plan that sets out our long-term vision of:

“Together, let's deliver Lincoln's ambitious future”

It also sets out the council's strategic priorities:

- Let's deliver quality housing
- Let's drive economic growth
- Let's reduce inequality
- Let's enhance our remarkable place
- Let's address the challenge of climate change.

The Tenant Involvement Strategy will help contribute to meeting Vision 2025 by helping to 'deliver quality housing' as well contributing to the other strategic priorities set out above. The next section goes into further detail and expands on these points.

Why do we involve tenants?

Involving tenants and residents is crucial in helping us to deliver outstanding housing services and without their input it would be difficult to provide quality services to tenants that meet their expectations.

The principles of effective involvement are that tenants and residents can:

- Have a choice that matters
- Help to get services right for all
- Hold the council to account for the decisions made
- Empower themselves through learning new skills and gain experience
- Empower communities through involvement.

A new charter introduced by the Government, the Charter for social housing residents (government Social Housing White Paper 2020) sets out what every social housing tenant should expect from their council:

To be safe in your home
To know how your landlord is performing
To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
To be treated with respect
To have your voice heard by your landlord
To have a good quality home and neighbour to live in
Be supported to take a step to ownership

New tenant satisfaction measures to be introduced by the Government

New tenant satisfaction measures are being introduced to assess how well we are performing against the standards. These are:

Theme

Overall

- Tenant satisfaction with overall service

Keeping properties in good repair

- Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). The Decent

- Homes Standard requires homes that are warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities)
- Repairs completed within target timescales
 - Tenant satisfaction with repairs
 - Tenant satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repairs
- Maintaining building safety*
- Gas safety
 - Fire safety
 - Asbestos safety
 - Water safety
 - Lift safety
 - Tenant satisfaction that home is well maintained and safe to live in
- Effective handling of complaints*
- Number of complaints received
 - Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
 - Tenant satisfaction with landlord's approach to handling of complaints
 - Tenant knowledge of how to make a complaint
- Respectful & helpful engagement*
- Tenant satisfaction that the landlord listens to views and acts on them
 - Tenant satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
 - Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly & with respect
- Responsible neighbourhood management*
- Number of Anti-social-behaviour (ASB) cases
 - Tenant satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained
 - Tenant satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
 - Tenant satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of ASB

)

The Existing Regulatory Framework and the White Paper

Under the existing regulatory framework existing and this white paper, we are committed to making this happen

Some of the standards set out in the existing regulatory that relate to involving tenants include:

- Supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them
- Consulting with tenants about services by setting out clearly the costs and benefits of relevant service options and changes to services,
- Consulting tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.
- Tenants should be given the opportunity get involved in:
 - their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities
 - making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
 - scrutinising performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved.

In addition to this, revised consumer standards from the white paper are:

Safety

Landlords' safety responsibilities including safety within the home and in communal areas

Quality

Quality of the home, communal spaces and services to tenants.

Neighbourhood

Landlords' role, working with other agencies to contribute to the wellbeing of neighbourhoods in which tenants live

Transparency

Landlords' role in making information accessible to tenants including roles and responsibilities within landlords, so tenants know who is responsible for matters relating to consumer standards.

Safety

Engagement and accountability

Engagement between landlords and tenants, including how complaints are handled. Landlords' accountability to tenants and treating tenants with fairness and respect.

Tenancy

Requirements on landlords in respect of tenancies, including allocations policies and opportunities for tenants to move

How the Government will ensure we comply with the standards set out above

The Government wants to

- See a transformed consumer regulatory regime which holds landlords to account in maintaining good quality homes and services, prioritising safety, treating tenants respectfully and being transparent with information. In short, our housing service will be inspected.
- Retain the principle of co-regulation, as it ensures that the focus is on driving good outcomes for existing and future tenants
- Introduce new regime for regulating social housing. This will give tenants confidence that their landlord is being properly scrutinised,
- Put safety at the heart of social housing regulation
- Make social landlords more transparent and accountable
- Strengthen the regulator's powers to enforce

Building and Fire Safety

Following the tragic events of the Grenfell fire in 2017, the Government introduced several measures to improve fire and building safety especially in high rise blocks and buildings of multiple occupancy.

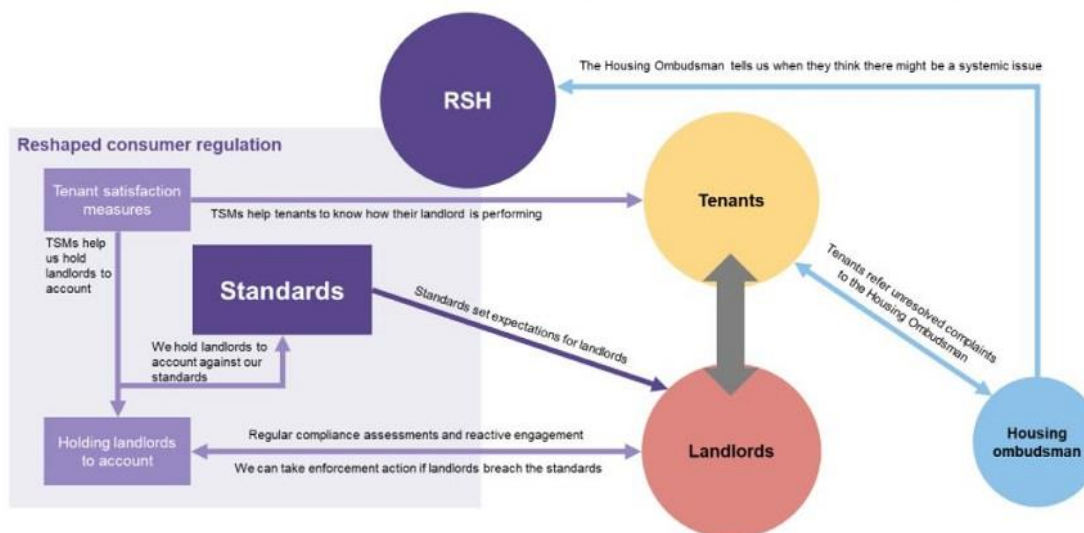
Building and fire safety reforms are currently coming into force alongside the white paper.

These reforms are being developed to help ensure your home is safe and that you feel safe.

A Building Safety Engagement action plan has been developed to look at getting 'buy in' for tenants and leaseholders living in flats by ensuring fire safety management and emergency plans are enacted, we need to find innovative ways of engaging with tenants and leaseholders.

Bringing it all together

This chart shows how the government wants to bring everything together:



What these things mean

Housing Ombudsman

Resolve complaints and disputes between individual residents and landlords

Regulator of Social Housing

Ensures the social housing sector is well run and viable and can deliver homes for residents.

Sets standards for landlords and can act if they are breached.

Building Safety Regulator

Will help ensure residents of all high rise buildings are safe.

Will oversee safety and performance of all buildings.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Puts forward legislation

Directs regulators and ombudsmen

Sets rent rules

Tenant and leaseholder involvement is crucial to implementing the changes and we have set out how we intend to do this over the next 3 years in this strategy in consultation with our Tenants' Panel.

Our Vision for our new strategy is to:

'To provide a range of ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved and using this to co-design of services and improvements.'

Our Objectives:

We have agreed four objectives for our Tenant Involvement Strategy. These are:

- 1. Co-design services with residents**
- 2. Facilitate community engagement**
- 3. Communicate key messages to residents**
- 4. Co-regulate with Lincoln Tenants' Panel**
- 5. Expand the ways residents can get involved.**

By involving tenants and leaseholders in these ways will help us to jointly deliver the top priorities identified.

We have developed an action plan which show we intend to achieve our objectives, which can be found at the end of this document.

We have also consulted with tenants and leaseholders to find out what they see as their top priorities:

Top priorities for Tenants

- Improving services
- Investing more in home and estate improvements
- Building new council houses
- Improving the estate environment

Top Priorities for leaseholders

- Improve communication to ensure leaseholders views are taken into account

These priorities are also reflected in the council's overall vision 2025 to deliver quality housing

- Let's provide housing which meets the varied needs of residents
- Let's improve housing standards for all
- Let's build thriving communities
- Let's help people have a sense of belonging
- Let's ensure our development approach reduces our carbon footprint
- Let's set the Lincoln Standard for sustainable zero carbon development

What have we achieved so far

Our annual report to tenants and Home magazine continues to be published so tenants and leaseholder can keep up to date with our achievements and performance, however publications will more timely and digital generally and no longer be published at set intervals. They detail house building, improvements (Decent Homes and Lincoln Standard of housing), scheduled and responsive repairs, tenancy management including tenancy breaches, anti-social behaviour, rental income and the estate environment, as well as tenant involvement in these activities.

Since we launched our last tenant involvement strategy, despite the coronavirus pandemic, we are proud of what we have achieved to improve our tenant involvement service and the willingness of tenants and leaseholders to participate in this.

Tenants and leaseholders have contributed in many of the ways set out in our menu of involvement (see below). The pandemic has encouraged the use of digital communication, such as Facebook and Zoom, and made it easier for people to get involved.

We have also reached out to people through fun days and roadshows, which has allowed even more people to get involved and find out more about effect of service changes and gain their views on our agreed future plans.

Our menu of involvement

There are many ways in which tenants and leaseholders can become involved and these can be tailored to suit each individual. Our menu of involvement shows some of the options available:

- Lincoln Tenants' Panel, focus groups and forums
- Consultation and satisfaction surveys
- Mystery shopping
- Estate and tenant inspections of services
- Community and resident groups and their representatives/spokes person
- Community projects
- Consultations, events and roadshows
- Home magazine and the Annual Report to tenants, including writing and editing for these
- Following, commenting and messaging us on our social media
Facebook page: City of Lincoln Council – Resident Involvement

Support for tenant and resident involvement

New technology presents exciting opportunities, and we will take full advantage of this.

Training and support are in place to help anyone who wants to get involved from IT skills and support, out of pockets expenses, travel costs, catering to childcare costs. Tenants are encouraged to talk to the resident involvement team about their learning and support needs to enable them to participate in any of our involvement options.

Reward vouchers are also available to our Tenant Panel Members and for other involvement activities.

We are always willing to discuss new ways tenants and leaseholder can get involved as we understand that 'one size' does not fit all. Timing, accessibility and creating an inclusive and co-ordinated strategy allows us to meet the aspirational outcomes together.

In addition, we have a dedicated resident involvement team who will co-ordinate resident involvement across the organisation and provide support for involved tenants.

Recruitment

Successful delivery of the strategy will also require sufficient numbers of tenants being involved. It is therefore critical that efforts are made to retain those already taking part and to recruit new tenants to the groups.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Statement

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Our tenant involvement strategy does not discriminate and aims to involve tenants and leaseholders regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, beliefs, or disability.

Climate Change

The Council is committed to working with tenants and leaseholders to find new solutions to reduce carbon emissions. Our repairs service and investment in our housing can have a significant impact on climate change locally. Reducing carbon emissions is a big challenge for our housing service, now and in the future.

Our Climate change and the need for decarbonisation Strategy sets out our objectives;

- Let's ensure our development approach reduces our carbon footprint
- Let's set the Lincoln standard for sustainable zero carbon development
- Let's make walking, cycling and the use of public transport the best and favourite way to move around Lincoln
- Let's ensure the city's infrastructure is fully adaptable and resilient to the challenges of climate change
- Let's make our existing housing and business premises energy efficient

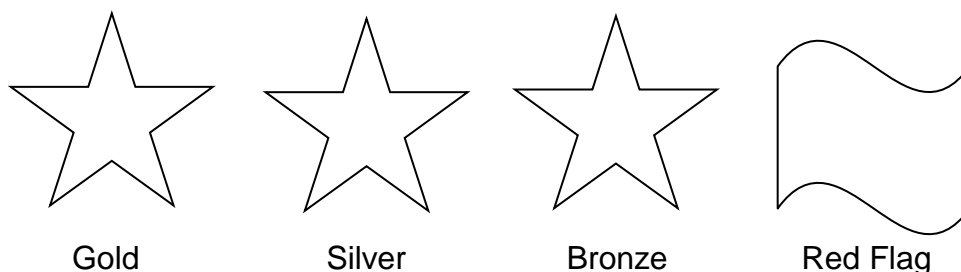
Practical tips and ways to get involved can be found in our Climate Change Commission at (www.lincolnclimate.org.uk)

Delivering and monitoring outcomes of the strategy

The resident involvement team will take the lead in its delivery. Throughout the lifetime of the strategy the resident involvement team will review the strategy with Lincoln Tenants Panel to ensure the objectives are being met and activities are providing value for money.

Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and housing managers will receive updates about progress and have the opportunity to provide input into the strategy.

The Lincoln Tenants' Panel will assess the progress of the strategy using a rating system as follows:




As part of the launch of our strategy Lincoln Tenants Panel have carried out an initial assessment to give us a starting position against which we can monitor outcomes.

Feedback on the strategy

We welcome your views on our resident involvement strategy. You can:

- * ✉ email us at: LTP@lincoln.gov.uk
- * ☎ phone us on 01522 873398

Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022 to 20

- *  visit us at Facebook-search City of Lincoln Council-Resident Involvement.

Appendix A-Action Plan

Objective	Action	Progress	Lincoln Tenants' Panel Assessment
<p>Co-design services with residents</p> <p>Expand the way residents can get involved</p>	<p>Housing Revenue Account Business Plan</p> <p>Involve tenants and leaseholders Housing Revenue Account Business Plan review and delivery plan:</p> <p>Agree on what tenant and leaseholder involvement is needed to successfully deliver any actions</p>		
	<p>Ensure that internal procedures for involving tenants in decision making are fit for purpose, for example that, any decisions taken demonstrate the level of tenant involvement in the process leading to the decision made</p>		
	<p>Continue to resource tenant involvement:</p> <p>Agree the level of tenant involvement and the level of resources that should be available to deliver service changes</p>		

	Review customer feedback and use it to improve services, ensuring a record is kept demonstrating how feedback has been used.		
	Carry out consultation with residents on the estate improvement programme		
	Develop and deliver the building safety engagement strategy and deliver the actions set out within it		
	Develop an on-line training module for tenants and staff to educate the importance and requirement for tenant involvement in service delivery and development.		
Support joint working opportunities for tenants to share best practice with other social landlord tenants and supporting bodies			

Objective	Action	Progress	Lincoln Tenants Panel Assessment
<p>Facilitate community involvement</p>	<p>Neighbourhood and Community groups</p> <p>Promote wider community involvement and:</p> <p>Target hard to reach groups such as leaseholders and young people to get involved in housing services</p>		
	<p>Gain feedback from the neighbourhood boards and community groups to inform service improvement</p>		
	<p>Assist in the delivery of community projects as agreed within the housing service plan</p>		

	Involve tenants and leaseholders from community groups in involvement activities		
	Support tenant representatives to support community groups in their areas	Councillors have agreed to act as a communication channel when surveys are carried out to engage with hard-to-reach groups	

Objective	Action	Progress	Lincoln Tenants Panel Assessment
Communicate key messages and increase digital engagement Expand the ways residents can get involved	Implement a continuous reporting model for performance by increasing the frequency and methods used to publish information		
	Home Publications Publish timely information throughout the year and publish this digitally and in user friendly formats		
	Annual Report		

	Publish timely performance data and the Annual Report to Tenants each year and publish this digitally and in user friendly formats		
	Help volunteers to use platforms, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to give better access to involvement opportunities		
	Creatively and continually develop our menu of involvement		
	Ensure our menu of involvement is inclusive and allows tenants with specific needs to take part and promote equality and diversity throughout the housing service	Councillors have agreed to act as a conduit when surveys are carried out to engage wit hard to reach groups	

Objective	Action	Progress	Lincoln Tenants Panel Assessment
Co-regulate with	Continue to support and develop LTP		
	Agree annual workplan with agreed		

Lincoln Tenants Panel	officer attendance as required		
	Implement the revised constitution		
	Agree and implement a programme of reviews into areas of the service where LTP have concerns about improvements		
	Carry out joint inspections of sample voids properties to check that they are at standard before letting (voids are the current vacant properties).		
	Review complaints to inform service improvements		
	Jointly monitor performance through Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee.		
	Develop an annual planner for involvement activities and training and monitor its delivery		

Appendix B-Risks that threaten delivery of the strategy

There are a number of risks that could potentially threaten full delivery of the strategy. These have been set out in the table below.

Risk	Consequence	Controls in place
Lack of residents involved.	Insufficient numbers involved result in groups not running or operating effectively.	Recruitment plan in place that continually recruits tenants. Quickly address issues that might cause involved tenants to leave.
Members of staff not complying with resident involvement duties/guidelines.	Residents not consulted or involved, leading to complaints and potentially leading to a regulatory breach. This could also lead to a legal challenge.	Staff awareness training to be carried out.
Key involved residents leave e.g. LTP chairperson.	Groups lose leadership and/or coordination and stop running.	Succession plans to be put in place for key groups.
Disagreements between involved residents.	Groups stop running for a period of time or completely collapse.	Adequate terms of references in place. Resident involvement team to provide mediation.
Weak or no terms of reference in place for groups	Groups are not able to run due to a lack of clear processes in place.	Resident involvement team to offer advice to groups on terms of references.
Insufficient budget in place	Lack of a budget would mean groups could not pay for meeting rooms, equipment or training. This could severely restrict their ability to operate.	Resident Involvement team and LTP to monitor the involvement budget.

SUBJECT:	PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 3 – 2021/22
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	YVONNE FOX – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee with a quarter three report on Performance Indicators for the 2021/22 financial year (April 2021 – December 2021). See Appendix A.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report combines all performance relevant to Housing Landlord issues.

2.2 In total there are 21 measures and of these, against agreed targets, 8 are on or exceeding targets for the year (year-end), 12 have not met the normal targets set. Of the 12 measures that did not meet target, 5 of these were within 5% tolerance of their respective targets (Amber rating), 3 of the 5 work towards a year-end target (Decent Homes and 2 Financial measures). One measure does not have a target (Complaints replied to in line with corporate policy).

3. Background

3.1 Over the last twelve years the Council has been working with the Lincoln Tenants Panel to improve external scrutiny and to meet the standards implemented by the Tenant Services Authority.

3.2 From 1 April 2010 all social landlords were required to have local offers in place alongside the national standards as set out in the new Regulatory Framework for Social Housing. The Framework was amended with effect from April 2012, but the principles remain the same.

4. Details

4.1 Appendix A attempts to simplify the overall analysis by listing performance on a service functional basis (rents, repairs etc) and then showing the source of the indicator (reason).

4.2 For comparison purposes each indicator shows performance for the last year, target for current year (where applicable) and progress made in the current year.

4.3 Appendix A shows which targets have been met and those where we have not

achieved our target. Particular areas to highlight are:

% of Rent Collected as a Percentage of Rent Due

The in-year collection rate achieved at the end of Q3 was 100.52%, compared to 98.9% for the same point last financial year. This is a positive improvement in collection, resulting in a decrease in arrears from last year.

Arrears as a % of Rent Debit

Current rent arrears as of the end Q3 are £1,052,680. This is £78,149 less than Q3 for the 2020/21 financial year. Arrears as a % of the debit stands at 3.68% compared to 4% for the comparative quarter last year. Rent collection has continued to be challenging with continued changes to legislation for landlords in place until October 2022. Universal Credit claims have increased by 1,028 claims on last year with an increase of £48,796 of arrears on these cases, taking the total arrears on Universal Credit claims to £666,390. Despite these challenges, the arrears have reduced, and the in-year collection achieved was 100.52%, compared to 98.9% at the same point last year. Tenancy have placed significant emphasis on contact through calls and visits, with new targets in place for staff. Normally Q3 performance is a good indication of where rent collection will be at year end and therefore, this positive out turn at the end of the Quarter would indicate that the Year End performance will be within target.

Complete Repairs Right on First Visit (Priority and Urgent)

Performance is within target; however, we aspire to improve further on this measure by reviewing our imprest stock and increasing the stock in time for our new fleet provision in August 2022. We have also increased the amount of inspections carried out in the planning stage of scheduled repairs to ensure materials are ordered and delivered prior to the delivery stage of scheduled repairs.

- 4.4 The following summary provides a brief explanation of reasons where we are close to achieving our targets (amber rating). Particular areas to highlight are:

% of Homes with Valid Gas Safety Certificate

We continue to encounter a small number of properties each month, which do not allow access for the annual gas service/safety inspection and this number is on the increase. Our robust processes are followed, and these failed access addresses are referred to legal services to seek an injunction from the county court in order to obtain access. A majority of the failed access is due to the tenant's continual failure to respond to correspondence. Therefore, no reason for failed access can be obtained. Occasionally it identifies that properties are not occupied. A vast majority of our tenants provide access when required and therefore I do not believe publicity will help tackle the small number of failed access addresses at this moment in time.

% of Non-Decent Homes

We currently have 82 properties that do not currently meet the decent homes

standard. A majority of these (58) are in programme for a replacement door. A further 22 are recorded as electrical failures, this is due to encountering failed access to undertake the 5 year electrical inspection of the property. 2 properties require a replacement roof. We have a contract with Nationwide windows to provide doors. The contractor has experienced various issues linked to the pandemic, which include access to materials, labour shortages, high demand for products along with IT issues in recent weeks. All of these issues have slowed down the door installation programme. We are monitoring the contractor's performance in delivering our door installation programme and discussing delays with them. The 58 failing doors are contained within the current programme of work.

- 4.5 The following summary provides a brief explanation of reasons where we have not achieved our targets (red rating). Particular areas to highlight are:

Average Re-Let Period – General Needs (Excluding Major Works) – (Days)

The current void turn-around time for general needs voids requiring minor works is 46.4 days against the target of 32 days. Void Repairs Team have experienced increased challenges since their initial contractor went into administration in the summer, leaving significant pressure on the DLO. There is a high, national demand for labour, coupled with covid restrictions and isolation within our workforce meaning that City of Lincoln Council has had difficulty in securing the necessary workforce to turnaround the empty properties to achieve the target of 32 days. There have also been additional pressures on tenants when trying to move, meaning delays throughout the void process. We have experienced delays in ordering kitchens, plastering products and certain timber lines.

The Voids Support Team has seen an increase in the number of terminations through deaths meaning that pre-termination inspections cannot be completed, resulting in more difficulty when planning required works. The data shows that when we can complete a pre-termination our average time for void repairs, cleansing and overall end to end time reduces.

We have now appointed five additional contractors to carry out void works and have allocated additional staff from the DLO. Subsequently, we are seeing an increase in the properties being completed and relet so performance for the remainder of the financial year will likely increase, however, this is due to numerous longer-term voids now being completed. We will not achieve the target of 32 days at Year End but by clearing the backlog of properties, we will move into Quarter 1 of 2022/23 in a more positive position.

Average Re-Let Period – General Needs (Including Major Works) – (Days)

The current void turnaround time for all properties is 57.6 days against the target of 38 days. This has increased by just over 7 days since last financial year. Properties requiring major works have seen increased difficulty with sourcing necessary materials and labour, resulting in an increase in the re-let time.

As with all relets, new tenants have often struggled to move due to isolation, or difficulty sourcing removals in a timely manner resulting in further delays.

With the additional contractors that are now in place and the increase in available materials, the current voids in the system should be completed and the overall voids in the system will reduce, however we won't see the average re-let time reduce until they are cleared.

We've also experienced a deterioration in the standard and condition of the properties being returned back to CoLC. This is a knock-on effect due to the reduction in the repairs carried out during the national lockdowns and the limited amount of inspections carried out on our properties by our officers.

% of Urgent (3 Days) Repairs Carried out Within Time Limits (HRS)

Performance is still below target and not where we aspire to be, this mainly down to the urgent repairs (3 days) tickets. This has prompted further investigation into the reasons why. The conclusions are; materials/ supplier/ limited resources issues are still in play however this is not exclusive to ourselves and benchmarking will confirm this. More to the point the issues we can fix ourselves are to be addressed, this includes resource planners prioritising 1 & 3 day jobs over 100 day tickets that are already in the diaries, any reluctance to follow this guideline, resource planners will escalate to Team Leaders for action.

The introduction of a new Repairs co-ordinator who will reinforce best practice and improve communication between the operatives and the planners. This closer management of the function will result in improved performance and ultimately see this performance improving quickly and see it reach an acceptable level.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Improve the Performance of the Council's Housing Landlord Function

There continues to be a strong commitment to improving the quality and efficiency of the service and this is a key aim in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

Although there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, there are several indicators that do affect the HRA including the amount of rent collected and repairs and improvements. Maintenance and Investment have seen an increase in material and labour costs, struggles with recruiting into vacant positions and an increase in repairs within Voids due to the standard of returned property.

We continually monitor the financial position on the HRA and HRS, with quarterly reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

6.2 Legal Implications Including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

Due to the nature of this report, there are no equality, diversity and human rights impacts to be assessed however their impact will be considered as part of the service delivery at all times.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 There is a risk as identified, to the maximisation of our income to the HRA from rents collected.
- 7.2 There is a risk that households are required to stay in TA longer than we would want them to due to the slow turnover of void properties.
- 7.3 There is a risk that the cost of repairs will increase due to local and national demands on workforce and raw materials

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 Members are asked to note and comment on:
1. The current performance outcomes during the financial year 2021/22;
 2. A commitment to continue reporting on a quarterly basis and to determine a programme to have more interim in depth reviews of service specific performance.

Is this a key decision? Yes/No

Do the exempt information categories apply? Yes/No

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

How many appendices does the report contain? 1

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Gareth Griffiths, Housing Quality and Performance Officer
Telephone (01522) 873448

LANDLORD SERVICES – PERFORMANCE 2021/22

APPENDIX A

Figures in brackets are the standalone quarterly figure.

PI	Description	Actual 20/21	Target 2021/22	21/22 Q1	21/22 Q2	21/22 Q3	21/22 Q4	Status (R,A,G) *Blue = No target
Rents								
125B	% of rent collected as a percentage of rent due	100.05%	96.5%	99.31%	97.61% (95.91%)	100.52% (107.40%)		
126	Arrears as a % of rent debit	3.74%	4.65%	4.20%	4.88%	3.68%		
Voids								
69	% of rent lost due to vacant dwellings	1.12%	0.90%	1.28%	1.37% (1.46%)	1.44% (1.65%)		
58	Average re-let period – General needs (excluding major works) – (days)	42.8 days	32 days	39.1 days	44.6 days (51.0)	46.4 days (49.6)		
61	Average re-let period – General needs (including major works) – (days)	50.2 days	38 days	48.1 days	53.7 days (62.2)	57.6 days (65.4)		
Allocations								
85A	% of offers accepted first time	83.33%	85%	75.42%	77.04% (79.49%)	79.94% (84.96%)		
Repairs (Housing Repairs Service)								
29A	% of all priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day)	100%	99.5%	99.15%	99.37% (99.62%)	99.22% (98.87%)		
32	% of urgent repairs carried out within time limits (3 days)	N/A	97.5%	86.18%	86.48% (86.81%)	88.27% (91.06%)		
33	Average time taken to complete urgent Repairs (3 days)	N/A	3 days	2.66 days	2.58 days (2.49)	2.54 days (2.50)		
34	Complete repairs right on first visit (priority and urgent)	92.00%	90%	92.48%	91.95% (91.32%)	92.91% (93.44%)		
37	Repair appointments kept against appointments made (%) (priority and urgent)	99.89%	95%	99.07%	99.40% (99.75%)	99.30% (99.12%)		
Repairs (Aaron Services)								
29B	% of all priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day)	99.64%	99.5%	100.00%	99.73% (99.38%)	99.86% (100%)		
Decent Homes								
50	% of non-decent homes	0.84%	0% (year-end target)	2.10%	1.50%	1.06%		
48	% of homes with valid gas safety certificate	96.28%	99.96%	99.46%	99.26%	99.14%		

PI	Description	Actual 20/21	Target 2021/22	21/22 Q1	21/22 Q2	21/22 Q3	21/22 Q4	Status (R,A,G) *Blue = No target
					(99.13%)	98.87%)		
Complaints								
22	% of complaints replied to within target time	70.8%	95%	68.42%	64.93% (62.34%)	67.12% (69.41%)		
	% of complaints replied to in line with Corporate policy	100%	-	98.18%	99.26% (100%)	99.55% (100%)		
ASB								
89	% of ASB cases closed that were resolved	97.81%	94%	98.51%	98.54% (98.57%)	98.62% (98.75%)		
90	Average days to resolve ASB cases	51.2 days	70 days	54.6 days	49.1 days (43.8)	49.2 days (49.3)		
Other								
	Expenditure against target set for year – responsive maintenance	67%	100% (year-end target)	3.6%	18.7%	42.97%		
	Expenditure against target set for year – capital programme	83.17%	100% (year-end target)	5.1%	7.8%	45.83%		
Customer Contact								
	% of calls answered within 90 seconds	61.39%	80%	22.15%	18.2% (14.3%)	20.82% (26.37%)		

SUBJECT:	TARGET SETTING 2022/23
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	YVONNE FOX, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOUSING MANAGEMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the proposed performance indicator targets normally reported to Scrutiny for 2022/23.
- 1.2 To agree the targets, consider how performance information can be monitored and reported throughout the year.

2 Background

- 2.1 Performance information is reported to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on a quarterly basis. Targets are reviewed on an annual basis with both tenants and the Committee at the March committee meeting.
- 2.2 Throughout Covid-19, normal management information has been collated as well as performance against targets. Management information has been provided wherever practically possible and members are aware of reasons for any changes to service and performance during this challenging period.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 Throughout 2021/22 there have been delays in repairing and allocating empty properties due to the pandemic and Government instructions on non-essential moves and holding empty properties for homeless households. Therefore, we are currently reviewing the voids performance and procedures and considering these measures against external restrictions on performance. We are now seeing an increase in the properties being completed and relet so performance for the remainder of the current financial year will likely increase however this is due to numerous longer-term voids now being completed. This will put us in a better position as we move into quarter one 2022/23.
- 3.2 We continue to encounter a small number of properties each month, which do not allow access for the annual gas service/safety inspection and this number is on the increase. Our robust processes are followed, and these failed access addresses are referred to legal services to seek an injunction from the county court in order to obtain access.
- 3.3 Rent collection has continued to be challenging with continued changes to legislation for landlords in place until October 2022. Universal Credit claims have

increased by 1,028 claims on last year. Tenancy have placed significant emphasis on contact through calls and visits, with new targets in place for staff

- 3.4 We have proposed realistic targets for 2022/23 based on current performance, national guidance, and benchmarking with similar authorities. These targets are attached at Appendix 1. To summarise, we are proposing introducing a lower target for rent loss due to non-payment of rent in order to maximise income and amending the non-decent target to reflect that due to the number of properties managed it is not possible to achieve a zero return. All other targets remain the same

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 To note and approve the proposed performance targets for 2022/23.

Is this a key decision? Yes/No

Do the exempt information categories apply? Yes/No

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

How many appendices does the report contain? 1

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Yvonne Fox
Assistant Director – Housing Management

LANDLORD SERVICES – DRAFT PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2022/23 (HSSC)

APPENDIX A

PI	Description	Actual 20/21	Target 2021/22	21/22 Q1	21/22 Q2	21/22 Q3	Draft 22/23 Target	Comments
Rents								
125B	% of rent collected as a percentage of rent due	100.05%	96.5%	99.31%	97.61%	100.52%	96.5%	Keep target the same
126	Arrears as a % of rent debit	3.74%	4.65%	4.20%	4.88%	3.68%	4.45%	Decrease arrears % from 4.65% to 4.45%
Voids								
69	% of rent lost due to vacant dwellings	1.12%	0.90%	1.28%	1.37%	1.44%	1.00%	Increase from 0.90% to 1.00%. This target never increased when we increased the other void measures to start 2021/22, so to ensure consistencies across all void measure we recommend increasing the void loss target to 1% which is more in line with the re-let target of 38 days
58	Average re-let period – General needs (excluding major works) – (days)	42.8 days	32 days	39.1 days	44.6 days	46.4 days	32 days	Keep target the same
60	Average re-let period – General needs (major works only) – (days)	57.0 days	45 days	57.7 days	66.1 days	74.7 days	45 days	Keep target the same
61	Average re-let period – All dwellings (including major works) – (days)	50.2 days	38 days	48.1 days	53.7 days	57.6 days	38 days	Keep target the same
Allocations								
85A	% of offers accepted first time	83.33%	85%	75.42%	77.04%	79.94%	85%	Keep target the same
Repairs (Housing Repairs Service only)								
29A	% of Priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day tickets) – HRS only	100%	99.5%	99.15%	99.37%	99.22%	99.5%	Keep target the same
32	% of urgent repairs carried out within time limits (3 day tickets)	N/A	97.5%	86.18%	86.48%	88.27%	97.5%	Keep target the same
33	Average time taken to complete urgent Repairs (3 day tickets)	N/A	5 days	2.66 days	2.58 days	2.5 days	3 days (working)	Change to 3 working days as per the ticket priority.
34	Complete repairs right on first visit. (Priority / Urgent	92.00%	90%	92.48%	91.95%	92.91%	92%	Change from 90% to 92%

55

PI	Description	Actual 20/21	Target 2021/22	21/22 Q1	21/22 Q2	21/22 Q3	Draft 22/23 Target	Comments
	tickets)							
37	Repair appointments kept against appointments made (%) (Priority / Urgent tickets)	99.89%	95%	99.07%	99.40%	99.30%	97%	Change from 95% to 97%
29B	% of Priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day tickets) – Aaron Services only)	99.64%	99.5%	99.29%	98.89%	99.86%	99.5%	Keep target the same
Decent Homes								
50	% of non-decent homes	0.84%	0% (year-end target)	2.10%	1.50%	1.06%	1%	Increase from 0% to 1%. CoLC has never achieved the 0% target so we recommend changing the target to 1% which would allow for some properties in our stock to end the year non-decent which is always the case. Currently doors and electrics are the main factors contributing towards our non-decency.
48	% of homes with valid gas safety certificate	96.28%	99.96%	99.46%	99.26%	99.16% (to Nov)	99.96%	Keep target the same
Complaints								
22	% of complaints replied to within Housing Code timescales	70.8%	95%	68.42%	64.93%	67.12%	95%	Keep target the same
23	Average number of working days to respond to complaint	11 days	10 days	9.5 days	14 days	12 days	12 days	L1 target – 10 days L2 target – 20 days Overall target – 12 days (based on 90% complaints being L1)
ASB								
89	% of ASB cases closed that were resolved	97.81%	94%	98.51%	98.54%	98.62%	94%	Keep target the same
90	Average days to resolve ASB cases	51.2 days	70 days	54.6 days	49.1 days	49.16 days	70 days	Keep target the same

SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE - LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022/23
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
LEAD OFFICER:	ALI HEWSON, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise members that a draft work programme for 2022/23 will shortly be circulated to officers for comments and will be forwarded to the Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln Tenant’s Panel in due course for individual input/comments ready for use as a working document at the first meeting of the new Municipal Year.
- 1.2 To note this is the last meeting of the current Municipal Year 2021/22.

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme for 2022/23 will be available at the start of the new Municipal Year to keep members aware of the forthcoming business at future meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee. The work programme will be regularly updated in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee and Chair/Vice 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 note that the work programme for 2022/23 will shortly circulated to officers for comments and will be forwarded to the Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln Tenant’s Panel in due course for individual input/comments ready for use as a working document at the first meeting of the new Municipal Year.
- 3.2 That the final copy of the current work programme attached at Appendix A to this report be noted.

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

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

Updated 21 Oct 2021
9 August 2021

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

Updated 21 Oct 2021
1 November 2021

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	Lincoln Tenants Panel	Regular Verbal Update
Quarter 2 (2020/21) – Performance and Finance Report	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
Review of Mutual Exchange Policy	Yvonne Fox	Requested by Chair/LTP Chair
Numbers of Properties Offered to People on Council Waiting List/Others	Yvonne Fox	Last Two Quarters 2020/21 now then Regular Quarterly Report Required e mail 30.07.21
Work Programme 2021/22	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

Updated 21 Oct 2021
24 January 2022

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
LTP Matters	Lincoln Tenants Panel	Regular Verbal Update
Homelessness and RS Update (Inc properties offered to people who are homeless Q3)	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report
LTP Review Update Report	Mick Barber Chair of LTP	Annual Report
Schedule Repairs Project Update	Matt Hillman	
City of Lincoln Resident Engagement Draft Strategy 2021	Paula Cade	Requested by Chair
9 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
Update on Communal Areas -Sheltered Housing Scheme	Yvonne Fox	Requested at meeting 9 August 2021
Work Programme 2021/22	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

Updated 21 Oct 2021

10 March 2022

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Tenancy Sustainment Project Update	Keeley Johnson	12 Oct 2020 Meeting Min 86 Update
Quarter 3 (2020/21) – Performance Report	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report Quarterly
LTP Review of Constitution -DEFERRED	Paula Cade/Andrew Mc Neil	Review Update
Tenant Involvement Strategy	Paula Cade/Andrew Mc Neil	Review
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:

Results of Pilot Repair Scheme Matt Hillman Results Due March 2021 E mail in folder 1 Nov from MH

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