

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1 February 2024
6.00 pm
**Committee Rooms 1 and 2,
City Hall, Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln, LN1 1DD**

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| Membership: | Councillors Gary Hewson (Chair), Pat Vaughan (Vice-Chair), Alan Briggs, Liz Bushell, Mark Storer and Loraine Woolley |
| Substitute member(s): | Councillors Adrianna McNulty and Emily Wood |
| Lincoln Tenants Panel member(s): | Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Caroline Coyle-Fox (Vice Chair of LTP), Mike Asher (Member of LTP), Sean Newton (Member of LTP) and Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP) |
| Officers attending: | Paula Burton, Democratic Services, Matthew Hillman, Michelle Hoyles, Amy Larder, Alison Timmins, Daren Turner and Marianne Upton |

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| 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 Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Alan Briggs, Mark Storer, Pat Vaughan and Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Liz Bushell and Mike Asher

Also in Attendance: Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Caroline Coyle-Fox (Vice Chair of LTP), Sean Newton (Member of LTP) and Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP)

27. Confirmation of Minutes - 10 August 2023

RESOLVED that:

1. the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2023 be confirmed as a true record.
2. answers from Members' questions, raised on 10 August 2023 would be circulated to Members further to the meeting.

28. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

29. Lincoln Tenant's Panel Project Update

Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP), provided a written report on the panel's continued work on a variety of projects with tenancy services, fire safety assurance, maintenance, business management and resident involvement teams. The briefing note, designed as a regular update to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, covered the following areas:

- LTP continued to hold quarterly meetings with the Voids Team Leader to review void inspections and targets. The number of voids inspections had increased and all had surpassed standards. The completion of forms had moved to a digital format to enable the Voids Team Leader access information immediately. Further discussions would be held with the Voids Team Leader to establish how multiple void inspections could be conducted with limited disruption to the team.
- The Complaints Review Group continued to hold quarterly meetings. The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Working group had recently reviewed and implemented recommendations. The City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) had been awarded the ASB accreditation.
- The Schedule of Repairs (SOR) Working Group had received positive information relating to performance with repair timescales. A detailed action plan to enhance and increase the SOR programme on Facebook had been rolled out. LTP had reviewed the kitchen and bathroom work programme, attended the final 30-year business plan and estate regeneration workshops. LTP worked with the Resident Involvement Manager to help in the creation of a set of questions to form part of the

tenant wide consultation delivered in August and reviewed responses/feedback.

- The Investment Working Group had reviewed the communal door replacement programme and were in the process of creating a satisfaction survey.
- LTP attended virtual training courses on the impact of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, consumer standards and joined a virtual Council tenants forum.
- LTP continued to represent CoLC at Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) and Social Housing Quality Resident Panel.

Members discussed the content of the report, commented, asked questions and received relevant responses as follows:

Question: Could an update on the issue of Green Verges be provided?

Response: It was a difficult time of year as the weather resulted in mud being churned up. It was hoped that when the issue moved over to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, there would be improvement in the area. Modern houses often contained between 3-5 cars and the lack of availability of space was a continued difficulty. Work on the issue was ongoing.

Comment: The issue affected everyone and did not always affect only council housing tenants.

Response: There had been areas cordoned off to prevent vehicular access and there had been an increase in signage.

Comment: Prior to the commencement of development in the area, a trial had been conducted in Hermit Street. There had been work with parking enforcement and additional signage had been installed. In addition, enforcement was pursued for individuals that did not comply. The approach made a considerable difference however consideration to the ownership of land was important. Further to consultation with tenants, the issue of parking was considered a key concern.

Comment: The result of the consultation has not been viewed by Members

Response: The consultation paper was shown at a workshop however the results were not received until final drafting of the report. Policy colleagues were in the process of producing a report to collate the outcome of the review which could be presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HSSC) in the future, if requested.

Comment: The full detail of the consultation provided would not be contained within the 30-year plan, given the depth of the review. However, the overarching principles would be included. The concept of improvement of the estate areas included parking and vehicular access and were included in the plan.

Comment: LTP had viewed the results and the information could be distributed to Members.

Question: Further to the success of the additional signage, where had vehicles that had previously parked on grass verges, now moved to?

Response: It was difficult to have accurate knowledge of where vehicles had moved to however a number could be attributed to commuters that travelled in for work.

Comment: The cost of a dropped curb installation was high.

Comment: Local estate areas were built many years ago and at the time of build, the provision for cars was not as it has become in recent years. The issue was an inherent problem and a solution was needed.

Comment: The 30-year business plan was a revolving document.

Comment: Over 70% of the properties in the Hartsholme area were privately owned and therefore, enforcement was a difficult issue. Many residents complained that cars were parked incorrectly however a great number of tenants reported that there weren't enough car parking spaces.

RESOLVED that the content of the written update from the Chair of LTP be noted with thanks, to be continued as a regular agenda item.

30. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024/54

Daren Turner, Strategic Director of Housing and Investment:

- a) presented Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HSSC) with a report which detailed the long-term Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for 2024/54 which could be seen at Appendix A to the report
- b) added that HRA Business Plan built on the previous five-year plan, demonstrated the current situation and outlined the aims and objective for the 30 years from April 2024. In addition, the HRA Business Plan included financial assumptions and projections during the lifespan of the plan
- c) confirmed that the Council had a legal duty to ensure the account remained solvent and would review financials on a yearly basis
- d) reported that the Business Plan focussed on 4 key objectives:
 - a. Develop and Improve Core Housing Services
 - b. Delivering New Homes
 - c. Estate and Neighbourhood Regeneration
 - d. Addressing Climate Change
- e) added that extensive consultation had taken place in collaboration with LTP, Tenants and also included five Member workshops. A shorter synopsis of the Business Plan was expected to be made available to all Members.
- f) offered thanks to Members of LTP for their involvement and for the attendance to workshops of all elected Members
- g) invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee.

Members discussed the content of the report, commented, asked questions and received relevant responses from Officers as follows:

Comment from Mick Barber, Chair of LTP: The hard work of the officers involved in the creation of the plan and the commitment of LTP was valued.

Comment from Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing: The dedication of officers for the vast amount of work that had been undertaken was recognised and appreciated. The document would be reviewed and amended over time as the situation would look very different in 30 years' time.

Question: Had the consultants work now been completed?

Response: The contract for the consultants was not for one specific part of the plan only. There would be a presentation by the consultants in the future.

Question: How many times throughout the year would consideration be given to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)? Should HSSC decide how many times the HRA was reviewed per year?

Response: The financial performance of the HRA had not historically appeared as a regular agenda item for consideration by HSSC. Instead, it had been presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee. Review of the financials was conducted within the department on a quarterly basis.

Comment: It may prove beneficial for a financial update to be presented to HSSC on a bi-annual basis for scrutiny.

Response: It would be a matter for the Chief Finance Officer to present financial information and discussions with finance colleagues would take place further to the meeting. Democratic Services had already commenced enquiries for bi-annual presentation of financial information, prior to the meeting.

Question: Where did the money to support emergency accommodation in hotels come from? The General Fund Account or the Housing Revenue Account?

Response: The General Fund Account. The long-term aim was to secure individuals into our housing stock and to have long term secure accommodation. Once under tenancy services, individuals would still be provided with support to ensure that the tenancy was sustainable.

Question: Why had there been an option appraisal for only two of the three high-rise blocks?

Response: Shuttleworth House had benefitted from significant investment approximately 4-5 years ago and was in good condition. Shuttleworth House also benefitted from two stairwells at both the front and the back of the block. Therefore, it was very well equipped in respect of fire safety. The other two high-rise blocks only had one stairwell each.

Question: Had consideration been given to the improvement of energy efficiency for properties with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band D or lower?

Response: We were committed to achieving an EPC Band C or above for all properties over the lifespan of the plan. Achievement was difficult for a range of reasons. Successfully gaining physical access to some properties was difficult and some tenants that had resided in their home for a number of years, opposed

modernisation of the property. Residents that allowed entry were considered within the plan and the total number of properties affected was now in single figures.

Comment: Changes contained within the Government's new Housing Bill which received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023, were required to be in place by 1 April 2024. Any organisation with over 1000 homes would be inspected once every four years to review compliance with the consumer standards. Social landlords would be required to collect and publish a range of 22 satisfaction measures and the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) had a contract in place to provide that, as an external method to provide baselines and dashboards. The CoLC's performance as a landlord would be accessible by any person and provided a transparent view to the public and potential tenants.

Question: The Act contained a charter that laid out seven commitments that residents should expect from their landlord. Further to the tragic death in Boultham Ward, how were we going to ensure people were safe in their home?

Response: Incidents of that nature were handled on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the nature of the incident. On some occasions, not always a serious case review was instigated and all public bodies involved in said case would be required to take part in a review of the response. If that occurred, reports would be published at a set time dependent on the nature of the enquiry which could take many months or years to complete.

Question: Was it possible to view the results of investigations, given the Council's role as landlord?

Response: It was not possible to comment on the processes of the Police, judiciary, and mental health services in connection with the tragic incident in Boultham Ward. Further to the incident, CoLC conducted an internal review of its own processes. A wider review had been commissioned, to be led by the Business Manager – Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board. Reports would always be considered, and messages fed back. The decision to publicise records was not a CoLC decision.

Comment: Two senior officers conducted the internal review. Neither officer nor their department were involved in the case.

Comment: The Charter had proposed criteria for how inspection of registered providers would be implemented, but it had not been agreed. Agreement was likely to be after Christmas. The information from the consultation could still be viewed even though it was closed. The CoLC had considered the proposals as a guide to our current performance.

Comment: Transparency was important and the only way to assess the impact of policies was to have sight of them.

Response: Consideration had been given to internal mechanisms only. Any change to policy would require presentation to the Policy Scrutiny Committee to be scrutinised by elected members prior to approval of Executive. The review of the Boultham Ward incident concluded that the CoLC could not have done more.

Comment: It was important to understand what the regulator meant in regard to being safe in your home. When we talked about being safe in your home, we

considered health and safety risks, property condition and damp and mould. Anti-Social Behaviour was a strand of safety however that element of the Charter regarded the structure and property condition.

Question: There was to be a review in 'early 2024'. Had a date been received?

Response: The guidance from Government was expected imminently and it would be presented to HSSC once received.

Question: Would the 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures be scrutinised?

Response: The Tenant Satisfaction Measures were standardised and it was not possible to shape the questions asked as the measures had been nationally agreed. The results would be publicly accessible.

Question: There would be a requirement for individuals at Scampton who passed refugee status to be housed. Did the Business Plan consider the long-term provision of housing?

Response: It was not possible to estimate the impact. As of the latest correspondence, the Home Office stated that the decision for those individuals to stay or not stay would not be made locally. The total number of 2000 would not have a decision made locally in West Lindsey. Individuals would be unable to use local connection to gain duty. Once given their decision, individuals would be transported to wherever in the Country they chose through a national dispersal arrangement according to the Home Office. We had a duty to provide housing to those that chose Lincoln.

Comment from Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing: A number of individuals may request to go to cities, especially single people.

Comment: In terms of the 30-year Business Plan, the CoLC had to consider homelessness and temporary accommodation but it was for the General Fund Account, not the Housing Revenue Account to pick up the related costs. Under homelessness legislation, CoLC had a duty to assist an individual to find housing. It did not have to be from our own Council stock.

Comment: The provision of 1700 additional homes was in order to address the losses from Right to Buy. The Council had looked to be ambitious to close the gap created by the need in Band 1 of the housing register.

Comment: The Government added on white paper, the Right to Buy was to be encouraged which was a cause for concern in respect of housing provision.

Question: Under Welfare Reform, the Business Plan stated the rental profile of tenants. What percentage were under discretionary housing?

Response: As of 31 July 2023, 56 family homes that are currently under occupying were in receipt of discretionary housing payment. The number of council tenants in receipt of DHP was twice as high 18 months ago.

Question: Further to the Covid-19 pandemic, 'it is now much more difficult to recruit or retain staff...' Was this in relation to housing officers?

Response: The recruitment and retention of staff remained a challenge across all departments of the Council and across different employment sectors. The Council had not seen a large movement of construction workers from private sector

companies into the Council. That position may change as the effects of soaring inflation were felt. Consideration had been given to different forms of more regular recruitment exercises.

Question: There appeared to be a lack of trades staff specific for a job. Were trades staff employed as specific staff or multipurpose staff?

Response: There was a specific skill set however staff were also offered opportunities to enjoy a multiskilled role. Such roles enabled resources to be deployed more effectively. The availability of specific skill sets was a traditional approach and given the nature of modern education and training, prospective employees did not present in that way. The standard of workmanship had not been adversely affected.

Question: How did the Council intend to approach Lincoln's ageing population and encourage people to downsize in the future?

Response: Consideration was given to socioeconomic factors prior to development works commencing in order to identify the future housing needs for the city. Developments offered a range of property sizes and composition.

Comment from Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing: Rookery Lane offered a wide range of properties which ranged from bungalows and flats to 4 bed properties.

Comment: Consideration was given to the internals of properties prior to build, to identify what design features were needed for now and in the future to provide homes that adapted along with the resident's needs. Some of the housing stock was ageing, not suitable for modern day living and needed to be rectified.

Question: What was the terminology used for rent payments?

Response: Local Housing Allowance.

Question: How many of the housing stock properties were above the Local Housing Allowance?

Response: Individuals who used their benefits to pay their rent would be able to access properties at Rookery Lane. It was important to have a variety of properties and to bridge the gap between social housing rent and private sector rent.

Question: Had the consultant's report considered this area?

Response: There were four areas of work which included a review of two of the high-rise blocks, a review of sheltered accommodation and estate regeneration and how they could be improved. Other pieces of work were mentioned in the documents and were reflected. There was a detailed financial model that we had committed to use which was specifically designed to manage the HRA and the 30-year plan.

Question: Referred to Table 1 on page 15 of the HRA Business Plan 2024/54. Under Band 1, March 2023, there were a total of 344 applicants on the housing register. What help was given to private renters? Did support come from the HRA?

Response: No. Support came from Homelessness Prevention under the General Fund.

Question: The HRA Business Plan detailed a variety of approaches to increase housing stock which included a review of existing assets. Could there be a review of empty garages that produced no rent and a breakdown, per ward of occupied and lost revenue per ward? It was important that the HRA generated as much revenue as possible.

Response: The use and management of garages had not been the focus for a number of years. Moving forward, we needed to consider them in a different way. Discussions had taken place with the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing, to consider differential pricing strategies and use of the sites. It was important to recognise non-tenants who parked in garages. It was often the case that it was more cost effective for those individuals to rent a garage than park in Council car parks and pay the appropriate fee. The continuation of illegal access to properties via our garage sites was also an issue. There was currently approximately 60% occupied and 40% unoccupied.

Comment from Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing: Consideration had been given to a varied charge for the use of garages, e.g. storing items inside would incur a higher fee and a non-Lincoln resident would incur higher charge.

Question: If there was rear access gained to a property, should the Council be paid?

Response: Yes.

Comment: When assets had not generated an income, it was important to consider what to do with them.

Comment: There had been fantastic levelling off work carried out in the Sincil Bank area, an excellent example of future proofing. In addition, great work had been carried out on Walnut Place and the Ermine which needed to be rolled out across the City. Many Council garages had been used to store items in which was not allowed.

Question: What would happen to the green space at Queen Elizabeth in the West?

Response: This had been factored in under the Local Plan. It would be developed upon.

Question: Bollards had been installed on the garage sites at Walnut Place. Was it possible to negotiate with tenants, that bollards would not be installed in front of gardens if the appropriate fee was paid?

Response: It was not possible to comment on illegal access to properties through Council land. The possession of an appropriate licence would make access, lawful behaviour.

RESOLVED that:

1. Additional information be provided by Officers in relation to:

- Confirmation of a bi-annual presentation of the Housing Revenue Account financial information to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The

Democratic Services Officer be tasked with the addition of the item to the Work Programme

- A figure, in monetary terms relating to lost revenue in respect of garages.

2. The HRA Business Plan 2024/54 be proceeded to Executive for formal approval.

31. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2023/24

Michelle Hoyles, Business Manager, Corporate Policy:

- a) presented Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee with a verbal summary on performance indicators for the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI) for Quarter 2 of 2023/24 (July – September)
- b) added that regular monitoring of the Council's performance was a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework and supported its ongoing commitment to continuous improvement of Council services
- c) confirmed that there was a total of twenty-one performance indicators monitored by DHI. An overview of performance for the second quarter of 2023/24, against such indicators, was attached at Appendix A to the report.
- d) reported that of the 21 measures in total; eight had met or exceeded their agreed target, five had performed close to target and seven had performed below target. Three of the measures found to be performing close to target were 'year-end' measures and included two measures that cumulatively recorded expenditure in maintenance and capital works
- e) added the third and final year-end measure related to the proportion of homes not at 'decent homes standard'. Performance against this measure, whilst formally recorded at year end, had notable improvement since Quarter 1 and therefore had moved closer to target
- f) referred to Appendix A of the report which attempted 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)
- g) confirmed that further, detailed information on the areas highlighted was provided within the report
- h) invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee.

Members discussed the content of the report, commented, asked questions and received relevant responses from Officers as follows:

Question: Was there a figure available for response in maintenance?

Response: A total of £2.2M had been spent, 28.75% of the budget.

Question: Referred to Appendix A of the report. The figure of closed Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases had been listed within the appendix however the total number of opened cases was not present. It would be helpful to know how many cases were opened as a comparative tool.

Response: The number of closed ASB cases was 138. It would be difficult to expand on the data further, as the figures were compiled on a quarterly basis. Therefore, it may be the case that an ASB case was opened in one quarter and closed in another.

Question: Did the new system pick up online repairs? Concerns had been raised by Customer Services that online repair requests had not been actioned.

Response: It was not necessary to speak to Customer Services to report a repair using the online system. The online repair tool had worked well and repairs had been received through the system. Regular dialogue took place between Customer Service staff and resource planners at Hamilton House.

Comment: Members of LTP had worked with Officers regarding voids and things had progressed a long way.

Note: Councillor Alan Briggs wished his thanks be noted, on record, to Amy Larder, Interim Maintenance Manager for the improved planning at Hamilton House and her continued expertise.

Comment: When consideration was given to figures for Quarter 2, the arrears increase in monetary terms was £53,000 less than the same time last year. It was common in Quarter 2 for this target not to be met. During the two-week rent-free period in December, the target would shift to green and should remain in green for Quarter 3. It was common for the time of year.

Question: The achieved number for ASB cases was 42 days. Why had the ASB target remained on 70 days?

Response: It was important not to rush the closure of an ASB case as it could prove detrimental to the case.

Comment: Some ASB cases needed sound equipment etc and therefore could take longer than the 70 days to close.

Comment: Targets were considered in consultation with LTP and the Portfolio Holder, however targets were agreed by the Members of the HSSC.

Comment from Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing: Some cases proceeded further than 46 days and therefore, the figure was an average.

Comment: Should the target be reduced to a very short amount of time; the onus would then be placed on officers. Therefore, a case may not be dealt with as effectively as it may have been with a longer time frame given. Consequently, it could result in a large number of ASB cases regarding one resident.

RESOLVED that the current performance outcomes during Quarter 2 of the financial year 2023/24 to date, be noted.

32. **Downsizing Policy Update (To Follow)**

Paula Burton, Housing Strategy & Investment Manager:

- a) presented Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HSSC) with a verbal summary on the details of a Downsizing Incentive Scheme (DIS) for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to review, prior to the introduction of a six month pilot.
- b) added that the option of a DIS was first discussed with HSSC in February 2023.
- c) confirmed that the scheme aimed to incentivise tenants to move to smaller accommodation more suited to the need and provide access to family housing for those registered on Lincs Homefinder.
- d) reported that the City of Lincoln Council had a statutory duty to assess and help those who qualified for housing assistance and demand continued to increase. The number of people registered for Lincs Homefinder for housing assistance for the past three years could be seen at paragraph 2.2 of the report.
- e) added that as of October 2023, over 500 secure tenants were deemed to be under occupying CoLC homes. The Council had collected household profile data and the figure was expected to increase.
- f) referred to Appendix A of the report which offered detailed information on the Downsizing Incentive Policy. This included eligibility for the scheme, policy statement, decision making and appeal process, relevant legislation, regulation or standards and the monitoring and evaluation of the downsizing scheme.
- g) requested HSSC review the DIS policy prior to the commencement of the six-month pilot. Following the six-month pilot, Post Implementation Review would be presented to HSSC to establish if the scheme had been a success and the next steps
- h) invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee.

Members discussed the content of the report, commented, asked questions and received relevant responses from Officers as follows:

Comment: Thanks offered to Paula Burton for an informative and well written report.

Comment: If a property was occupied by four tenants and the property was received back, the data may present as we had removed an individual from the waiting list four times. The policy seemed to give consideration to the number of bedrooms.

Response: The report confirmed at paragraph 4.3 that the benefits to the scheme included the reduction of the number of tenants under-occupying and subject to the 14% (one extra bedroom) or 25% (two or more extra bedrooms)

under occupancy charge. It was not concerning 4 individuals but was about one larger property potentially resulting in a number of lettings to fill that property (the other properties that are transferring into the larger one and cascading down).

Comment: The incentive was very positive. In real terms, on a three-bed property, the downsizing incentive worked out to be approximately £4300. In addition, an applicant may receive further assistance with downsizing. It was noted that many people did not wish to downsize however the incentive was considerable. It was hoped that the scheme would encourage people to move and free up family homes.

Question: Would prospective eligible tenants be approached or would the pilot be advertised?

Response: A communications strategy would be rolled out in collaboration with Communications colleagues. This was planned to be arranged in December 2023 and go live in January 2024.

Comment: Many tenants in larger homes were elderly and therefore, may not use the internet.

Response: The Council were aware of those who were under occupying and contact with those individuals would be made. The Council would approach those in receipt of discretionary housing payments (bedroom tax).

Comment: Compared to other Council's, the scheme was a very good one. Could HSSC receive an update in the next Quarter of the findings and progress of the scheme?

Response: Yes – an update would be brought to HSSC in the next Quarter.

Comment: Evidence showed around the Country, schemes such as the DIS needed considerable funding to get them off of the ground. Success was expected in small steps.

Comment: The DIS is a welcomed scheme that had been long awaited. With the data available, encouragement derived from connection. It was important to talk to individuals on ground level.

Comment from Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing: It was important to recognise that individuals would use the scheme in a voluntary way. It was a big step for individuals to move home, especially those that downsized from a four-bedroom home to a one- or two-bedroom home.

Comment: Tenants were entitled to their lifetime tenancy and that would be respected.

Question: What would happen to the discretionary housing payment if a move was offered but declined?

Response: It would be considered during the yearly review of the DHP.

Comment: Gave thanks for an excellent report. Was there any data to analyse who and how many people lived within Council properties?

Response: It was difficult to understand exactly how many people were overprovided for within Council housing stock. Information from Council Tax and

Housing Benefit helped. Tenant knowledge needed to be improved and would be expected by the regulator from April 2024. From the new year, it would be important to review how often we visited properties within the Council's stock; a large job as the number of properties totalled 7,800. Tenant knowledge was especially important in high-rise blocks due to fire safety regulations. It was illegal to sub-let. Consideration was given to data that could be used legally and Customer Services conducted routine checks. Tenancy services planned to visit properties and it was hoped that the majority of properties would be visited within the year. It may be the case that targeted properties were visited more than once a year.

Comment: Tenant knowledge was important and it was vital to know who lived within Council properties.

Response: Further to the Charter, there was now an expectation to have knowledge about tenants that was not expected before. Consideration would be given to how the data was obtained.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

33. Work Programme 2023/24

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the work programme for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for 2023/24 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- a. advised that this was an opportunity for Committee to suggest other items to be included on the work programme.

RESOLVED that:

1. Additional items be added to the work programme as follows:
 - Pet Policy Review – February 2024
 - Downsizing Policy – March 2024
2. The content of the Work Programme be noted.

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| SUBJECT: | LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL ANNUAL REPORT |
| DIRECTORATE: | HOUSING AND INVESTMENT |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | MICK BARBER - CHAIR OF LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the activities and achievements of the Lincoln Tenants' Panel (LTP) for the period from December 2022 to December 2023.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Lincoln Tenants' Panel produces a report each year, which sets out its main activities and achievements in the past 12 months. It also reports on priorities for the following year.

3. Overview of the Year

- 3.1 Lincoln Tenants Panel have continued to maintain and introduced business activities through a mixture of face to face and virtual meetings. In addition to this, Lincoln Tenants Panel Chair has secured a place on the department for levelling up/housing and communities Social Housing Quality Resident's Panel.

4. Main Activities

- 4.1 The Lincoln Tenants' Panel over the last year has been involved in a wide range of activities. These included:
- Contributed towards the development of the 30-year business plan.
 - Contributed to the 30-year business plan estate regeneration work stream consultation.
 - Contributed to the kitchen refurbishment programme choices.
 - Continued to engage with the Repairs Service Managers to review schedule of repairs programme.
 - Continued to engage with Investment to review the communal door replacement programme.
 - Continued to carry out tenants' inspections for void properties.
 - Continued to engage with tenancy services and to attend estate inspections.
 - Continued in the development of the HRA Business Plan and Asset management Strategy.
 - Continued to carry out quarterly reviews to assess complaints and ASB processes and procedures.

- Reviewed and revised Lincoln Standards policy.
- Reviewed and revised Tenants Involvement Strategy action plan matrix.
- Reviewed and revised communal area policy.
- Reviewed Annual performance and targets.
- Reviewed garage and rents.
- Monitored performance and challenged the council over issues.
- Worked with Tenancy Services to apply and secure ASB Accreditation status.
- Joined TPAS – Tenant Participation Advisory Service
- Attended HSSC meetings and represented tenants where possible.
- Attended fire safety engagement exercises delivered in partnership with Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue and City of Lincoln Council at Trent View.
- Attended training sessions delivered by TPAS and Four Million Homes programme (funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).
- Attended ARCH conference.

5. Priorities for the Next 12 Months

5.1 Over the next 12 months LTP have set out in their work plan the activities it will be involved in.

- Complaints monitoring.
- Review of Tenant Involvement Strategy action plan matrix.
- Tenant Inspection of void properties.
- Tenant estate inspections.
- Performance monitoring.
- Implementation of Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- Review of tenancy services complaints.
- Review of ASB related complaints.
- Continual review of ASB accreditation recommendations.
- Continual review of schedule of repairs.
- Continue to review communal door investment programme.
- Review tenancy agreement
- Review pet policy
- Review rechargeable repair policy.
- Arrange for TPAS to deliver bespoke training programme.

6. Thank You and Acknowledgements

6.1 As Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel, I would like to thank our tenants' representatives, councillors and officers for their work in supporting our panel.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

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SUBJECT: AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: AMY LARDER, INTERIM MAINTENANCE MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to seek approval for the implementation of a new Aids and Adaptations policy and to advise on the key areas within the policy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Information and guidance on our Aids and Adaptations service and to seek approval for the introduction of the Aids and Adaptations Policy to provide clarity for service providers and users.
- 2.2 The policy identifies regulatory requirements, who is eligible to use the service, and types of adaptations that can be provided through the service. It identifies the approvals process and timescales for approved works.
- 2.3 The key aims of the policy are to enable the provision of a high quality and cost-effective adaptations service. It will assist those in need of adaptations to make informed choices about their housing options, raise awareness of the service and identify our approach in handling requests for adaptations.

3. Background

- 3.1 The City of Lincoln Council offers tenants permanent and temporary adaptations to their homes to ensure their homes remain suitable for their individual needs. We work with partners and agencies, Including Lincolnshire County council to provide adaptations to our housing stock.
- 3.2 Within the last financial year 2022/2023 we received 221 referrals for adaptation to properties. 95 of those referrals were for major adaptations to our properties including wet room installations.
- 3.3 We are committed to ensuring council tenants and their immediate family who have a disability can as far as possible continue to live safely and independently and able to carry out day to day activities.

4. Policy Details

- 4.1 The policy provides clarity, information, and awareness of the availability of the aids and adaptations service.

The policy identifies the regulatory requirements as well as the legal framework and who is considered within the policy.

4.2 Requests for aids and adaptations will normally only be considered, if the person(s) is named in the tenancy, their dependant, or a permanent member of the household.

4.3 **Minor Adaptations**

Involve small scale, Non-structural alterations, or additions to a property some examples may include:

- Lever operated taps.
- Handrails
- Grab-Rails
- Mixer showers
- Additional external Lighting
- Concrete half steps to front or rear doors.

4.4 **Major Adaptations**

Involve larger works and will involve structural alterations including:

- Ramps
- Stairlifts
- Low level access showers and over bath showers
- Property alterations for example to widen doors.
- Extensions to the family Home
- Vehicle hard standing and dropped curbs.

4.5 **Referral Process**

Tenants and members of their household can apply for adaptations for themselves but there must be proven need. Referrals can also be received through a hospital referral from an occupational therapist or from Lincolnshire County Council Occupational Therapy as well as disability specific key workers.

4.6 **Approvals**

The policy clearly identifies the considerations that will be taken prior to approval of works commencing, including the likely availability of more appropriate property, tenants or members needs that demonstrate a need to remain in existing accommodation as well as considering PEEPS and evacuation processes.

4.7 **Funding**

We have a set Aids and Adaptations budget per year currently at £511,880, this may mean that it is necessary on occasion to prioritise referrals received that could lead to waiting lists for some cases.

We will not fund adaptations where a right to buy application exists, there is a transfer application in place or where there is a breach of tenancy and proceedings against the tenant(s) have commenced.

Funding for applications where a more suitable property has been identified will also not be funded. Non fixed equipment such as specialist furniture or hoists are also not funded.

We will endeavour to fund adaptations up to the value of £10,000, On occasions works may need to be declined or prioritised on a need's basis due to budget constraints. Where the value of works is more than £10,000 then this value must be approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and Investment.

We will meet the costs of all routine repairs and maintenance to any equipment we supply through the policy.

4.8 Performance

The policy details the performance measures that will be recorded this includes.

- The number of adaptations Installed.
- Number and type of adaptations rejected and why.
- Percentage of minor and major adaptations completed within target

4.9 Communication of the Policy

Briefings on the policy will take place within Maintenance and Investment teams as well as customer services and tenancy services to ensure all officers are aware of the policy and its contents. The policy will be available on our website for customers, and we will also look to produce further information videos that will be available online and accessed through QR codes on business cards highlighting the process for customers wishing to use the service.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

The provision of the policy reduces all kinds of inequality allowing tenants and household members to continue to live safely and independently, allowing them to still carry out essential day to day activities.

5.2 Let's deliver quality housing

The provision of this policy enables us to provide housing that meets the varied needs of our residents, improves housing standards for all and allows tenants and household members to have a sense of belonging allowing them where possible to continue to live safely and independently to carry out day to day activities.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

No finance implications are expected because of the introduction of this policy. The policy does identify that works more than £10,000 must be approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and Investment for Funding from the Contingency Reserve of the Housing Investment Programme.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

All works required where not undertaken in-house will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and ultimately, Public Contract Regulations 2015

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.

The principles of equality, diversity and Inclusion are integral in the Business planning and delivery of the aids and adaptations service. The Aids and Adaptations service is committed to delivering its service in a way that meets the diverse needs of local communities and will achieve this by treating people fairly and taking the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 into consideration in all aspects of the Aids and Adaptations Policy including access to the service.

6.4 Human Resources

N/A

6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

N/A

6.6 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

Please see the Council's [Environmental Policy \(sharepoint.com\)](#) for further guidance

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety Implications

The policy identifies that we will meet all applicable statutory requirements that are provided to meet the health and safety of occupants in their homes.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

It is not considered that there are any risks identified with the implementation of this policy.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 To agree and implement the policy for Aids and Adaptations to provide clarity of the Aids and Adaptations service provision and Processes for officers and service users, and to communicate the policy as identified in section 4.9

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

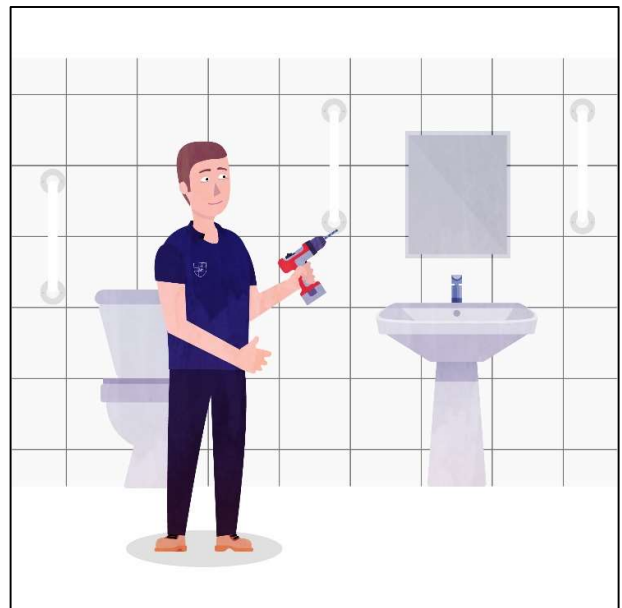
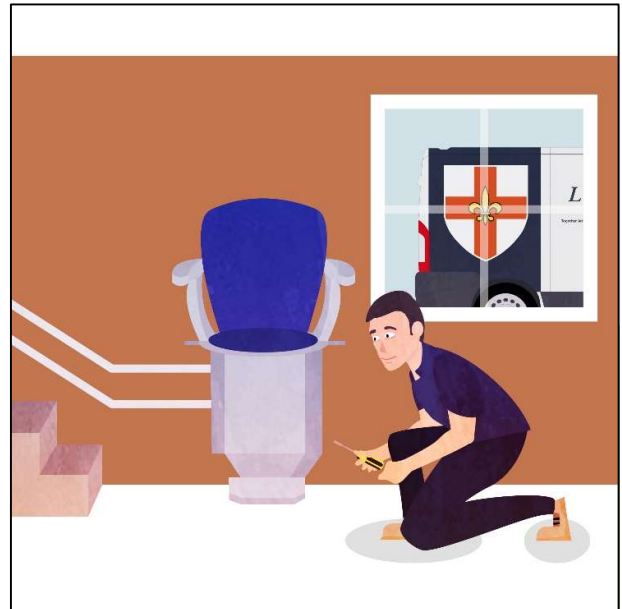
Lead Officer: Amy Larder Maintenance Manager
Email address: amy.larder@lincoln.gov.uk

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Housing Repairs Service

Aids and Adaptions Policy



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Introduction

At the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC), we understand everyone's housing needs are different. The CoLC offers our tenants with permanent and temporary adaptations to their homes to ensure that they are suitable for their individual needs. The CoLC works with partners and agencies, including Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to provide adaptations to its housing stock. If an adaptation is assessed as being necessary and appropriate by an Occupational Therapist it will be referred to the CoLC who will determine whether the request is "reasonable and practicable." If it is, the CoLC will install the adaptation.

This document sets out the City of Lincoln Council's policy for the provision of aids and adaptations to the homes of tenants living in Council accommodation.

Aims and objectives of the policy

The City of Lincoln Council is committed to ensuring that Council tenants and their immediate families who have a disability can, as far as possible, continue to live safely and independently and carry out essential day-to-day activities.

Let's deliver quality housing

- ▶ **Let's provide housing which meets the varied needs of our residents**
- ▶ **Let's work together to tackle homelessness in Lincoln**
- ▶ **Let's improve housing standards for all**
- ▶ **Let's build thriving communities**
- ▶ **Let's help people have a sense of belonging**



The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a high-quality aids and adaptation service to enable tenants with a disability and their immediate families to live safely and independently in their own homes.
- Provide an efficient and cost-effective adaptations service making the best use of the Council housing stock and the budget available, whilst ensuring value for money.
- Assist those in need of adaptations to make informed choices about their housing options, facilitating transfers to more appropriate accommodations where required.
- Raise awareness of the availability of the aids and adaptations service.
- Set out the Council's approach on effectively and consistently handling requests for aids and adaptations.

Diversity and inclusion

The CoLC will ensure that the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion are integral in the business planning and delivery of the Aids and Adaptations service. The CoLC is committed to delivering its Aids and Adaptations service in a way that meets the diverse needs of local communities and will achieve this by treating people fairly and taking the nine protected

characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 into consideration in all aspects of the Aids and Adaptations service including access to the service.

Regulatory requirements

In July 2023, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act received Royal Assent in Parliament making a host of reforms to sector law. One of these reforms will be to empower the Regulator of Social Housing to proactively monitor and drive landlords' compliance with enhanced consumer standards.

A consultation was published seeking input on a set of consumer standards that are likely to apply from April 2024 ([Consumer standards consultation publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.service.gov.uk/publications/consumer-standards-consultation)). The four standards are below:

- **The Safety and Quality Standard** - requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
- **The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** - requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
- **The Neighbourhood and Community Standard** - requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
- **The Tenancy Standard** - sets requirements for the fair allocation and letting of homes and for how those tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.



Further information on the home standard is available at-
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-standard>



Our responsibilities

Registered providers shall:

- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers the choice to, tenants and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements "right first time".
- Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

Specific expectations relating to the repair and maintenance are that:

- Registered providers shall ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas. This should demonstrate an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs and value for money. The approach should include responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties, and adaptations.
- Registered providers shall cooperate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptation service that meets the tenant's needs.

Definition of aids and adaptations

For the purpose of this policy, an aid or adaptation is defined as the provision of fixed equipment and/or modification to the property (or associated land) which enables tenants or other members of the household to continue to live independently and safely in their home.

Minor adaptations

Involve small-scale, usually non-structural, alterations or additions to a property. Examples of this type of work include:

- ▶ Lever operated taps
- ▶ Handrails
- ▶ Grab-rails
- ▶ Mixer showers
- ▶ Concrete half-steps
- ▶ Additional external lighting

Major adaptations

Involve larger schemes of work and will often involve structural alterations. Types of major adaptations include:

- ▶ Ramps
- ▶ Stairlifts
- ▶ Low level access showers (wet room) and over bath showers
- ▶ Extensions to the family home
- ▶ Hard standing and dropped kerbs
- ▶ Property alterations, for example to widen doorways and alterations to kitchens

Service Delivery

How to get an aids and adaptations referral

Tenants of any age (or members of their household) can apply for an adaptation for themselves. However, there must be a proven need. If it is considered that the scope of the work required is more complex and a full assessment of need is required, then the case will be referred to the Occupational Therapy service for that area for a full assessment. Upon receipt of an Occupational Therapist referral, the Aids and Adaptations Team Leader will write to the tenant confirming receipt of the referral and provide a point of contact for the case. If more than one member of the household is disabled and requires adaptations to meet their needs. Each person will need a separate Occupational Therapy assessment.

The policy and procedure recognise the following referral routes:

Hospital referral - Adaptation works recommended by a hospital Occupational Therapist, resulting from a full property assessment as part of discharge planning, will be considered by the Council.

LCC occupational therapy referral - This will be the principal referral route for all major adaptations. The Occupational Therapy service will assess the requirements and needs of the tenant, using the recognised Adult Social Care and Health eligibility criteria and associated Policy and Procedural Guidance. The Council will then consider the referral.

Disability - Specific key workers - Where the Council receives a request directly through an organisation representing a person with a specific disability / sensory impairment to supply and fit

specialist equipment, the CoLC will decide if the works can proceed in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Such organisations include the Deaf and Visual Impairment Team from LCC.

The Council will reserve the right in some cases to refer the request directly to an appropriate agency for further assessment.

Approval of work

In all cases, the Council will consider the following before approving a scheme based on the Occupational therapists advice:

- If the requested, adaptation is reasonable and practicable, having regard to the age and character of the property.
- The likely medical prognosis and the long-term usability of the proposed adaptation(s).
- The needs of the tenant, or member of the household and any personal factors that demonstrate a need to remain in their existing accommodation.
- The cost of the adaptations necessary to the current property.
- Any under-occupation of the present accommodation.
- Property type and demand.
- The likely availability of more appropriate alternative accommodation.
- Assessments of properties above the ground floor. Where Occupational Therapy recommendations are for properties above ground floor level, consideration should be made by the relevant housing officers. Any additional needs of the householder are recognised, and an assessment is made of any other measures that may need to be taken.
- Consideration of PEEPS and evacuation processes should also be considered.

Approval of major adaptations will be made on the condition that:

- An Occupational Therapist completes an 'Assessment of Need' which outlines clear recommendations that the work is necessary to sustain independent living.
- An assessment is carried out with the tenant to check whether a move to a more suitable property may resolve the need for adaptations and present a better long-term solution to their household's circumstances; the proposed works comply with all Planning Permission and Building Regulations requirements.
- If major adaptation works are not reasonable or practicable for a tenant's home, the Council will work closely with the tenant and other agencies to find a more suitable property to ensure the best use of the housing stock, whilst considering the needs of the household

Timescales of work

All works are dealt with on a referral date order basis. However, if the occupational therapist assesses the priority need as urgent, this assessment will influence the priority given to the works. In addition, the Council may prioritise works when the availability of resources is a factor in order to maximise the Council's resources.



The tenant will be given an indication of the timescale in which it is anticipated the works will start and be completed, the name of the contractor, and the contact telephone number for the Aids and Adapts Team Leader.

The Council will endeavour to ensure that procedures do not add unnecessary delays during the consideration of a referral for aids and adaptations. In addition, the undertaking of works is subject to the availability of funding.

Tenant liaison

The CoLC will aim:

- To arrange suitable appointments for contractors to gain entry and proceed with the works.
- To notify the tenant that they may be considered for a transfer to a more suitable property that would better meet their needs.
- To publicise the adaptations service by giving information packs to all tenants using or planning to use the service.
- To consult with and notify all tenants at key stages throughout the adaptation process.
- To advise the tenant as to the extent of the work to be undertaken.
- To advise the tenant of the timescale for the work and update them if this changes
- To notify the tenant of which contractor has been instructed to do the work
- To ensure the tenant is satisfied with the adaptation completed.

Performance management

There are a number of indicators recorded in respect of repairs and maintenance. Performance figures are presented to Housing Services Team, Lincoln Tenants Panel, Performance Scrutiny Committee and Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee. Targets for the aids and adaptations team in 2023/24 are as follows:

- ▶ 8-week average time to complete major works.
- ▶ 4-week average time to complete minor works.



Funding

The CoLC will usually fund works up to the value of £10,000. Work that is in excess of this value must be approved by the Assistant Director of Housing and investment to allow for a budget to be allocated from within the Contingency Reserve of the Housing Investment Programme.

Work that will not be funded

The Council will not adapt a property when:

- A tenancy does not exist
- The tenant is seeking to move or transfer on the grounds the property is not suitable for their needs.
- A breach of the tenancy agreement exists and possession proceedings against the tenancy have commenced. Unless authority has been granted by Housing Management.
- Where a Right to Buy application has been made.

The Council will not fund non-fixed equipment, including:

- Powered bath-hoists
- Commode chairs
- Specialist toilet seats
- Specialist furniture
- Induction loops
- Mobility scooters



Budget monitoring and review

The Aids and Adaptations budget is managed within the Housing Repairs Account and authorised by the Director of Housing.

The following information will be recorded and retained by the CoLC:

- Number of adaptations installed
- Number and type of adaptations rejected and the reasons why
- Percentage of minor and major adaptations completed within target.

Details of spend and budget commitment will be reported to the Director of Housing by the Housing Repairs Service Manager(HRSM). Any request for budget increases will be made by the HRSM. The Council will aim to ensure that adequate resources are provided to meet the adaptation needs of its tenants and to make the best use of any adapted properties that become vacant.

Servicing and maintenance of equipment

The CoLC will meet the costs of all routine repairs and maintenance to any equipment it supplies through this policy. The tenant must allow access to any servicing or repairs of equipment. If equipment is wilfully damaged by the tenant, members of their household, or anyone else visiting the property, the CoLC will recharge the tenant for any repairs required (Please refer to the rechargeable repairs policy for more information).

A programme will be in place to undertake annual servicing and maintenance of stair lifts and lifting equipment and assisted door openers.

Installation of aids and adaptations by tenants

A tenant wishing to undertake an adaptation at their own expense is required to make a written request to the CoLC via their Housing Officer (HO) stating the adaptation they wish to carry out. Any adaptation to the property will need written consent from the Council before the work is started.

Following Council approval any installations made by the tenant will be the responsibility of the tenant to maintain and/or remove at the end of the tenancy. Alternatively, if the Council agrees to take responsibility for the alterations the tenant will be required to relinquish ownership at no expense to the CoLC. If the CoLC agrees to the future responsibility of an adaptation this will be stated in the conditions should permission be granted to the tenant to undertake the adaptation.

Alternative solutions

If it is considered by the CoLC that a tenant's needs would be best met through a move to a more suitable property, a priority transfer within the Council's stock will be sought. Alternatively, a priority move to another Registered Social Landlord's property could also be negotiated.

Where a decision is made that a tenant's needs can be best met through a move to a more suitable property, the aids and adaptations officer will liaise with the Housing Officer regarding a management transfer. The tenant can then apply for rehousing through the Homefinder system and submit the relevant case information to support their application. The application will then be assessed and awarded a housing priority in accordance with the allocations policy.



Removal of adaptations

Any adaptation funded or part funded by the CoLC will remain in the property and should not be removed by the tenant or anyone acting on their behalf without the written permission of the CoLC.

Where adaptations have been carried out to a property designated for elderly or disabled people, these will not normally be reversed unless the adaptation has come to the end of its life. For example, if a bath has been replaced with a level access shower.

Where 'General Need's' accommodation has been adapted, the CoLC will seek to find a suitable applicant using the council's approved allocations policy, who will benefit from such adaptations. However, CoLC will consider any application made by a new tenant for the removal of equipment in order to make the property, more habitable.

Transfers after adaptations have been carried out

Following a major adaptation, the CoLC will permit a housing transfer if the individual's needs have changed, and the Occupational Therapist and the CoLC agree a move is necessary. Such as, if the family size changes or there is a need to move into supported housing. Then, if the new home requires any adaptations, the Occupational Therapist and the CoLC will assess any appropriate adaptations, and these will be considered in accordance with this policy. In the event that the person whom the adaptations were installed for is no longer residing in the property, the Council may use discretion and offer the tenant the option of relocating to an un-adapted property.

Letting adapted properties

The Council recognises that the void time is a key stage in the successful delivery of the adaptation process. In order to ensure properties are allocated to make efficient and effective use of the housing stock and reduce costs in delivering adaptations, it is important that key issues have been considered prior to re-letting. The Council will identify details of any major adaptations for all properties that become vacant and will allocate properties to make the most appropriate use of any existing adaptation.

Significantly adapted properties such as properties with internal lifts, wet rooms, or low-level kitchens fitted may be advertised with the adaptations listed to allow the most appropriate applicant to let the property. Where a new tenant who is not disabled accepts an offer to move into an adapted property, adaptations such as level access showers will not usually be removed. In cases where a bath can be fitted over a level access shower consideration will be given.

Recycling adaptations

Where possible, adaptations will be “recycled” on re-letting a property by allocating the adapted property to a person needing the adaptation. If this is not possible, the CoLC has a process to consider removing adaptations from locations where they are no longer required. Examples of equipment that may be removed and recycled include:

- Stairlifts
- Hoists
- Through floor lifts
- Modular ramps

Structural adaptations that have been carried out to a property, such as concrete ramps and level access showers will not be removed. If a new tenant accepts a property that has been adapted, they must accept that the adaptations remain in situ. All adaptations of this nature will be classed as an attribute to the property and treated as such.

Appeals

If a tenant wishes to appeal against any decision taken regarding their requested adaptation, they should contact CoLC asking to request an appeal on the decision, using one of the following methods:

▶ By email to: customerservices@lincoln.gov.uk

▶ By telephoning: 01522 881188

▶ By letter to: Housing Services

City of Lincoln Council,
City Hall,
Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln, LN1 1DD



Upon receipt of the appeal, the maintenance manager will aim to acknowledge the request within 5 working days. The maintenance manager will then consider the appeal and consult with the Aids and Adapts Team Leader and any relevant healthcare professional or other relevant organisations. The maintenance manager will subsequently inform the tenant of their decision within 20 working days of the appeal being lodged.

Complaints

The Aids and Adaptation Policy will aim to bring consistency to the management of adaptations within Council properties. However, if a tenant feels they have cause to complain, procedures are in place to put things right as quickly as possible. If a tenant wishes to register a complaint, they are

encouraged, in the first instance, to contact the Aids and Adapts Team Leader, to allow us to attempt to resolve the situation informally.

If the tenant remains dissatisfied, they can register their complaint through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, using one of the following methods:

- ▶ Online at: www.lincoln.gov.uk/complaints
- ▶ By email to: complaints@lincoln.gov.uk
- ▶ By telephoning: 01522 881188
- ▶ By letter to: Housing Services

City of Lincoln Council,
City Hall,
Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln, LN1 1DD



We aim to acknowledge and respond to complaints within 10 working days. Further information is available at-
<https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/council/compliments-compliments-feedback/3>





Further information

If you have any comments on what you read in this policy, or any service that you receive from the City of Lincoln Council, please let us know. We are interested in any suggestions that you have on how to make this a more user-friendly document.

Email customer.services@lincoln.gov.uk

Tel 01522 873333

Website www.lincoln.gov.uk

Write to DHCS, City of Lincoln Council
City Hall, Beaumont Fee, LN1 1DD

Allocations Breakdown April-December 2023

At the end of Quarter 3 2023, the Council had allocated 410 properties. The table below indicates the type of applicant/banding that successful bids for properties were made to. The second table breaks down allocation by property type across all property type.

| Type | Lets | % |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| HOMELESS | 268 | 65.4% |
| REGISTER | 80 | 15.1% |
| TRANSFER | 62 | 19.5% |
| Grand Total | 410 | |

With respect to the lettings by band, we are required to ensure that any household who is homeless or threatened with homelessness is prioritised for accommodation. In addition, the Council has a quota for transfer applicants to move into more suitable accommodation that meets their changing needs. The target for transfers is 25% of all lettings, we are looking to increase the number of properties advertised with preference to transfers in quarter 4, to remain on target to ensure that we meet local needs and Government priorities.

| Row Labels | Count of Type |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Homeless | 268 |
| 1 BED BUNGALOW | 5 |
| 1 BED FLAT | 143 |
| 1 BED HOUSE | 2 |
| 2 BED BUNGALOW | 2 |
| 2 BED FLAT | 30 |
| 2 BED HOUSE | 45 |
| 3 BED FLAT | 1 |
| 3 BED HOUSE | 24 |
| 4 BED HOUSE | 2 |
| BEDSIT | 5 |
| HIGH RISE | 9 |
| Transfer | 80 |
| 1 BED BUNGALOW | 12 |
| 1 BED FLAT | 22 |
| 2 BED BUNGALOW | 5 |
| 2 BED FLAT | 6 |
| 2 BED HOUSE | 19 |
| 3 BED HOUSE | 12 |
| 4 BED HOUSE | 1 |
| BEDSIT | 3 |
| Waiting List | 62 |
| 1 BED BUNGALOW | 2 |

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| 1 BED FLAT | 28 |
| 2 BED BUNGALOW | 2 |
| 2 BED FLAT | 8 |
| 2 BED HOUSE | 12 |
| 3 BED HOUSE | 2 |
| 4 BED HOUSE | 2 |
| BEDSIT | 3 |
| HIGH RISE | 3 |
| Grand Total | 410 |

It is interesting to note that the majority of properties allocated are flats and that the supply of houses, particularly larger houses, continues to be in short supply.

Dan Sharp
January 2024

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | ESTATE INSPECTIONS FEEDBACK PROCESS |
| DIRECTORATE: | HOUSING AND INVESTMENT |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | MARIANNE UPTON – TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee about how feedback is provided about issues raised during annual Estate Inspections.

2. Background

- 2.1 Each year a programme of Estate Inspections is carried out by Officers from Tenancy Services, Members and representatives from Lincoln Tenant's Panel (LTP). In 2023 there was also the addition of officers from the Investment Team and Housing Repairs Service.
- 2.2 The purpose of these inspections is to assess the overall condition of the areas and record any specific issues that need action.
- 2.3 The Housing Officers compile a report for each estate that details issues raised and potential projects for improvements.
- 2.4 Questions have been raised through Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and Lincoln Tenants Panel about the process for providing feedback to Members and tenants about progress made for identified work.

3. The Current Position

- 3.1 There are a number of teams involved in the inspections, each recording items relating to their areas to be actioned, without a central record.
- 3.2 Much of the information is recorded on spreadsheets because the current IT system is not set up in a way that can specifically record that the issue was raised during an inspection, except in the form of notes which makes running reports difficult.
- 3.3 There is no set process for regularly updating stakeholders about the outcomes from the inspections other than the initial report that Housing Officers provide.
- 3.4 Due to the number of issues that have been logged in previous inspections and the difficulty running system reports it would be a very time consuming manual exercise for Officers to check that each issue was logged and whether the job has been completed or is in progress.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 We have the opportunity with the implementation of the new IT system to ensure the process for estate inspections is fully recorded and that any actions can be easily identified and reported on. This will remove the need for spreadsheets and manual checking of data.
- 4.2 There could be greater involvement in the monitoring process for members of LTP, who are also keen to see feedback and progress as a result of inspections. Subject to consulting with LTP, this could take the form of a sub-group that focusses on checking outcomes.
- 4.3 A commitment is made to provide feedback to all Members on any issues raised at the estate inspection for their area within 8 weeks of the inspection being completed. This 8 week period of time allows sufficient time for jobs to have been logged and either progressed or been completed.
- 4.4 Where improvements have been identified, there will be clear information provided on whether these are to be progressed individually, or whether they will form part of Estate Regeneration programmes linked to the HRA Business Plan.
- 4.5 A commitment will also be made to report to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the number of estate inspection completed, the works and improvements raised, the progress on completing or programming the issues raised and confirmation that Members have been provided with the information relevant to their area.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

There should not be any difference in the level of service received by tenants and residents based on where they live. By having a clear, robust and well monitored process for Estate Inspections we can ensure a consistent approach with transparency about outcomes.

5.2 Let's deliver quality housing

Although many of the issues found are to communal spaces and the environments around our housing, they do also mean that repairs or management issues at individual properties are identified. Tenants have the opportunity to talk to Officers about any concerns with their homes when they are on site. Any new reports of repairs made by tenants will be treated as the initial notification and the appropriate action taken.

5.3 Let's enhance our remarkable place

The inspections identify various issues from repairs to improvement schemes to management issues such as untidy gardens. Resolving as many of these as possible clearly enhances the areas and contributes to the overall feeling of living in well managed and cared for communities.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no additional financial impacts of improving the established process to include feedback to stakeholders regularly. The improvements to the IT system are all within the current plans.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications for providing regular feedback and no new services are being procured to do this.

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

This is an existing process that enhances access to services. If a full review of the process is carried out, an Equality Impact Assessment would be carried out if there were any significant changes.

6.4 Human Resources

6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

6.6 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

Please see the Council's [Environmental Policy \(sharepoint.com\)](#) for further guidance

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety implications

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

8. Recommendations

8.1 That members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee:

- Note the contents of this report.

- Consider the proposal to feedback to Members on the outcome of the estate inspection completed in their areas directly and within 8 weeks.
- Approve the outcomes of the future estate inspections to be reported into HSSC annually and programmed into the future workplan.

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: Marianne Upton, Tenancy Services Manager
Email address: marianne.upton@lincoln.gov.uk

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| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | WORK OF TENANCY SUSTAINABILITY TEAM |
| DIRECTORATE: | HOUSING AND INVESTMENT |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | DAVID GENERY, SENIOR HOUSING PROJECT MANAGER |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the current position on tenancy sustainment within Tenancy Services. The last update on the project to the committee was January 2023.

2. Background

- 2.1 Sustaining tenancies and keeping people in their homes is a key priority for the City of Lincoln Council (CoLC). There are benefits of doing this for our tenants and for us as a landlord in terms of reduced void costs, reduced income loss and decreased management costs. There is also a benefit to the General Fund as tenant's facing eviction are likely to apply for rehousing or assistance via the Homelessness Team.
- 2.2 Since the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act in 2012 tenants have faced challenges to their income such as introduction of the 'spare room subsidy', benefit cap, Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments.
- 2.3 This has left tenants with little income to absorb any other cost increases. The Pandemic in 2019, has now led to a further erosion of income, not only for those on benefits, but even those who work full time have seen a continued erosion of available income due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.4 To address these issues, in April 2022, Tenancy Services introduced three Housing Officers on two-year contracts, dedicated to working on our sustainment objectives which cover four phases.

3. Project Overview

- 3.1 To address these issues, in April 2022, the Tenancy Sustainment Team (TST) was introduced with a focus to support tenants to maintain and avoid losing their homes through financial hardship. This team comprised of three housing officers on two-year fixed term contracts. The pilot had four key themes which are:
- 1. Pre-tenancy support for vulnerable tenants.*
 - 2. Roll out of referrals to any tenant at risk of enforcement action.*
 - 3. All general referrals accepted for any tenant experiencing some type of hardship.*
 - 4. Forming strong relationships with the third sector*

Further detail of what each phase covered is included in the background papers to this update (Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Report January 2023).

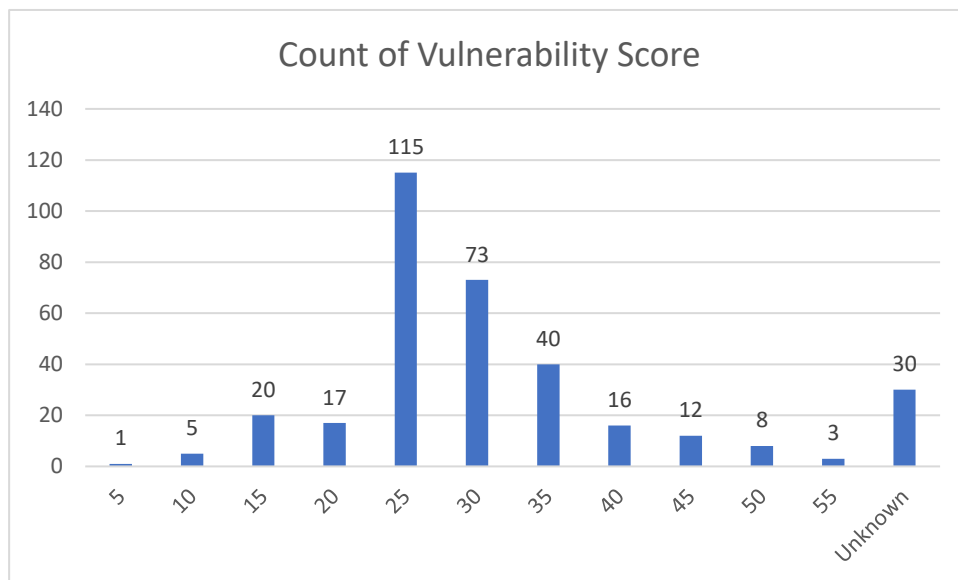
4. Analysis of how the project has performed against each phase.

4.1 Phase 1 - *Pre-Tenancy Support for Vulnerable Tenants.*

Supporting new introductory tenants is a key priority for the Council.

Up to the end of October 2023, 58.92% (340) of all closed cases referred to the service were Introductory Tenants/ new Tenants.

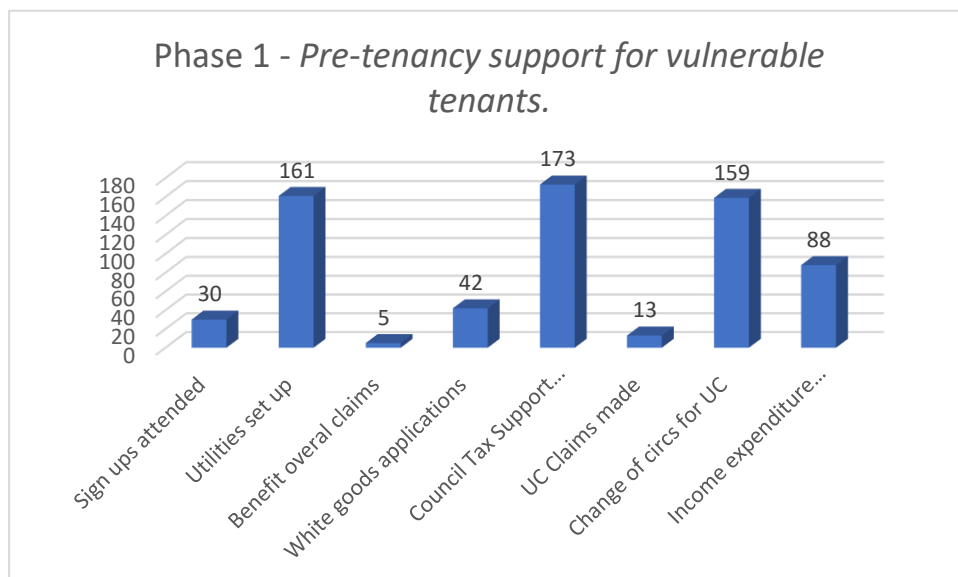
Table 1 – Breakdown of Vulnerability Scores



Each tenant referred to the service has a vulnerability score calculated and of the Introductory/ new tenants referred 78.53% had a vulnerability score of 25 or more. This demonstrates that most tenancies have vulnerability in more than one area. All tenants with a score of 25 or more are an automatic referral to the TST. For a breakdown of the list of vulnerability markers/areas please see appendix 2.

A slight concern is that thirty referrals did not have a vulnerability score, we are currently investigating these cases, so we can identify why there was no score and ensure processes are robust.

Table 2 – Breakdown of Tenancy Sustainment Work for Introductory/ New Tenants



The highest areas of work for the TST have been for Council Tax Support Applications, followed by setting up utilities and then making changes to Universal Credit claims.

The figure that stands out is the small numbers attributed to sign ups attended, the TST has only been fully resourced for 20% of the project, this has meant that the TST have not had the capacity to do the support needed for those high-risk tenancies.

A considerable proportion of the work in this phase could be undertaken by the Void Support Team with extra training. This would include setting up utilities, Council Tax Support Claims, UC change of circumstances, white goods applications. This would then enable the TST to focus on other priorities.

4.2 Phase 2 - Roll out of Referrals to any Tenant at Risk of Enforcement Action.

One of the key functions of the TST is to prevent tenants from possession action on their tenancy. This enables the CoLC to comply with the pre-action protocol for possession claims by social landlords.

Analysing cases from April 2022 to the end of October 2023, there were 520 referrals made to the service, this includes both Secure and Introductory Tenants.

Of those 520, 385 tenancies have not had a legal notice served on them since April 2022. This equates to 74.04% of tenancies.

Further analysis shows of all those who have had a Notice served, 89.63% have not progressed in legal action.

Table 3 – Breakdown of Tenancy Void Codes

| Tenancy Termination Reason | Number of tenancies ended |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Eviction | 10 |
| Homeless T/A | 2 |
| Moved with family/ relatives | 8 |
| MX | 2 |
| No forwarding address | 3 |
| Notice to quit | 7 |
| Deceased | 1 |
| True void – other reason | 1 |
| Transfer | 12 |

The largest void reason is Transfers, which is as a positive as those who transfer need to meet the strict Allocations Policy in place (such as not being significantly in rent arrears or demonstrating behaviour likely to make them unsuitable to be a tenant).

A key metric for the TST was to prevent evictions from occurring, the service up to the end of October 2023 only had ten referrals that have ended in eviction. Analysing the data behind the ten evictions, more investigation needs undertaken to assess the length of time between the referral and the tenancy end date(eviction). This data is not currently available in the reports available.

Following the removal of transfers, mutual exchanges, and deceased customers from the number of tenancies that ended as they are not failures to sustain a tenancy, 6.93% of tenancies that engaged with the service have failed. Further analysis is required to

validate this, as tenancy end reasons are not specific enough within the current IT system. For example, 'Notice to quit,' is part of the tenancy ending process and required by law in all tenancies. Having seven tenancies with this code does not give us the detail required to conduct thorough analysis.

Further work is required to compare the service to those tenancies that have not been referred to the service to see if the data is comparable.

4.3 **Phase 3 - All General Referrals Accepted for any Tenant Experiencing some Type of Hardship.**

The TST have engaged with tenants over a vast array of reasons for enduring forms of hardship. Hardship does not necessarily mean the inability to pay rent, this can include, but not limited to, putting the heating on, turning the lights on, or at its basic level having food in the cupboard to make a meal.

The TST have had 520 referrals from April 2022 to the end of October 2023 to support tenants with non-rent related queries, this includes supporting with utilities claims, foodbank referrals and white good applications.

The number of referrals as a proportion of the overall housing stock demonstrates that 6.2% of tenants have had a referral. This figure would be more if the service were fully resourced as per the original business case. Another factor impacting on this number is that at certain times, due to lack of resource, there have been temporary suspensions on referrals to the service due to volume. An example of resource issues is that the current member of the TST has been working on their own since February 2023.

The TST have assisted tenants in becoming as much as £900 per calendar month better off. The following case study highlights the work of the team for one family.

Tenant referred to TST due to rent arrears. They have five children and Ms is pregnant with her sixth child. Both are from Latvia and have pre-settled status. This means they must prove they satisfy the Habitual Residence and Right to Reside tests to claim benefits and have recourse to public funds. They said they had not claimed UC previously because they did not think they qualified.

Housing benefit had ceased due to failure to return a review form. As a result, considerable rent arrears had accrued. Their only sources of income were working tax credit (which they had failed to declare a change for and were not entitled to), child tax credit and child benefit. They were at risk of their tax credits being withdrawn altogether because they had claimed eligibility due to Mr working.

TST helped them identify significant financial benefits in claiming UC, which demonstrated they would be over £900 per month better off by claiming UC. TST was also able to demonstrate two ways in which they would meet the Habitual Residence Test (HRT) meaning they could claim benefits. TST helped them with a claim and helped them put the case forward to satisfy their right to claim benefits and have recourse to public funds (both through work and derived right of having a child born in the UK, being in work since that child was born and that child now being in compulsory education).

Their claim was accepted, and now they can fully cover their rent and pay a significant sum towards their arrears, alongside having a substantial increase in their household income.

Since this, there has been an issue with the incorrect amount of money being declared as earnings by the employer to HMRC, meaning that the benefits paid was reduced significantly (by about £1,000) for one month. The TST have been supporting them in appealing this decision and have helped them gather and provide evidence of the mistake to the DWP.

Complex cases as the one above may not have had such a successful outcome if it was not for the TST, who have the time and expert knowledge to navigate the complexities of benefit and immigration law.

4.4 Phase 4 - Forming Strong Relationships with the Third Sector.

Forming strong links with organisations is a key facet of the Tenancy Sustainment Team. The pilot has allowed the team to forge long lasting relationships and enhance existing ones.

Externally they have relationships with seventeen organisations with points of contact regularly updated, to prevent any wasted time in supporting CoLC tenants.

There are notable examples such as the Ignite charity, which looks to repurpose old furniture so new tenants can have them. Furnishing a property makes it a home and supports tenants from potentially having to use monies on furnishing rather than for rent, food, or heating.

Two recent organisations that are now engaged with CoLC are Energy Save Lincoln and Community Greengrocer. Community Greengrocer has had seven referrals since CoLC started collaborating with them in July 2023. The Community Greengrocer allows those registered to buy twelve items of food for £5.

The team are very much out there and receive requests for help and referrals for our tenants by these organisations and there may be other organisations of whom we are not yet aware.

5. Other Findings

5.1 Welfare Rights Team v's Tenancy Sustainment Team

We are going to review the **TST** service and explore opportunities to improve the overall effectiveness and improve overall sustainability of Tenancies.

5.2 Recruitment

Since April 2022, the team have only been fully resourced for 20% of the project.

Recruitment has proved difficult and when appointments have been occurred, staff retention has again proved challenging due to the temporary nature of the contract.

This has impacted on the service available to customers, as the service has had to curtail substantial portions of its pro-active work to solely focus on income related activities which is the strength of the current TST member.

5.3 Reporting

It has been a challenge to identify the actual impact the TST has made to customers other than anecdotal feedback from individuals or spreadsheet information.

Amendments to the system have been completed, to allow better reporting of cases as of December 2023, this will improve the ability to see if behaviour has been amended by interaction with the service.

6. Finance

The financial implications relating to the extension of 1 x Tenancy Sustainment Officer Post for six months up to 30 September 2024. This cost will be fully met from the HRA Invest to Save reserve.

Use of this reserve was agreed by the Executive in the original business case, and due to the level of vacancies throughout this project the funding required to extend this post does not exceed that of the original approved request. All residual funding will remain within the HRA Invest to Save reserve.

| | 22/23 | 23/24 | 24/25 | Total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Original Funding | 107,980 | 110,140 | | 218,120 |
| Revised Funding | 76,830 | *41,230 | *21,300 | 139,360 |

*Forecast

7. Legal implications (including procurement rules)

The work completed by the Tenancy Sustainment Team contributes towards the assurance that CoLC are compliant with the pre-action protocol for possession claims by social landlords.

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

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

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 To note the contents of this update on the work completed by the Tenancy Sustainment Team.

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:

Housing Scrutiny update January 2023

Lead Officer:

David Genery
Senior Housing Project Officer
David.genery@lincoln.gov.uk

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| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | REVIEW OF EMPTY GARAGES |
| DIRECTORATE: | HOUSING AND INVESTMENT |
| REPORT AUTHORS: | PAULA BURTON, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOUSING MANAGEMENT |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report aims to update the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the number of empty garages and subsequent loss of income resulting from empty garages.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan was approved by Executive in November 2023. This business plan sets out the long-term income and expenditure plans for delivery of council housing and assets in the city over the next thirty years.

3. Garage Stock

- 3.1 The Council owns 1,134 purpose-built garages situated within 88 garage sites with an additional 16 garage plot sites. The majority of the garage stock was constructed more than 40 years ago and methods of construction have changed considerably over the years. These garages were designed for cars which were often smaller than the average car today.
- 3.2 Car usage has also changed over time with many households requiring additional parking facilities for multiple cars. Our current provision of garages is not always the best solution to resolve parking issues in our estates.

4. Current Garage Use

- 4.1 The number of garages currently tenanted is 775 of a possible 1,134. This equates to 68%. There are currently 72 garages available to let, 15 of which are in the process of signing new tenancies. There are 204 garages requiring repairs and 83 that are unavailable to let. This has resulted in a void loss of £165,099 from the beginning of this financial year to the end of December 2023.
- 4.2 The reasons for the garages remaining void this year have mainly been either a lack of need on some sites or because major works have been required to make the garage lettable.

As part of the current void process, if it is identified that a garage requires works that are likely to cost a significant amount the garage has not been allocated and has remained void whilst a decision is made about whether it is financially viable to complete any repairs or whether disposal or alternative use for the site should be considered.

5. Garage Strategy

- 5.1 It was previously identified that there was a need to improve the processes used to manage our garage stock and to explore whether the provision of garages was still a priority for the council. A working group has been in place for the last year exploring the options available.
- 5.2 The group has assessed the potential alternative uses available for each garage site and have also analysed the usage of each site and what the potential cost of any planned repairs on those sites would be. The options considered so far have been:
- Development of housing
 - Investment to provide better quality garages
 - Alternative parking provision
 - Change of use to provide community spaces such as play areas, green spaces etc.

These considerations also fit within the priorities of the HRA Business Plan and the Council's Vision priorities.

- 5.3 A draft garage strategy is currently being consulted on with other service areas within the council and will be circulated for information in due course. It is expected that this will be within the next two months.
- 5.4 The draft garage strategy contains an action plan for the coming year and some of the actions included within this commit to detailed investment costs being sought and investment work to be completed to enable the garages to be relet and generate an income again.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 The City of Lincoln Council's Vision 2025 priorities are:
- Let's drive inclusive economic growth.
 - Let's reduce all kinds of inequality.
 - Let's deliver quality housing.
 - Let's enhance our remarkable place.
 - Let's address the challenge of climate change.

This report relates primarily to 'Let's deliver quality housing' but also relates to 'Let's enhance our remarkable place.' As part of the HRA Business Plan consultation with tenants it was identified that tenants would like the parking facilities in their area to be improved. Looking at alternative ways to provide parking on the garage sites would meet this need. Another request by tenants was to provide play facilities and this is also a consideration for change of use of the sites.

7. Organisational Impacts

7.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 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.

This report is for information only so there is no direct impact on individuals.

8. Risk Implications

8.1 (i) Options Explored – Not applicable to this report.

8.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach – Not applicable for this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee reviews and comments on the content of this report and the information contained therein.

| | |
|--|------|
| 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 |

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|----------------------|--|
| Lead Officer: | Paula Burton – Acting Assistant Director – Housing Management Paula.burton@lincoln.gov.uk Sophie Elley – Housing Strategy Officer Sophie.elley@lincoln.gov.uk |
|----------------------|--|

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | HOUSING 30-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN: SUMMARY OF INITIAL TENANTS' CONSULTATION |
| DIRECTORATE: | HOUSING AND INVESTMENT |
| REPORT AUTHORS: | RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT, CORPORATE POLICY AND TRANSFORMATION |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee the results of the recent tenants' consultation, linked to the Council's Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Business Plan.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Council's HRA Business Plan was approved by Executive in November 2023. This business plan sets out the long-term income and expenditure plans for delivery of council housing in the city over the next thirty years, and was developed in partnership with Savills.
- 2.2 The Lincoln Tenants' Panel has been involved in development of the business plan since its inception. During summer 2023, prior to finalising and seeking Executive approval for the business plan, the Council also undertook a wider consultation with tenants to seek their views on their local neighbourhoods.
- 2.3 This report aims to brief the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the Council's approach to this tenants' consultation, and summarise the responses received.

3. Approach to Tenants' Consultation

- 3.1 The Council is committed to empowering its tenants, through meaningful engagement in decision making and encouraging them to hold the Council to account. The city has an active and effective tenants' panel (LTP), which represents all council tenants and leaseholders in the city, and the Council has worked closely with the LTP and Members in developing the business plan.
- 3.2 Given the significance of the Housing 30-Year Business Plan and the ambitious objectives it seeks to deliver, the Council and the LTP identified a need for early engagement with all tenants in the city. This early engagement was sought via a short survey, and gave tenants an opportunity to share their views on their neighbourhoods and estates.
- 3.3 Survey questions were developed by Housing and Investment in partnership with the LTP, with advice sought from the Communications and Corporate Policy and Transformation Teams prior to approval by the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing. The survey was sent by post to every council tenant and leaseholder in the city (over 7,800 properties). An incentive was offered to complete the survey to

boost participation; all tenants who responded were given an opportunity to be entered into a prize draw to win a £100 high street shopping voucher. Tenants were given the option of responding to the survey online or by post, and provided with both pre-paid postage and a QR code make it easy to take part. A copy of the survey is attached as '**Appendix A**' to this report.

- 3.4 The survey ran for three weeks, ending on 31st August. The response rate to the survey was relatively low, with 311 responses (4%). Approximately two thirds of tenants returned their surveys by post, with the remaining third completing it online.
- 3.5 Survey responses were then collated and analysed, and a copy of the findings are attached as '**Appendix B**' to this report.

4. Summary of Consultation Findings

- 4.1 The findings set out in '**Appendix B**' show that, overall, the Council's tenants are relatively satisfied with the areas where they live. For consistency, responses to each survey question have been interpreted using the following methodology:

- Each question category asked tenants to rate their satisfaction with a given topic, from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). Scores of 5 or above were therefore considered to indicate a neutral-to-positive response. Scores of 4 or below have been interpreted as negative responses.
- Each rating question was followed by a free text question, which gave tenants an opportunity to leave comments linked to the preceding question. These responses are likely to have skewed negative due to the question type; not all respondents answered these free text questions; and many of the positive comments left by respondents were very brief and offered limited additional information. Because of this, the comments data in '**Appendix B**' collates negative feedback only.

4.2 Satisfaction with Living on their Estate/Neighbourhood

73% of respondents selected the rating 5 or above, indicating that almost three quarters of tenants who responded either rate their neighbourhoods positively or hold neutral views on this topic. The mean score given by tenants was 6.20 out of 10.

The subsequent question that asked residents to explain their score garnered 104 positive comments and 161 negative comments. Key themes for both positive and negative comments related to how respondents felt about their neighbours, their community, and the behaviour of people in vicinity of their home. Figure 2 in '**Appendix B**' categorises the negative comments received from respondents.

The most common reason given by respondents who provided negative comments was antisocial behaviour.

4.3 Satisfaction with Paths/Green Space/Play Space

The mean score for this question was 5.75, with 70% of respondents giving a satisfaction rating of 5 or above.

Significantly more negative responses were received than positive, focused primarily on maintenance, cleanliness and the condition of pavements. Figure 4 categorises the negative comments received. Comments related to maintenance centred around trees, hedges and weed control, with numerous tenants providing comments about the condition of paths in their neighbourhood. Comments on cleanliness focused on people fly tipping and littering.

Responses also indicate a demand for more child friendly outdoor spaces, with 28 comments in this category.

4.4 Satisfaction with Parking

This rating question garnered the lowest overall satisfaction score in the survey, with a mean score of 5.19. The subsequent comment question highlighted concern over a lack of parking spaces, and issues linked to inconsiderate parking behaviours.

Figure 6 in '**Appendix B**' categorises the negative comments received.

4.5 Perceptions of Safety

72% of respondents rated this question 5 or above, indicating that the majority of tenants who completed the survey felt safe in their home and neighbourhood. Over 40% of respondents gave a score of 8 or above.

Of the 169 negative comments received, the most common reason given by respondents was antisocial behaviour, followed by concerns about drugs. 38 respondents stated they felt unsafe without providing more information.

4.6 Satisfaction with Communal Areas (if applicable)

66% of respondents gave neutral-to-positive scores on satisfaction with communal areas, and 69% for outdoor communal areas. Similar to feedback on outdoor greenspaces, negative comments provided in relation to the subsequent question centred around cleanliness/fly tipping and maintenance issues.

4.7 Top 5 Improvements

Key improvements requested by respondents were as follows:

- Improved parking
- Street cleanliness
- Road/pavement maintenance
- Garden maintenance
- Child/youth facilities

Improved parking was the most popular response, with 36.4% of respondents providing comments linked to this topic.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 The City of Lincoln Council's Vision 2025 priorities are:

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

This report relates primarily to 'Let's deliver quality housing.' Meaningful engagement with tenants and leaseholders is crucial to delivery of the 30-Year Business Plan, and the consultation feedback provided in this report will assist the Council in understanding, at this early stage in the life cycle of the business plan, the key issues that matter to tenants when developing new housing and regenerating existing assets. This feedback also provides an insight into how the residents view their local area and may also be used for information for the 'Let's enhance our remarkable place' priority.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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.

The consultation subject of this report demonstrates the Council's commitment to engaging with all tenants. This is the first of multiple engagement exercises with tenants on the 30-Year Business Plan, and further measures will be taken to try to ensure that customer feedback is as representative of the city's makeup as can be achieved.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 (i) Options Explored – Not applicable to this report.
- 7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach – Not applicable for this report.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee reviews and comments on the content of this report and the information contained therein.

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| 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? | Two (Appendix A, B) |
| List of Background Papers: | None |

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Donna.lyons@lincoln.gov.uk

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Appendix A

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

To. Customer Services

City of Lincoln Council
City Hall, Beaumont Fee
Lincoln
LN1 1DD

63

in advance for playing your part in making the housing
and area you live in the best it can possibly be.
Our aim to make Lincoln a better city, a truly great city.
You need to know what this means for you as a tenant. We have
also engaged an independent company, Savills, to explore and
collect important information about our estates over the summer
and this too will feed into developing the 30-year plan.

Thanks

2023 30-Year Business Plan

We want to hear from you and learn what your priorities
are and in what areas you believe we could improve.



Our aim

It's fit-for-purpose & meets the needs of you, our tenants, and the city as a whole.

In the first part of 2023, City of Lincoln Council published its five-year-plan for its Housing Service. Once this was done, we started work on a long-term 30-year plan, which we expect to be adopted by the end of 2023. When devising a plan that will take us beyond 2050 it is essential we ensure it's fit-for-purpose and meets the needs of you, our tenants, and the city as a whole. The main priorities of this 30-year-plan fall into four distinct categories. We will:

- ▶ Continue **delivering and developing** a wide range of high-quality, appropriate housing across the city, while also ensuring we **provide an exceptional repairs service**
- ▶ Commit to the **regeneration of our estates** to ensure current tenants have good-quality, safe housing and our estates are desirable areas to live
- ▶ **Address the challenge of decarbonisation** and ensure we become cleaner and greener in all services we deliver, allowing our tenants to benefit from energy-efficient homes that are affordable to run and benefit the environment
- ▶ Strive to **lower the waiting list** for our properties by providing more housing in the city that are suitable for all needs and personal circumstances

How you can help

In order to deliver our 30-year plan we need to hear from you, our tenants, to inform what else you would like us to focus on above and beyond the four priorities outlined overleaf.

We want to hear from you and learn what your priorities are, and in what areas you believe we could improve. And we want to continue the conversation beyond the 30-year-plan publication date so you have a direct line to us to discuss any issues, any suggestions etc you might have throughout the plan's duration.

As well as taking your comments on board, we have also consulted with Lincoln Tenants' Panel which represents the views and interests of all the council's tenants – as the Panel is made up of tenants themselves.

Win £100

Please send your comments to us (positive or negative) and one lucky person will win £100!



CUT OUT TO POST BACK TO US

We want to hear from you

It is important to us that you understand our plans, why we are doing what we do while also being able to ask questions. Use the QR code, below, (alternatively you can visit ***) and answer the following questions for you and then provide any further information you'd like to share about your experience of being a council tenant in the city of Lincoln:

Please submit by **25 August** / Score **1 (very poor)** to **10 (very good)**

Please rate what it is like to live on your estate/neighbourhood

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please tell us the main reasons for this score

How would you rate the paths/green space/play space on your estate/neighbourhood?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Are there any problems/issues with this these spaces?

How would you rate the parking arrangements/spaces on your estate/neighborhoods?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Are there any problems/issues with this these arrangements/spaces?

How safe do you feel on your estate/neighbourhood?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please tell us the main reasons for this score

If you live in a flat or maisonette, please answer the next few questions:

Please rate the indoor communal area(s) you use

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please rate the outdoor communal area(s) you use

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Are there any problems/issues with these communal spaces?

Final question What are the top 5 improvements you'd like to see on your estate/ neighbourhood?

Name

Email

Telephone



Scan the QR code to submit online

PLEASE DO GET IN TOUCH
Answer the questions and provide us with the feedback. If you are unable to access the form online, you can email your answers to us or post them.

You can email your answers or post back to us

Email customer.services@lincoln.gov.uk

Address City of Lincoln Council, City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1DD

City of Lincoln Council 30 Year Business Plan Consultation – Results Summary

The maximum number of respondents per question was 311.

It is important to note that for those questions where respondents were asked to rate an area based on a score of 1-10 with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied. These have been shown as percentages for all numbers 1-10 with an average score provided within the supporting commentary.

Additionally, for those comments based questions, in some cases the comments provided cover more than one topic. In these instances, each comment has been placed under the topic with the greatest weighting.

Please rate what it is like to live on your estate/neighbourhood (Score 1 – 10)

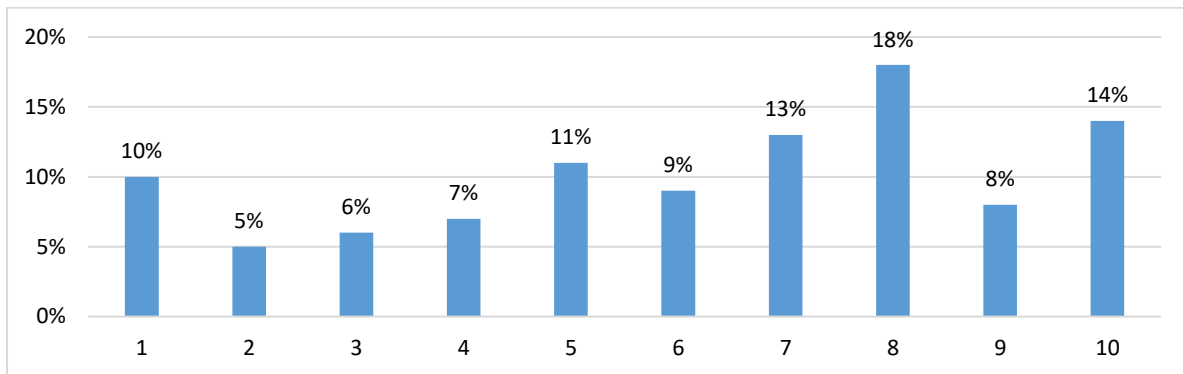


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows how respondents rated (Score 1-10) what it is like to live on their estate/neighbourhood. Those respondents who rated '5' or above amounted to 73% (226 respondents). The average score rating for this question was 6.20.

Please tell us the main reasons for this score.

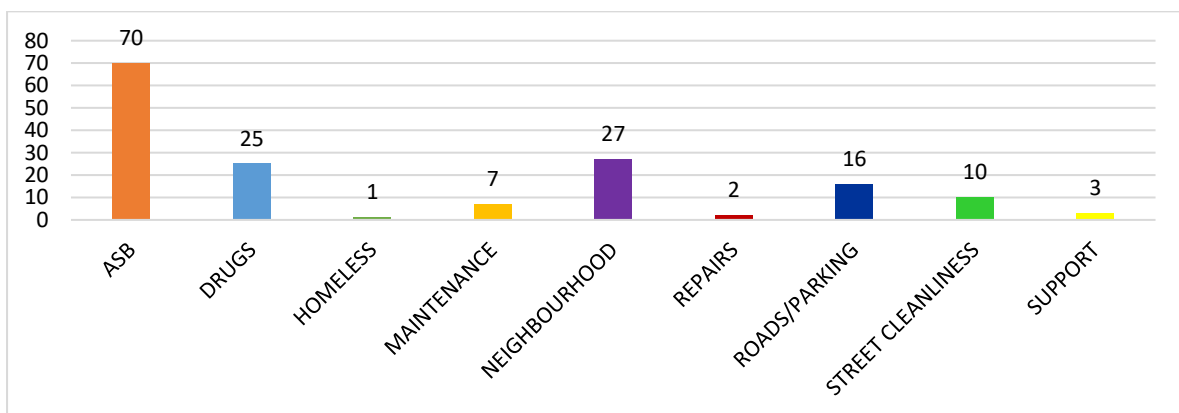


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the main reasons why respondents rated their score for what it is like to live in their estate/neighbourhood. This was a comments-based question. Figure 2 is an

overview of the negative comments by category. Of the 265 responses to this question, there were 104 positive comments and 161 negative comments. The most common reason given was 'ASB' (Anti-social behaviour) with 70 comments (26.4%).

**How would you rate the paths/green space/play space on your estate/neighbourhood?
(Score 1 – 10)**

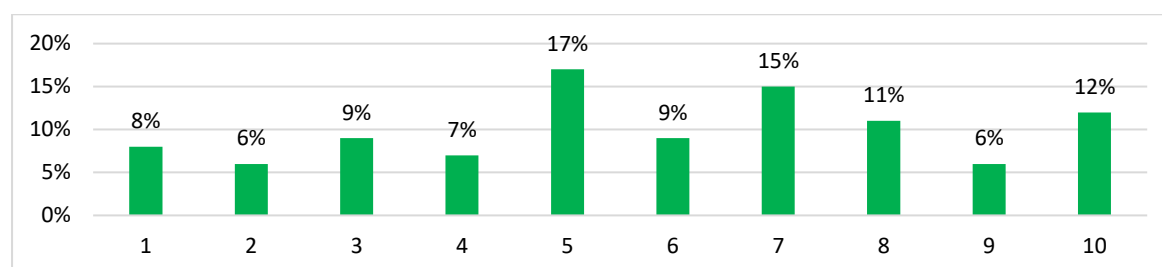


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows how respondents rated (Score 1-10) what the paths/green space/play space is like in their estate/neighbourhood. Respondents who rated '5' or above totalled 70% (213 respondents). The average score rating for this area was 5.75.

Are there any problems/issues with this these spaces?

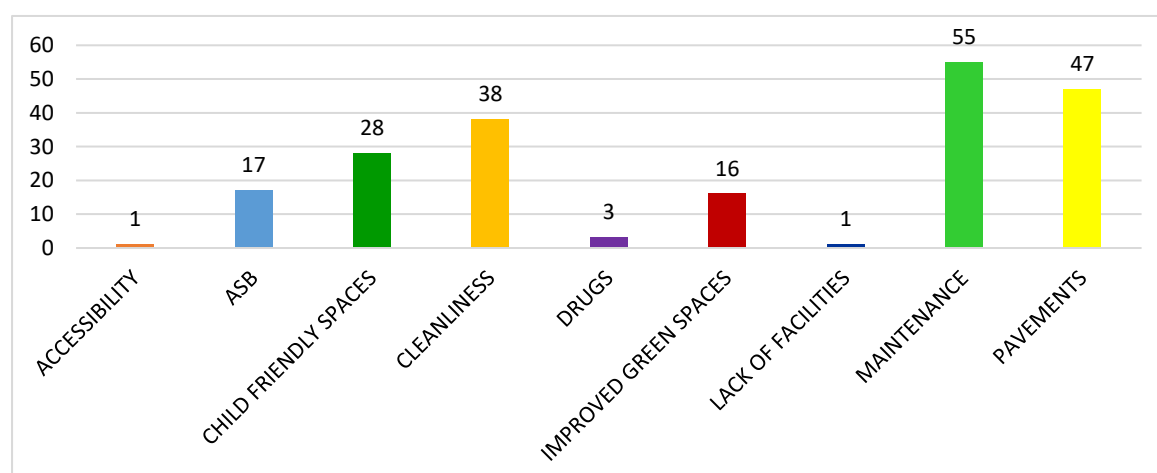


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows whether or not respondents thought there were any problems with paths/green space/play space on their estate/neighbourhood. This was a comments-based question. Figure 4 is an overview of the negative comments by category. Of the 246 responses to this question, there were 40 positive comments and 206 negative comments. The most common topic was 'Maintenance' with 55 comments (22.4%).

How would you rate the parking arrangements/spaces on your estate/neighbourhoods? (score 1 – 10)

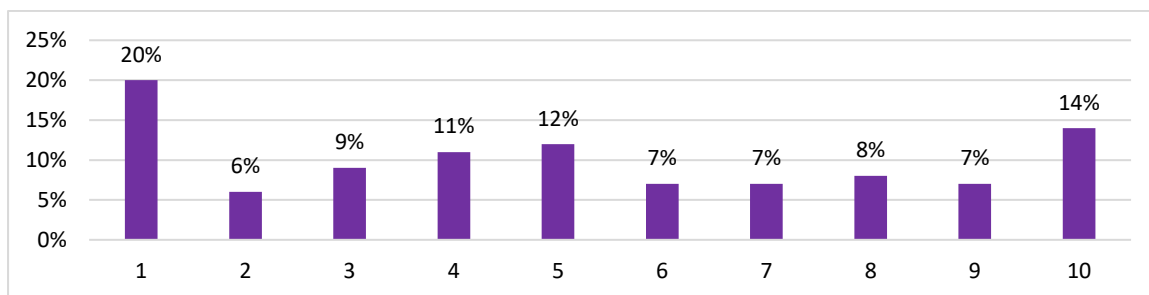


Figure 5

Figure 5 shows how respondents rated (Score 1-10) the parking arrangements/spaces on their estate/neighbourhood. The proportion of respondents who rated '5' or above was 55% (162 respondents). The average score rating for this area was 5.19.

Are there any problems/issues with this these arrangements/spaces?

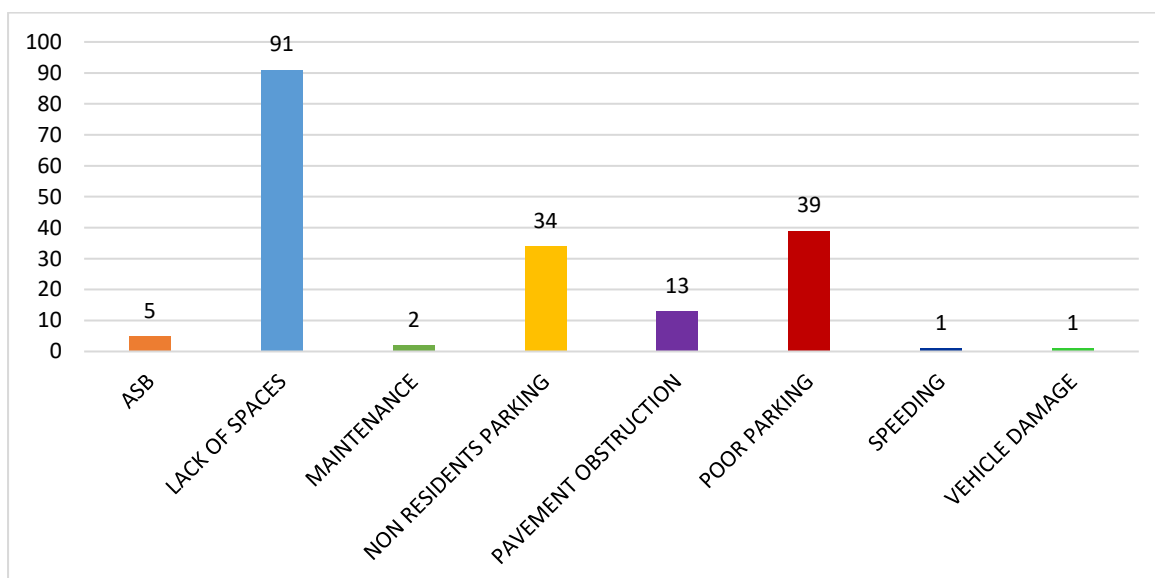


Figure 6

Figure 6 shows whether or not respondents thought there were any problems with parking arrangements/spaces on their estate/neighbourhood. This was a comments-based question. Figure 6 is an overview of the negative comments, categorised based on respondents' feedback. Of the 228 responses to this question, there were 42 positive comments and 186 negative comments. The most common topic was 'Lack of spaces' with 91 comments (39.9%).

How safe do you feel on your estate/neighbourhood? (score 1 – 10)

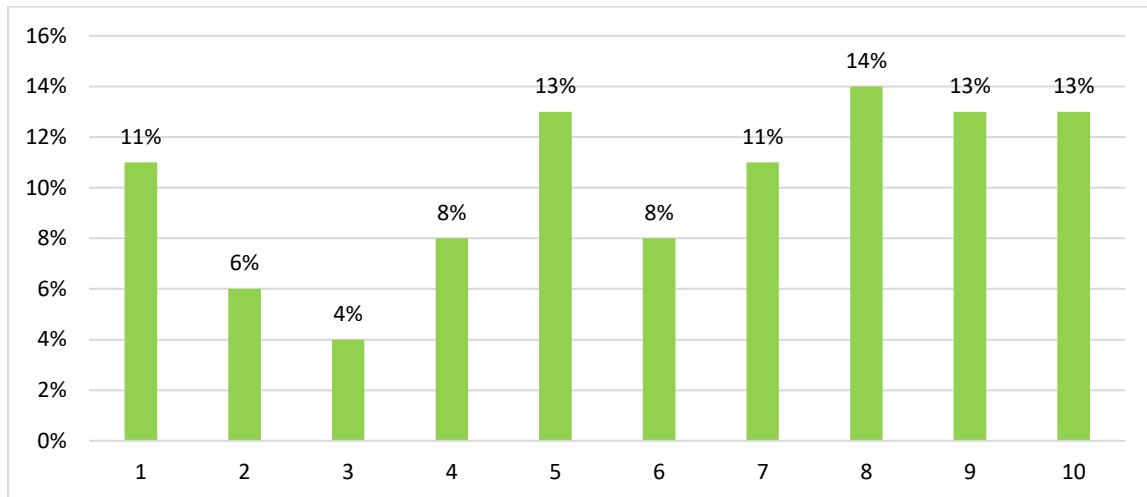


Figure 7

Figure 7 shows how respondents rated (Score 1-10) how safe they feel on their estate/neighbourhood. Those respondents who rated '5' or above was 72% (218 respondents). The average score rating for this area was 6.10.

Please tell us the main reasons for this score.

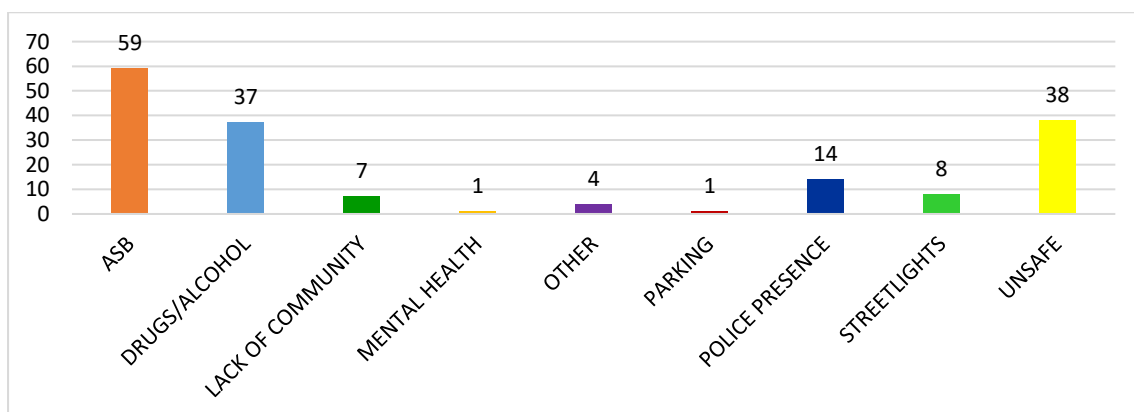


Figure 8

Figure 8 shows the main reasons why respondents rated their score for how safe they feel in their estate/neighbourhood. This was a comments-based question. Figure 8 is an overview of the negative comments by category. Of the 233 responses to this question, there were 64 positive comments and 169 negative comments. The most common topic was 'ASB' (Anti-social behaviour) with 59 comments (25.3%).

The following two questions on communal areas related to those respondents who live in a flat or maisonette only.

Please rate the indoor communal area(s) you use (score 1 – 10)

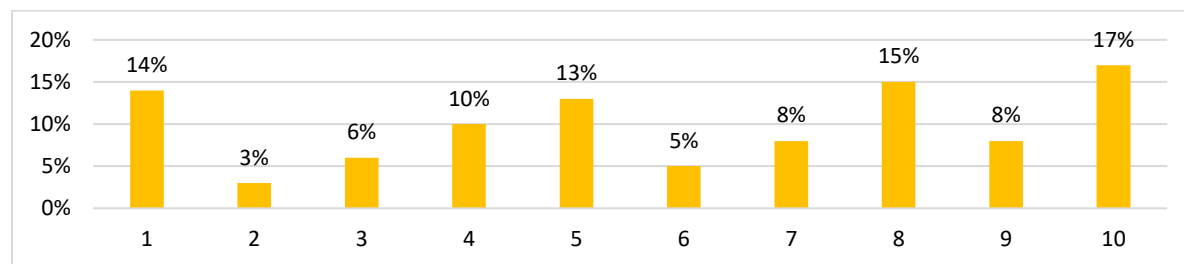


Figure 9

Figure 9 shows how respondents rated (Score 1-10) the indoor communal areas that they use. The proportion of respondents who rated '5' or above was 66% (115 respondents). The average score rating for this area was 5.97.

Please rate the outdoor communal area(s) you use (score 1 to 10)

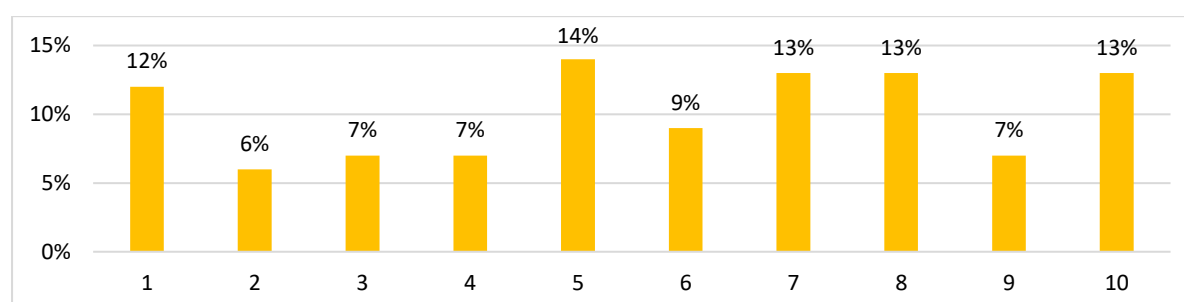


Figure 10

Figure 10 shows how respondents rated (Score 1-10) the outdoor communal areas that they use. The proportion of respondents who rated '5' or above was 69% (125 respondents). The average score rating for this area was 5.77.

Are there any problems/issues with these communal spaces?

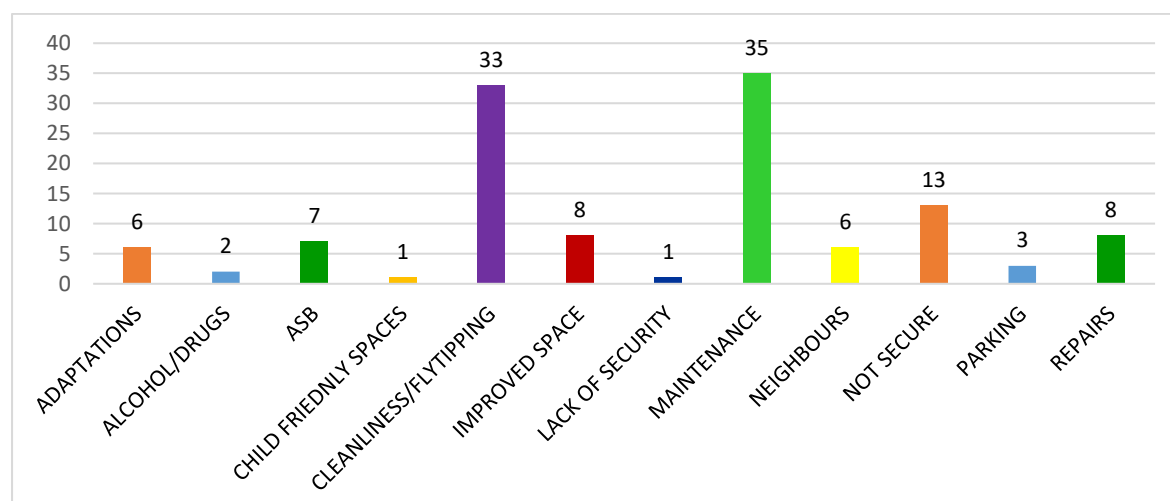


Figure 11

Figure 8 shows the main reasons whether or not respondents had any issues with communal spaces in their estate/neighbourhood. This was a comments-based question. Figure 11 is an overview of the negative comments by category. Of the 157 responses to

this question, there were 33 positive comments and 124 negative comments. The most common topic was 'Maintenance' with 35 comments (22.3%).

What are the top 5 improvements you'd like to see on your estate/neighbourhood?

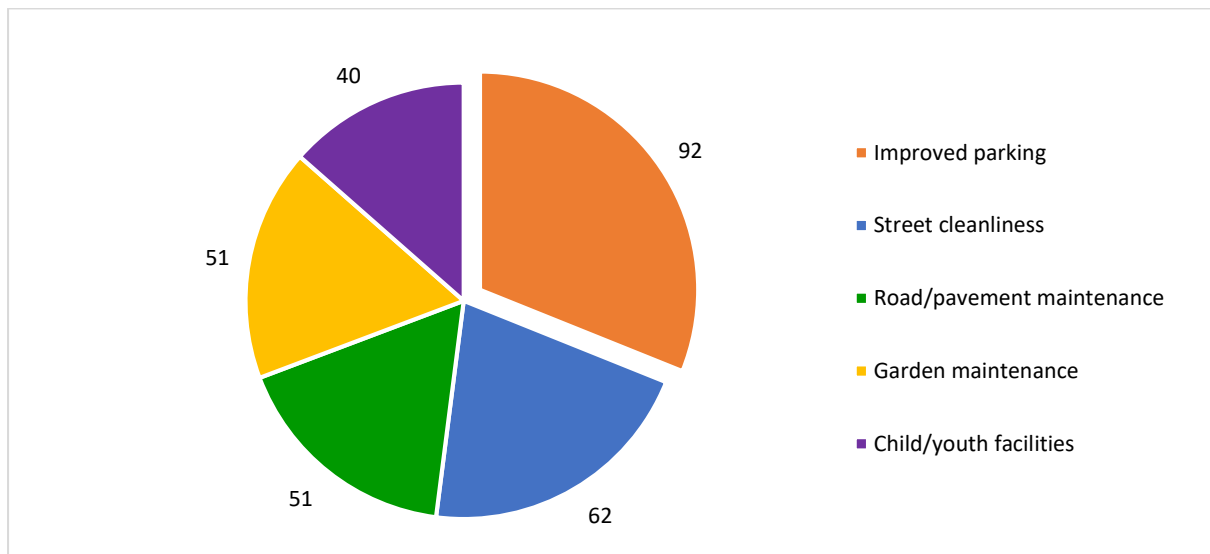


Figure 12

Figure 8 shows the top 5 improvements respondents would like to see in their estate/neighbourhood. This was a comments-based question. Figure 12 is an overview of the comments/improvements categorised based on respondents' feedback. Of the 253 responses to this question, the most common topic was 'Improved parking' with 92 comments (36.4%).

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | REVIEW OF THE PET POLICY |
| DIRECTORATE: | HOUSING AND INVESTMENT |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | MARIANNE UPTON – TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information relating to the impact on the Pet Policy following the recent changes to the Schedule of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, relating to XL Bully dogs.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Government made a decision to add XL Bully dogs to the list of banned dogs in 2023.

- 2.2 The first part of the ban came into force on 31st December 2023 and became against the law to:

- sell an XL Bully dog
- abandon an XL Bully dog or let it stray
- give away an XL Bully dog
- breed from an XL Bully dog
- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle

- 2.3 The second part of the ban comes into force on 1st February 2024 and will make it a criminal offence to own an XL Bully dog in England and Wales unless the dog has a Certificate of Exemption.

- 2.4 There will be some City of Lincoln Council tenants who already have XL Bully dogs at their home, so the Council needs to have a clear corporate position on the rules and the responsibilities for our tenants.

- 2.5 The Council has a Pet Policy document which was last updated in 2013, which needs to be reviewed.

- 2.6 The current policy does not allow any dog breeds covered by the Act, or make any reference to The Dangerous Dogs Exemption Schemes (England and Wales) Order 2015.

3. Proposed Amendments

- 3.1 That the policy is reviewed in full to ensure it reflects all legislation and City of Lincoln Council's reasonable approach to keeping pets in properties.

- 3.2 Ensure that the policy reflects more recent evidence relating to emotional support that animals can provide and provide clear information about this to tenants.

- 3.3 That a clear statement is made about whether banned dog breeds can be kept in our properties in line with any Exemption regulations.

4. Strategic Priorities

4.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

To have a fair and consistent approach for our tenants who wish to have pets.

4.2 Let's deliver quality housing

Quality housing is not solely about the condition of the property. It is also about making a positive environment where people can thrive. For many people, the ability to have pets enhances their wellbeing and home.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in reviewing this policy.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications of reviewing this policy.

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Although the review of the policy may have an impact on tenants who currently own XL Bully dogs, the change is legislative and beyond the control of the council.

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

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the policy review to consider the impact of any amendments to tenants and applicants and actions the council can take to support tenants with the changes and information that can be provided.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 (i) Options Explored

6.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

7. Recommendation

7.1 That the Pet Policy is reviewed in full to ensure it is up to date with legislation by 31st March 2024.

7.2 That the council allows current XL Bully owners to retain their pets, subject to them:

- Obtaining permission from us to keep a pet
- Meeting all Exemption criteria
- Not allowing their pets to cause a nuisance.

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: Marianne Upton, Tenancy Services Manager
Email address: marianne.upton@lincoln.gov.uk

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SUBJECT: TENANCY POLICY

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

**REPORT AUTHOR: PAULA BURTON, HOUSING STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT
MANAGER**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 For Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee to consider the contents of the City of Lincoln Council's (CoLC's) Tenancy Policy prior to its implementation and publication.

2. Background

- 2.1 It is a requirement under the Localism Act 2011 for each local authority to produce a Tenancy Strategy and all Registered Providers must publish a Tenancy Policy that aligns with the Tenancy Strategy. As the Housing Revenue Account is a Registered Provider the Council is required to produce and publish a Tenancy Policy.

3. City of Lincoln Council Tenancy Policy

- 3.1 The Tenancy Policy specifies the different types of tenancies, licences and non-secure tenancies to be granted to new and existing Council tenants. The policy provides a framework of which tenancies the Council will grant and the exceptions to granting the most secure form of tenure.
- 3.2 The policy ensures that the tenancy granted is compatible with the purpose of the accommodation provided, considering the housing needs of individuals and households, sustainability of the community and making best use of housing stock.
- 3.3 The policy outlines the following detail:
- Introductory tenancies
 - Secure tenancies
 - Non-secure tenancies
 - The use of Licenses
 - The use of Demoted tenancies
 - The use of Family Intervention tenancies
 - Granting of joint tenancies, succession and assignments
 - New tenancy process
- 3.4 The draft tenancy policy is attached as Appendix 1 for reference.

4. Strategic Priorities

4.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

This policy will support tenants, potential applicants and applicants on the housing register to obtain suitable accommodation and reduce inequalities in regard to the financial, physical, and mental impact of living in housing that does not meet their needs.

4.2 Let's deliver quality housing.

The Tenancy Policy states the different tenancy types and the security of tenure attached to each. Publishing this information empowers tenants and potential applicants when making decisions about where they want to live and which housing may be the most suitable for them.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications relating to this policy.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications specifically for the implementation of this policy, however it should be noted that the tenant will sign up to the terms set out in their tenancy or licence, and any variations should be explained and understood before the tenancy or licence is signed.

There are no procurement implications with the introduction of this policy.

5.3 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

The introduction of the Tenancy Policy helps to ensure fair access to housing based on individual/ family need whilst also meeting the Council's statutory duty.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights form part of the processes being followed and the specific housing teams involved within the assessment and award of tenancies and licences. Upon assessment each applicant will be considered against a set criteria based on their current need in line with the Lincs Homefinder Policy.

A combined Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for both the Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Strategy and no impacts in regard to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights have been identified.

5.4 Human Resources

This scheme will be managed by existing staff within the Directorate of Housing and Investment. The policy will form part of the core landlord services that existing staff carry out.

5.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

The policy will advise tenants and applicants of tenancy types and licences granted and the properties will remain owned and managed by the Housing Revenue Account.

5.6 Corporate Health and Safety Implications

The scheme does not have any corporate health and safety implications. Any work and processes followed will be in line with existing corporate working practice.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 (i) Options Explored

No Introduction of a Tenancy Policy

The City of Lincoln Council would not meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

Implementation of Tenancy Policy (Preferred Option)

The introduction of the Tenancy Policy provides a clear and useful policy to guide tenants on the tenancy types and any considerations provided by CoLC. It also ensures CoLC are meeting the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 To consider and approve the Tenancy policy prior to implementation and publication.

| | |
|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| List of Background Papers: | None |
| Lead Officer: | Paula Burton Housing Strategy and Investment Manager Paula.burton@lincoln.gov.uk |

City of Lincoln Council Tenancy Policy



Let's deliver
quality
housing

January 2024

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| Succession and Assignment of Tenancies | 6 |
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the City of Lincoln Council will use the range of options that are available as a result of the Localism Act 2011 and the changes to the regulatory standards that all social landlords are expected to meet.

The policy therefore sets out:

- The type of tenancies City of Lincoln Council will grant and the circumstances in which we will grant tenancies of a particular type and to set out those exceptions to us granting the most secure form of tenure.
- To ensure that the tenancy granted is compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of our housing stock.
- To comply with legislation, regulation, and good practice in the granting of tenancies, including the revised regulatory framework for social housing.
- To clarify the council's position on succession, assignments (including mutual exchanges) and joint tenancies.

Policy Objectives

To achieve the Council's Corporate Plan, Vision 2025 identifies the following 5 strategic priorities:

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

This policy supports the **Let's deliver quality housing** priority key in by stating how it intends to meet the aspiration of **Let's provide housing which meets the varied needs of our residents** by:

- Ensuring that we continue to house those households that are deemed to be in housing need.
- Making the best use of social housing stock including reducing overcrowding, tackling under occupation, and making best use of adapted housing for those with a disability.
- Providing support to tenants when they need it to enable them to sustain their tenancies.
- Supporting the development of new homes and sustainable communities across the city.



Types of Tenancies Granted

Introductory Tenancies

For new tenants, City of Lincoln Council will grant a 12-month introductory tenancy which is managed and reviewed regularly, during the introductory period. At the end of the introductory period, a decision is taken on whether the tenancy should be extended or ended as a result of tenancy breaches. If no such decision is warranted or taken, the tenancy will automatically become secure at the end of the introductory period. For extended introductory tenancies, there will be a further review of the conduct of the tenancy to determine whether there have been any further breaches before expiry of the introductory period.

Introductory tenants will not have the same statutory rights as secure tenants. They will not have the right to:

- Buy their council property (though it will count towards the qualifying period).
- The same protection from eviction for any breach of their tenancy agreement
- Assign or transfer the tenancy (some exceptions may apply)
- Take in lodgers.
- Carry out improvements or mutually exchange with another tenant.

An introductory tenant will have the right of appeal if we intend to end the tenancy.

Operational procedures will provide for a suitable appeal/review mechanism to challenge the decision to terminate via the City of Lincoln Council Housing Appeal Panel.

In considering an appeal against the termination of an introductory tenancy and reaching a decision the panel will consider the tenant and their family's circumstances, including their age, disabilities, medical conditions, vulnerabilities, and dependants.

Secure Tenancies

Introductory tenants whose tenancies have not been ended will be granted a secure tenancy automatically after a period of 12 months or – if the introductory tenancy is extended – 18 months.

Secure tenancies are granted to existing Council tenants who are already secure or assured tenants from other registered providers. This tenancy is not time-limited and may only be terminated on the grounds set out in the Housing Act 1985 (as amended) and if judged reasonable by a Court.

Non-Secure Tenancies

In some limited circumstances it is possible for the Council, at its discretion, to grant a tenancy which is neither an introductory nor a secure tenancy. This is a non-secure tenancy and the circumstances in which such a Council tenancy will apply, are set within Schedule 1



of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended). We will grant non secure tenancies where short-term accommodation is required. An example of this, is where the Council is obliged to provide accommodation as part of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), which is temporary accommodation for applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, requiring additional support to sustain future independent accommodation. As a non-secure tenant, they will not have the right to:

- Buy their Council property through the Right to Buy scheme.
- The same protection from eviction for any breach of their tenancy agreement
- Assign or transfer the tenancy through mutual exchange.
- Take in lodgers.
- Succession of tenancy to someone else

There is no requirement to prove a statutory ground for possession of a non-secure tenancy. This tenancy can be ended after four weeks following issue of a valid Notice to Quit.

Licences

City of Lincoln Council will grant licences for lettings where there is not exclusive possession of a dwelling or part of a dwelling and/or for temporary accommodation when discharging our homelessness duty. We will also grant licences of properties into which an existing tenant moves temporarily because they cannot remain in their permanent home for reasons including:

- Planned major repairs/improvements.
- Fire, flood, natural disaster, or similar event.

Demoted Tenancies

City of Lincoln Council may grant a secure tenant a demoted tenancy through a demotion order granted by a court as an alternative to eviction, in circumstances involving anti-social behaviour or some similar breach of tenancy. A demoted tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy that will, after twelve months, revert automatically to a secure tenancy unless terminated by the tenant or rescinded by order of the court. We will only terminate a demoted tenancy because of continued anti-social behaviour or similar breach of tenancy. City of Lincoln Council uses demoted tenancies as a positive tool that will enable us to deal effectively with incidents of anti-social behaviour in a targeted and supportive way as part of our approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Family Intervention Tenancies

City of Lincoln Council may grant a family intervention tenancy under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 if a secure or introductory tenant agrees to it. This will follow breaches of tenancy for anti-social behaviour or some similar breach and where, in all parties' opinions, such a tenancy would be beneficial and where intensive support will be given to the tenants through a family intervention project. Family intervention tenancies will only be offered if the tenant is to be transferred to alternative dispersed or purpose-built accommodation.

Family intervention tenancies will not last normally for more than two years. We may agree to offer a family intervention tenancy an introductory tenancy through a transfer back to



mainstream housing. We may terminate a family intervention tenancy by Notice to Quit after having served notice of intent and having fulfilled our obligations to offer a review process of that notice of intent to terminate the agreement. Further operational guidance will be issued separately.

Joint Tenancies

Joint tenancies are only issued at the start of a tenancy by City of Lincoln Council. There is no specific provision in law that governs the granting of joint tenancies, nor to add a joint tenant during the duration of the tenancy.

However, If a tenant requests a joint tenancy the request will be considered and is at the discretion of the City of Lincoln Council, Tenancy Management Team.

Succession and Assignment of Tenancies

A tenant may be eligible to succeed to an existing tenancy which may be introductory, secure, or demoted. Succession will be considered via succession rights, there can be no succession to a non-secure, licence or a family intervention tenancy. If someone who was not the tenant's spouse (husband, wife, or civil partner) succeeds to a tenancy we may assist in rehousing the successor, if the home is too big for their needs. In those circumstances we will always offer suitable alternative accommodation to the successor.

A spouse who is not a joint tenant may succeed to the tenancy upon the tenant's death provided they were living with the tenant immediately prior to death.

Someone who is not the tenant's spouse may only succeed to the tenancy if they had been living with the tenant for over a year before the tenant's death. Requests for such succession will be considered on their individual merits as is currently the case.

Normally there can be only one statutory succession to a secure, introductory, or demoted tenancy. However, we may consider granting a second succession where the existing tenant is a successor themselves by granting a discretionary succession to people who would not normally be eligible to succeed to a tenancy. Circumstances where we would consider this include:

- where the would-be successor is vulnerable through age, disability, illness, or some other similar reasons.
- where there are no practical alternative options for the would-be successor to consider in terms of re-housing.

Mutual exchanges will take effect through the assignment of the existing tenancy. Mutual exchanges are not permitted for introductory, non-secure tenants, demoted tenants, licensees, or family intervention tenants.

New Tenancy Process

The Council recognises the importance of establishing a good landlord/tenant relationship at the start of a new tenancy and we will conduct a comprehensive sign-up meeting that will



address all likely needs of a new tenancy, particularly for those who require additional support.

At the sign-up meeting, the Void Support Team will ensure that:

- The tenant clearly understands the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement.
- They will clarify methods and frequencies for paying their rent and accessing benefits.
- They will check to see if the tenant or anyone in the household has any particular support needs.

All new tenants will be visited by their Housing Officer within 3 weeks of the start of their tenancy and this will provide an opportunity to:

- Clarify any tenancy information and household details.
- Identify any property issues (such as repairs)
- Identify any other issues such as support needs or vulnerabilities and provide relevant signposting/ completing referrals to support the tenant in sustaining their tenancy.

The Tenancy Agreement sets out the core responsibilities of the Council and the tenant, this will include an explanation of the introductory tenant process. We will ensure tenants are aware of these responsibilities during the initial sign up meeting and New Tenancy Visit. We will also consult with tenants about any proposed significant changes to the Tenancy Agreement.

We will maintain good quality tenancy records and will comply with the General Data Protection Regulations. Please see our data protection and privacy policies for more information. These can be found here <https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/privacy-policy/data-protection-privacy-policy>.

We will ensure all new tenants are provided with clear information regarding the terms of their tenancy and the consequences of failing to keep to those terms. If a tenant breaches a condition of their tenancy agreement, we will provide appropriate and accurate information to any tenant where there has been a tenancy breach to explain what action will be taken by us. We will be clear about any action a tenant is required to take to rectify any breaches where appropriate.

Equality and Diversity

We aim to ensure that our policies and procedures are fair and transparent; and we work towards achieving balanced and sustainable communities in accordance with our equality and diversity policy and strategy. The award and type of tenancy or licence issued to a tenant is considered, determined, and allocated in line with the Lincs Homefinder Allocations policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless required through legislative or regulatory changes.

References:

In developing this policy, City of Lincoln Council has had regard to:

- City of Lincoln Council Tenancy Strategy.
- City of Lincoln Council Mutual Exchange Policy
- Lincs Homefinder Allocation Policy (City of Lincoln Council choice based letting scheme)
- City of Lincoln Council Homelessness Strategy.
- City of Lincoln Council Vision 2025.
- Equality and diversity policy and strategy
- Anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime policies.
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children from abuse policies.

Legal Framework

- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1985
- Equality Act 2010

Regulatory Framework

- Allocation Code of Guidance 2012
- Homelessness Code of Guidance
- Regulatory Framework for Social Housing 2012 - Tenancy Standard

Equality with Human Rights Analysis Toolkit



Appendix 2

The Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 require us to consider the impact of our policies and practices in respect of equality and human rights.

We should consider potential impact before any decisions are made or policies or practices are implemented. This analysis toolkit provides the template to ensure you consider all aspects and have a written record that you have done this.

If you need any guidance or assistance completing your Equality and Human Rights Analysis contact:

Corporate Policy Team - Email: policy@lincoln.gov.uk

Legal Services – Email: louise.simpson@lincoln.gov.uk

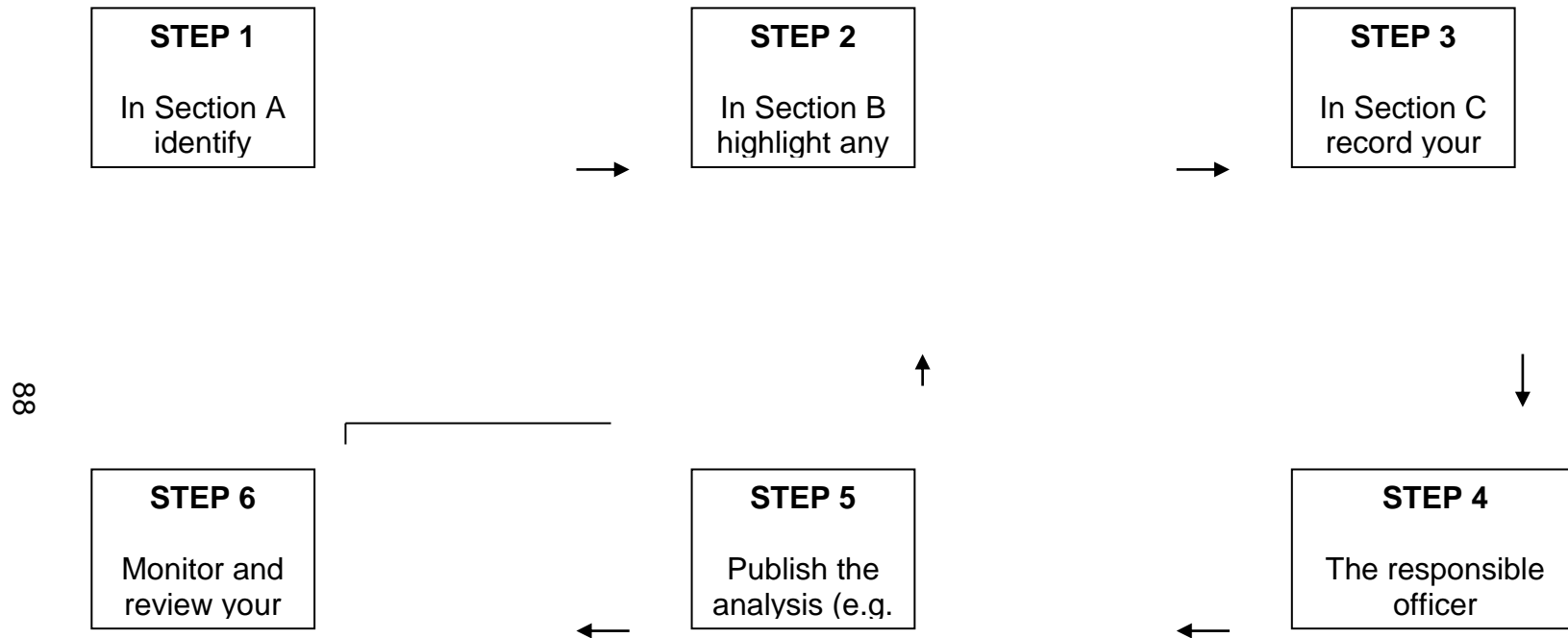
A diagram of the process you should follow is on page 2, and glossary and guidance to help you complete the toolkit can be found on pages 6-9.

∞ Even after your policy, project or service has been implemented; it is recommended that analysis is undertaken every three years, and that this analysis is updated at any significant points in between. The purpose of any update is that the actual effects will only be known after the implementation of your policy, project or service. Additionally, area demographics could change, leading to different needs, alternative provision can become available, or new options to reduce an adverse effect could become apparent.

Useful questions to consider when completing this toolkit

1. What is the current situation?
2. What are the drivers for change?
3. What difference will the proposal make?
4. What are the assumptions about the benefits?
5. How are you testing your assumptions about the benefits?
6. What are the assumptions about any adverse impacts?
7. How are you testing your assumptions about adverse impacts?
8. Who are the stakeholders and how will they be affected?
9. How are you assessing the risks and minimising the adverse impacts?
10. What changes will the Council need to make as a result of introducing this policy / project / service / change?
11. How will you undertake evaluation once the changes have been implemented?

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO EQUALITY ANALYSIS



* Evidence could include information from consultations.

SECTION A

| | |
|--|---|
| Name of policy / project / service | City of Lincoln Council Tenancy Policy & Tenancy Strategy |
| Background and aims of policy / project / service at outset | <p>All registered providers including City of Lincoln Council are required to publish a tenancy policy to set out the types of tenancies being used when letting homes in line with the Localism Act 2011. This is to ensure tenancy types are known/transparent, comply with legislation, regulation and good practice. The City of Lincoln Council Tenancy Policy includes all tenure types currently being provided by City of Lincoln Council.</p> <p>City of Lincoln Council is a Local Housing Authority and in line with the Localism Act 2011 section 150, has a duty to also produce a tenancy strategy. The legislation clearly states that Registered Providers should “have regard” to the Local Authority Strategies when developing their own Tenancy Policies. However, the Strategy has no statutory weight, but can help to guide Registered Providers to achieve a consistent approach across the sector to ensure best use of housing tenures.</p> <p>The Tenancy Strategy is an informative guidance document, publishing tenancy types being used by Registered Providers and listing registered providers operating within the City of Lincoln</p> <p>The City of Lincoln Council Tenancy Strategy is intended to set out Council’s preferred approach to managing existing registered providers housing stock and to validate that the registered providers are issuing the correct tenure types within their registered provider status and terms. Copies of tenancy policies from the registered providers help to inform and shape this strategy. Annual asset portfolio details are also requested from registered provider to ensure up to date records are maintained on numbers of housing registered provider housing and tenure types these has been let on.</p> <p>This tenancy strategy replaces the joint Central Lincolnshire Tenancy Strategy which was published in 2013 due to each District now introducing its own strategy due to the differing operating environments across the district and not all being stock holding authorities.</p> |
| Person(s) responsible for policy or decision, or advising on decision, and also responsible for equality | The responsible person for the City of Lincoln Tenancy Policy, EIA review and validation is the Tenancy Services Manager in conjunction with Area Housing Managers, Housing Solutions Manager and the Housing Strategy and Investment Manager. |

| | |
|--|--|
| analysis | The responsible person for the Tenancy Strategy, EIA review and validation is the Housing Strategy and Investment Manager in conjunction with the Housing Solutions Manager. |
| Key people involved <i>i.e. decision-makers, staff implementing it</i> | Housing Strategy and Investment Manager, Tenancy Services Manager |

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SECTION B

This is to be completed and reviewed as policy / project / service development progresses

| | Is the likely effect positive or negative? (please tick all that apply) | | | Please describe the effect and evidence that supports this and if appropriate who you have consulted with* | Is action possible to mitigate adverse impacts? | Details of action planned including dates, or why action is not possible |
|--|---|----------|------|--|---|--|
| | Positive | Negative | None | | | |
| Age | | | x | No Identified impacts | NA | |
| Disability including carers (see Glossary) | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Gender re-assignment | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------|----|--|
| Pregnancy and maternity | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Race | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Religion or belief | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Sex | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Sexual orientation | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Marriage/civil partnership | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |
| Human Rights (see page 8) | | | x | No identified impacts | NA | |

**Evidence could include information from consultations; voluntary group feedback; satisfaction and usage data (i.e. complaints, surveys, and service data); and reviews of previous strategies*

| Did any information gaps exist? | Y/N/NA | If so what were they and what will you do to fill these? |
|---------------------------------|--------|---|
| None at this stage | N/A | <p>The CoLC tenancy policy is to be published to offer transparency and guidance on tenure types provided by the council.</p> <p>The Tenancy Strategy has no statutory weight, but is to be used to help guide Registered Providers to achieve a consistent approach across the sector to ensure best use of housing tenures.</p> |

SECTION C

Decision Point - Outcome of Assessment so far:

Based on the information in section B, what is the decision of the responsible officer (please select one option below):

- **No equality or human right Impact** (your analysis shows there is no impact) - sign assessment below
- **No major change required** (your analysis shows no potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment)- sign assessment below
- **Adverse Impact but continue** (record objective justification for continuing despite the impact)-complete sections below
- **Adjust the policy** (Change the proposal to mitigate potential effect) -progress below only AFTER changes made
- **Put Policy on hold** (seek advice from the Policy Unit as adverse effects can't be justified or mitigated) -STOP progress

Tick here

[x]
[]
[]
[]
[]

| | |
|--|--|
| Conclusion of Equality Analysis (describe objective justification for continuing) | No negative E&D impacts identified. The strategy sets out the terms of tenure types and which registered providers are operating in the area. The award and type of tenancy/ licence issued to a tenant will be determined and allocated in line with the registered providers tenancy policy. It should also be noted that prior to the award of a tenancy this often includes nominations via the Lincs Homefinder Allocations policy which also has its own policy and EIA. Neither the Tenancy Strategy nor the Tenancy Policy actually change the Council's approach to allocating or managing tenancies in the city. |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| When and how will you review and measure the impact after implementation?* | EIA to be revisited every 3 years in conjunction with the Tenancy Strategy Review and City of Lincoln Tenancy Policy. Should any legislative changes occur during this time further reviews may take place earlier than the stated 3 years. |
|--|---|

| | | | |
|---|----------|------|------------|
| Checked and approved by responsible officer(s) (Sign and Print Name) | A Ripley | Date | 11/01/2024 |
| Checked and approved by Assistant Director (Sign and Print Name) | P Burton | Date | 11/01/2024 |

When completed, please send to policy@lincoln.gov.uk and include in Committee Reports which are to be sent to the relevant officer in Democratic Services

The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance to the Public Sector Equality Duty is available via: www.equalityhumanrights.com/new-public-sector-equality-duty-guidance/

City of Lincoln Council Equality and Human Rights Analysis Toolkit: Glossary of Terms

Adult at Risk - an adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Adverse Impact. Identified where the Council's operations has a less favourable effect on one or more groups covered by the Equality Act 2010 than it has on other groups (or a section of a group)

Carer - see also disability by association. A carer is a person who is unpaid and looks after or supports someone else who needs help with their day-to-day life, because of their age, long-term illness, disability, mental health problems, substance misuse

Disability by association. Non disabled people are also protected from discrimination by association to a disabled person. This might be a friend,

partner, colleague or relative. This applies to carers who have a caring responsibility to a disabled person.

Differential Impact. Identified where a policy or practice affects a given group or groups in a different way to other groups. Unlike adverse impact, differential impact can be positive or negative.

Disability. It is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as 'having a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Physical impairment is a condition affecting the body, perhaps through sight or hearing loss, a mobility difficulty or a health condition.

Mental impairment is a condition affecting 'mental functioning', for example a learning disability or mental health condition such as manic depression

Diversity. Diversity is about respecting and valuing the differences between people. It is also recognising and understanding the mix of people and communities who use services and their different needs.

Discrimination. Discrimination has been defined as 'the unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on less because of a protected characteristic – see protected characteristic. This includes discrimination by association, perception, direct and indirect discrimination.

Example of discrimination: An employer does not offer a training opportunity to an older member of staff because they assume that they would not be interested, and the opportunity is given to a younger worker

Equality. The right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment:

Equality Analysis. This is a detailed and systematic analysis of how a policy, practice, procedure or service potentially or actually has differential impact on people of different Protected Characteristics

Equality Objectives. There are specific strategic objectives in the area of equalities and should set out what services are seeking to achieve in each area of service in terms of Equality.

Equality of Opportunity. Equality of opportunity or equality opportunities may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination. There are two main types of equality encompassed in equal opportunities:

1. Equality of treatment is concerned with treating everyone the same. Thus, in an organisational context it recognises that institutional discrimination may exist in the form of unfair procedures and practices that favour those with some personal attributes, over others without them. The task of equal opportunities is therefore concerned with the elimination of these barriers.
2. Equality of outcome focuses on policies that either have an equal impact on different groups or intend the same outcomes for different groups.

Evidence. Information or data that shows proof of the impact or non impact - evidence may include consultations, documented discussions, complaints, surveys, usage data, and customer and employee feedback.

Foster good relations. This is explicitly linked to tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

General Equality Duty. The public sector equality duty on a public authority when carrying out its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.

Gender reassignment. The process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another – for example male to trans-female or female.

Harassment. This is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Human Rights – Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world - **see below**

Marriage and Civil Partnership. Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. Single people are not protected. Discrimination on grounds of marriage or civil partnership is prohibited under the Act. The prohibition applies only in relation to

employment and not the provision of goods and services.

Pregnancy and Maternity. Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Protected Characteristics. These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion and belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex/gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation

Public functions. These are any act or activity undertaken by a public authority in relation to delivery of a public service or carrying out duties or functions of a public nature e.g. the provision of policing and prison services, healthcare, including residential care of the elderly, government policy making or local authority services.

Race. This refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief. Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Section 11 of the Children Act. This duty is a duty under the Children Act 2004 that requires all agencies with responsibilities towards children to discharge their functions with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They must also ensure that any body providing services on their behalf must do the same. The purpose of this duty is that agencies give appropriate priority to safeguarding children and share concerns at an early stage to encourage preventative action.

Sex. It refers to whether a person is a man or a woman (of any age).

Sexual Orientation. A person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex; the opposite sex; or to both sexes: *Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual*

Victimisation. Victimisation takes place where one person treats another less favourably because he or she has exercised their legal rights in line with the Equality Act 2010 or helped someone else to do so.

Vulnerable Adult. A Vulnerable Adult is defined as someone over 16 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation'

Human Rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. They help you to flourish and fulfill your potential through:

- being safe and protected from harm
- being treated fairly and with dignity
- living the life you choose
- taking an active part in your community and wider society.

The Human Rights Act 1998 (also known as the Act or the HRA) came into force in the United Kingdom in October 2000. It is composed of a series of sections that have the effect of codifying the protections in the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to. They include:

- Right to life
- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Right to liberty and security
- Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment without law
- Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry and start a family
- Protection from discrimination in respect of these these rights and freedoms
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Right to education
- Right to participate in free elections

Many every day decisions taken in the workplace have no human rights implications. However, by understanding human rights properly you are more likely to know when human rights are relevant and when they are not. This should help you make decisions more confidently, and ensure that your decisions are sound and fair.

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SUBJECT: ADI'S LEGACY / HARTSHOLME COMMUNITY GARDEN

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING & INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: PAULA BURTON, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOUSING MANAGEMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee regarding the request made by Adi' Legacy to lease the land to the rear of Hartsholme Shops, Morton Drive for them to manage and maintain as a community garden at a nil or peppercorn rental cost per annum.

2. Background

- 2.1 The land to the rear of Hartsholme Shops on Morton Drive in Lincoln is land owned by the Housing Revenue Account. The piece of land is indicated in yellow on the attached Appendix A and is 244m².
- 2.2 Due to historical anti-social behaviour the land (and other land in the vicinity) was fenced off to prevent fly tipping, vandalism and people gathering and causing a nuisance to the shops and residents in the community.
- 2.3 In September 2023, Adi's Legacy CIC approached the City of Lincoln Council and requested use of the land to create a community garden for public use in the city.

3. Adi's Legacy

- 3.1 Adi's Legacy (CIC) is a registered non-profit community interest company and provides a unique service to individuals across the city. They cater to all in the community including those sleeping rough, those who have previously slept rough or living in hostel/temporary accommodation. They supply home packs, food and toiletry packs but also support anyone in need of extra help.
- 3.2 Adi's Legacy pre-loved shop opened on 5th August 2023 and is situated at 72 Hemswell Avenue, Lincoln.

4. Adi's Legacy Community Garden

- 4.1 Adi's Legacy's main aim is to bring the community together and create a safe multipurpose outdoor space for local residents to use. They hope that by creating a multipurpose garden, it would help prevent loneliness and isolation and make a positive impact on those living in the community. They aim to include the community in the upkeep of the area including gardening tasks, grass cutting and litter picking.

From the Adi's Legacy pre loved shop they will be able to supply drinks and snacks from the kitchen area of the shop which will all be supplied free of charge. They currently offer hot drinks and breakfast snacks in the shop. Adi's Legacy intend to use the utilities from the shop to provide electric for tools and water for the garden as needed.

- 4.2 Adi's Legacy aim to secure a formal lease for the land to enable them to bid for available funding to encourage community participation in looking after the garden, with assistance from volunteers already working for Adi's Legacy preloved shop. Adi's Legacy would also like to use the garden for events for the local community including barbecues, teddy bear picnics, family picnics, coffee and chat sessions, and aim to provide seating areas for all ages.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's drive inclusive economic growth

The establishment of a new community garden that is open to the public and maintained by members of the community and voluntary agencies will support jobs and training opportunities in the local voluntary sector.

5.2 Let's reduce inequality

The provision of the community garden promotes equality of opportunity and seeks to tackle deprivation by providing access to outdoor spaces to the local residents. Adi's Legacy Garden will also provide much needed opportunities for the public to be able to enjoy the space, participating in gardening and provide opportunities to support and promote mental health.

5.3 Let's deliver quality housing

The land being proposed for lease is not of a sufficient size for development of additional homes but will provide public outdoor space that the local residents will be able to access and use.

5.4 Let's enhance our remarkable place

The development and the green space enhances the community, creating a sense of belonging and pride in the local area.

5.5 Let's address the challenge of climate change

The proposal by Adi's Legacy looks to introduce and maintain plants in the garden will contribute to biodiversity and the public's awareness of how the community can work together to achieve a reduced amount of carbon emissions.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

The land being requested for lease was previously leased as a community garden. There has been no maintenance in place and the garden is in need of some maintenance in the future.

There are no foreseen financial expenditure costs connected to the granting of a lease for the garden as Adi's Legacy will be responsible for the maintenance costs for the garden.

No commercial potential for income has been identified for the piece of land.

Failure to grant permission for the lease will result in the Council having to fund ongoing costs to maintain the land as and when required.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

Legal implications have been explored and it is recommended that a formal lease be granted to Adi's Legacy for clarity of responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of the land.

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

The proposal to grant a lease to Adi's Legacy for the land requested for a community garden advances equality of opportunity by enabling members of the public to gain experience of volunteering roles and gives them work experience and also confidence to work with others.

The community engagement and participation activities that will be delivered in this project within the local community will be accessible and open to all local residents which encourages community cohesion and good local relationships as well as benefits to the health and wellbeing of local residents.

6.4 Human Resources

This project will be managed by existing staff within the Corporate Property Team and Tenancy Services Team.

6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

This programme will improve the use of formerly unused land owned by the Housing Revenue Account and will encourage community engagement and accountability for local community land.

6.6 Significant Community Impact

Long term, the community impact will be positive with improvement in the biodiversity of the area.

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety implications

It is not envisaged that there are any Health and Safety implications should the lease be granted.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 i) Options Explored:

Granting of the lease – The benefits of this are detailed within this report.

Decision to not grant the lease – This will trigger a piece of work to bring maintenance of the land back within the Housing Revenue Account responsibilities. This will incur a cost to the HRA and inclusion within the current DCE contract will be required.

7.2 ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach:

Management of the lease:

Risk: Adi's Legacy do not maintain and use the land for the reason the lease is granted.

Mitigation: Action can be taken to end the lease using the conditions contained within the lease.

8. Recommendation

8.1 For the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee to note the contents of this report and approve:

- The granting of a lease of the land to the rear of Hartsholme Shops to Adi's Legacy at a peppercorn rent for a term of seven years or less being terminable at the end of any year of lease or earlier should there be a breach of lease conditions.
- Each party to bear their own fees in the granting of such lease.

Is this a key decision? Yes

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: Paula Burton, Acting Assistant Director –
Housing Management
Paula.burton@lincoln.gov.uk

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Appendix A



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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

1 FEBRUARY 2024

SUBJECT: WORK PROGRAMME - 2023/24

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

LEAD OFFICER: ALI HEWSON, SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present Members with the work programme for 2023/24 (Appendix A).
- 1.2 To advise members that a draft work programme for 2023/24 had been circulated to the Chair and Vice/Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel for individual input/comments prior to the first meeting of the new Municipal Year ready for use as a working document.

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme for 2023/24 is attached at Appendix A to advise members of the proposed 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 This work programme can be added to or amended at members discretion at any time during the Municipal Year
- 2.3 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 the content of the work programme for 2023/24.

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, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Alison.hewson@lincoln.gov.uk

Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2023/24**21 June 2023**

| Item(s) | Responsible Person(s) | Origin of Request |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| Lincoln Tenants Panel Update | Mick Barber, Chair LTP | Regular report by MB |
| Allocations Update (Including Numbers of Properties Offered to People on Council Waiting List/Others) | Alison Timmins | Progress Report |
| Downsizing Policy | Keeley Johnson | Verbal Update |
| Investment Programme: General List of Planned Works 2023/24 | Kev Bowring | Requested at meeting 3 Nov 2022 |
| Housing Finance - Council's Housing Out-Turn Position for 2022/23. | Coleen Warren | Annual Report |
| Quarter 4 (2022/23) – Performance Report | Yvonne Fox/Daren Turner | Regular Report |
| Scheduled Repairs Update | Matt Hillman | Written Report inc move to 9 weekly cycles and an Explanation on the Process Manual for service consistency. |
| Update: Fire Assessments Completed | Matt Hillman | Requested at meeting 9 March 2023 |
| Work Programme 2023/24 | Ali Hewson | Regular Report |

Updated January 2024

10 August 2023

| Item(s) | Responsible Person(s) | Origin of Request |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Lincoln Tenants Panel Update | Mick Barber, Chair of LTP | Reserved time for LTP topics |
| PIR De Wint Court | Paula Burton | PIR of first year requested 3 Nov 2022 |
| Overview of ASB | Keeley Johnson | Update inc feedback available from LTP and Housing Officers Working Party and also accreditation |
| Downsizing Policy Update | Keeley Johnson | Deferred from last meeting. |
| Ellie's Memorial Garden | Paula Burton | Requested by PB -28 June 2023 |
| Repairs Policy | Amy Larder | |
| Management of Communal Areas Policy | Matt Hillman | Matt Hillman |
| Performance Indicators Update – Quarter 1 | Yvonne Fox | Regular Report |
| Work Programme 2023/24 | Ali Hewson | Regular Report |

Updated January 2024

2 November 2023

| Item(s) | Responsible Person(s) | Origin of Request |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Lincoln Tenants Panel Update | Mick Barber, Chair of LTP | Reserved time for LTP topics |
| Review of Draft HRS 30 Year Business Plan | Paul Hopkinson | Director |
| Quarter 2 Performance Update | Michelle Hoyles | Regular Report |
| Downsizing Policy Update | Andrea Ripley | Deferred from last meeting. |
| Work Programme 2023/24 | Ali Hewson | Regular Report |

Updated January 2024

1 February 2024

| Item(s) | Responsible Person(s) | Origin of Request |
|---|---|--|
| Lincoln Tenants Panel Review Update Report | Mick Barber, Chair of LTP | Reserved time for LTP topics |
| Aids and Adaptations Policy | Amy Larder/Matt Hillman | Deferred from last meeting |
| Homelessness and RS Update (Inc properties offered to people who are homeless Q3) | Alison Timmins | Regular Report |
| Estate Tours of Inspection- Performance Monitoring | Tenancy Services Manager | Requested by Chair: Scrutiny of teams re performance particularly for the items noticed on the tours and logged for action and the performance levels regards these agreed actions |
| Work of Tenancy Sustainability Officers | AD Housing or Tenancy Services Manager (Marianne Upton) | Six monthly progress report |
| Review of Empty Garages | AD Housing or Tenancy Services Manager | Requested by Cllr Briggs 2 Nov 2023 at HSSC |
| Tenants Consultation Paper on 30 Year Business Plan | Daren Turner/Paula Burton/Michelle Hoyles | Requested by Chair E Mail 13 Nov 2023. |
| Pet Policy Review | Tenancy Services Manager | Debbie Rousseau. Requested due to new legislation. Agreed by Chair at meeting held on 02.11.23 |
| Tenancy Policy | Andrea Ripley | Democratic Services notified by e mail |
| Hartsholme Community Garden | Paula Burton | Requested by officers. |
| Work Programme 2023/24 | Ali Hewson | Regular Report |

Updated January 2024

11 March 2024

| Item(s) | Responsible Person(s) | Origin of Request |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Lincoln Tenants Panel Matters | Mick Barber, LTP | Regular Update |
| Quarter 3 (2023/24) – Performance Report | Yvonne Fox | Regular Report Quarterly |
| Quarter 3 (2023/24) Housing Finance Report | Laura Shipley/Adam Oxley | New Regular Quarterly Report |
| Setting of Performance Targets 2024/25 | Daren Turner | Annual Review |
| Update on Insurance Claims paid in respect of disrepair claims lodged. | Finance | Requested by Chair – 21 June 2023 |
| Timescale for Scheduled Repairs | Matt Hillman/Amy Larder | Requested at meeting 10.08.23 |
| Tenant Involvement Strategy Action Plan | Donna Lyons | Progress Update |
| Report from PH Cllr Nannestad to Performance Scrutiny Committee | Cllr Nannestad | Annual Report |
| Downsizing Policy Update | Paula Burton | Requested by Chair and agreed by Officer at meeting held on 02.11.23 |
| Acquisitions Policy | Andrea Ripley | Democratic Services notified by e mail |
| Disposals Policy | Andrea Ripley | Democratic Services notified by e mail |
| Work Programme 2024/25 | Ali Hewson | Regular Report |

Updated January 2024

Other Agenda topics to be scheduled into 2023/24 as appropriate

- Complaints
- Lincoln Standard