

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8 August 2024
6.00 pm
**Committee Rooms 1 and 2,
City Hall, Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln, LN1 1DD**

Membership:	Councillors Gary Hewson (Chair), Pat Vaughan (Vice-Chair), Alan Briggs, Liz Bushell, Natasha Chapman 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:	Democratic Services, Paula Burton, Matthew Hillman, Michelle Hoyles, Martin Kerrigan, Laura Shipley, Daren Turner and Marianne Upton

A G E N D A

SECTION A	Page(s)
1. Confirmation of Minutes - 11 March 2024	3 - 16
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
3. Lincoln Tenants Panel Project Update	17 - 18
4. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4 - 2023/24	19 - 28
5. Tenant Satisfaction Measures Annual Report - 2023/24	29 - 42
6. Housing Financial Performance - Outturn 2023/24	43 - 64
7. Income Management and Arrears Policy	65 - 74
8. Pet Policy (Reviewed)	75 - 86
9. Neighbourhood Management Policy	87 - 96
10. Pilot of a New Structure for the Tenancy Services Team	97 - 100

11. Directorate of Housing and Investment Compliance Report 2023-24	101 - 120
12. Work Programme - 2024/25	121 - 128

- Present:** Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Alan Briggs, Mark Storer, Pat Vaughan and Loraine Woolley
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Liz Bushell
- Also in Attendance:** 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)

47. Confirmation of Minutes - 1 February 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

48. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 - 2023/24'.

Reason: His granddaughter worked in the Finance Department at City of Lincoln Council and his daughter worked in the Benefits Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Housing Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring'.

Reason: His granddaughter worked in the Finance Department at City of Lincoln Council and his daughter worked in the Benefits Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Target Setting 2024/25'.

Reason: His granddaughter worked in the Finance Department at City of Lincoln Council and his daughter worked in the Benefits Department at the City of Lincoln Council.

49. Change to Order of Business

RESOLVED that the order of business be amended to allow the 'Report by Councillor Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing' to be considered as the next agenda item.

50. Report by Councillor D Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing:

- a) presented a report to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee covering the following main areas:

- Homelessness
- Tenancy Services
- Voids

- Housing Repairs
- Housing Investment
- New Build
- Decarbonisation
- Lincare Control Centre

b) highlighted that some areas were performing better than others, however, even those areas recorded as 'red' were showing as good performance when compared to other authorities, with all areas up and down the country facing the same problems

c) invited questions and comments from Members of the Committee

Members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the content of the report in further detail. Comments and questions were responded to by the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing and officers as follows:

Question: It was stated that 20% of new build properties within the Western Growth Corridor (WGC) development would be affordable homes and managed by social housing regulators. Were all new builds going to be affordable housing?

Response: The type of new build housing was dependent on the purpose for which finance was awarded to us by Homes England. If more funding was given for social housing then we would consider if there was opportunity to deliver a higher percentage of affordable or social homes. Affordable Housing products included affordable rented, shared ownership, first homes and some supported accommodation. These could be delivered by a registered provider and Local Housing Authority. The site at WGC was to be a mixed tenure site with market housing also captured within the development.

Question: Would new tenants living in old council stock still be classed as affordable housing tenants? Many would not be able to stretch to affordable housing rents. How would this be managed?

Response: There were no current plans to convert existing social rented tenants over to affordable rents. However, if a tenant moved they would sign up to the terms of the property they were signing for. For example if this was an affordable rented property, this would be the terms and this communicated to them. Financial assessments on affordability took place before the tenant signed up to the terms of the tenancy.

Question: Was the way forward that if a person was already a tenant and moved house, their payments were set at affordable rent and not social housing rent?

Response: A blanket approach did not exist, it would all depend on the property they were moving to and how and when this had been purchased/built. For example new builds were often funded via the affordable homes programme and let at affordable rent, whereas if someone was moving to a house which had been a council property long term these would normally remain as social rents. When purchasing properties or building new homes, the financial viability was also dependent on government intervention rates, for example better intervention rates from government to deliver more social rents could help the Housing Authority determine the rent type and if we were to introduce social rents rather than affordable rent again in the future. The housing authority could not operate at a loss and needed to ensure the rents and intervention rates covered costs incurred and likely to be incurred for ongoing future maintenance.

Comment: There could be a situation whereby affordable rent was applied to one house whilst the house next door paid social housing rent.

Response: Transparency came into action through the Joint Homefinder Scheme. A prospective tenant had the choice whether or not to bid on an affordable property. There were of course safeguards built into the system to ensure people were financially able to afford prospective bids.

Comment: Western Growth Corridor (WGC) land owned and sold to contractors for social housing would now be used for affordable housing.

Response: There had been no sale, there had been a land swap. The first 52 WGC homes would not be affordable, they were mainly on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and received funding from Homes England. There had to be a mix of homes built in order to make the scheme financially viable.

Question: Was the 38 day performance target for voids achievable?

Response: This was dependent on the condition of the properties when they became available for re-let. It was becoming increasingly difficult to meet the targets due to the availability/cost of labour and materials. There had unfortunately been a large number of deaths in our properties, which resulted in access to the properties being delayed for legal reasons. It was more realistic to increase the number of days than to set unmanageable targets.

Question: It was understood that it was written into the Tenancy Agreement that officers would access council homes once a year for inspection, although this hadn't been universally applied. A record of how many visits we made to each property for whatever reason would be beneficial, also to make tenants aware of their responsibilities.

Response: Some tenants had lived in the same property for many years and did not welcome improvement works to their homes. We now had a new Tenancy Services Manager in post committed to spending more time on property inspections. There was more that we could and wanted to do here. Those properties that hadn't reported repairs for more than 10 years would be targeted first as most at risk.

Question: At the last Voids meeting the performance target had been increased by 3 days and the reason for this action was understood. Was there anything that could be put in place to avoid hoarding in council properties and improve the way that a minority of people lived?

Response: Pre-tenancy support was an important factor here. We also needed to improve our recharging regime for damage caused and the bad state of repair that some properties were vacated in. There may be a need to temporarily put a hold on 'transfers' to reduce the number of void properties at any one time.

Question: Had building work commenced yet on Garfield Close?

Response: The date was moving forward. Queen Elizabeth Road was one of the earlier developments being planned for the housing pipeline, hopefully starting in 2025-26. A report on the housing pipeline was due to be presented to Executive which set out the Council's anticipated sites and potential delivery timescales.

Question: The number of properties having a valid gas safety certificate at 98.29% was very high, however, the 93 homes that did not have one also seemed high in terms of fire risks?

Response: The figures were comparable to other areas. The problem was in gaining access to some properties.

Question: It was now a year since Ward Paddock had been built. Had snagging issues been addressed at a reasonable settlement to the council?

Response: Officers were in discussions with the developer to look at any defects. A list of liable work to be completed by the developer was being established. All this work was documented.

Question: Would temporary homes be introduced to help deal with the influx of people at RAF Scampton requiring accommodation?

Response: This was very early days and the impact was unknown until the site was operational. If people secured rights to remain it was believed through historic information from other similar schemes that they relocated/settled to where friends or family lived in larger conurbations and not necessarily local areas. This would be monitored once this site was fully in operation to understand the impact to City of Lincoln Council (CoLC).

Response by LTP Chair: It needed to be placed on record that 85% of tenants were very responsible people. There were 15% of properties with issues and we were working to alleviate these problems.

RESOLVED that the report be noted with thanks.

51. Lincoln Tenants Panel Project Updates

Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP), provided a written report highlighting 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 to review service areas.
- The Complaints and ASB Review Group continued to implement recommendations and a positive impact on complaint processes and procedures had been seen.
- A meeting had recently been attended with contractors and it was confirmed that installations of kitchens/bathrooms/communal doors were on target.
- A robust tenant journey had been implemented which ensured communication took place on a regular basis.
- The working group had been tasked to create a satisfaction survey for current investment installations.
- The Schedule of Repairs (SOR) Working Group had again received positive information relating to performance with repair timescales and damp and mould procedures.
- LTP continued to hold quarterly meetings with the Voids Team Leader reviewing void inspections and targets. The number of voids inspections had increased and they had all, again surpassed standards.
- LTP had reviewed the following:
 - 1) Caretaker Review for low and high rise
 - 2) Tenancy Agreement Review
 - 3) Pet Policy
 - 4) Aids and Adaptations Policy
- A new member of LTP had been recruited and joined in January 2024.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

52. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 - 2023/24

Michelle Hoyles, Business Manager, Corporate Policy:

- a) presented Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee with a summary on performance indicators for the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI) for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 (October -December)
- 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 third quarter of 2023/24, against such indicators, was attached at Appendix A to the report
- d) reported that of the 21 measures in total; nine had met or exceeded their agreed target, five had performed close to target and six had performed below target
- e) highlighted that 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
- f) added that 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, was currently exceeding target
- g) 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)
- h) confirmed that further detailed information on the areas highlighted was provided within the report
- i) invited Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committees questions and comments.

Members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the content of the report in further detail. Comments and questions were responded to by officers as follows:

Question: There was no reference to performance on electrical safety?

Response: That measure would be commenced in the 2024-25 meeting cycle and would be reported on a quarterly basis.

Comment: Reference was made within the report to 'two weeks free rent', This was not free rent as the rent charges for the whole year were averaged out over 50 weeks rather than 52.

Response: Apologies were made for the terminology used within the report which was incorrect.

Question: The Customer Contact Centre had been closed due to a fault on the system. What measures were being taken to improve the response times?

Response: A response to this query would be fed back by the officer under separate cover.

Comment: The target for response times to formal complaints made was not showing as performing well.

Response: Some complaints were being recorded as formal complaints that were actually service requests when the nature of the complaint was not known.

Comment: Performance on rental income was very good news. Congratulations to the officers concerned in achieving this figure.

RESOLVED that:

1. A response to the measures being taken to improve Customer Contact Centre response times be fed back to members under separate cover.
2. The current performance outcomes during Quarter 3 of the financial year 2023/24 to date, be noted.

53. **Housing Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring**

Adam Oxley, Principal Finance Business Partner:

- a) presented a report to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee with a summary of the third quarter's performance (up to 31 December 2023), on the Council's

- Housing Revenue Account
- Housing Repairs Service
- Housing Investment Programme

- b) provided information on the Council's

- **Housing Revenue Account** — for 2023/24 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £58,930, resulting in estimated general balances at year-end of £1,125,517, after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position, at Q3 the HRA was currently projecting a forecast overspend of £13,787, which would result in HRA balances of £1,111,730 as at the end of 2023/24 (Appendix A provided a forecast Housing Revenue Account summary). Although the forecast position was an overspend there was a number of significant variations in income and expenditure. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix B.
- **Housing Repairs Service** – For 2023/24 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net budget was set at zero, which reflected its full cost recovery nature. At quarter 3 the HRS was forecasting a deficit of £552,062 in 2023/24. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix C.
- **Housing Investment Programme** – the revised programme for 2023/24 amounted to £16.862m following the quarter 2 position. At quarter 3 the programme had been decreased by £0.742m to £16.120m as shown at paragraph 6.2 of the report. The overall

expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of quarter 3 was £7.029m, which was 41.85% of the 2023/24 revised programme. This excluded expenditure relating to Western Growth Corridor, which was currently shown on the General Investment Programme (GIP), to be apportioned at year end (current forecast outturn £1.97m) as detailed at Appendix G of the report. A further £0.525m had been spent as at the end of January 2024.

c) invited Housing Sub-Committees questions and comments.

Members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the content of the report in further detail. Comments and questions were responded to by officers as follows:

Question: Why was rental income higher than anticipated?

Response: This was due to a higher than budgeted opening housing stock at the start of the financial year with voids turned around more quickly. The Rookery Lane new build development had been allocated quickly providing higher occupancy and rent levels.

Comment: It would be much preferred if we could carry out our own repairs without having to rely on sub - contractors.

Response: With current inflationary pressures, everything was more expensive. A piece of work was currently ongoing giving far greater allocation of where service vehicles were deployed and reviewing productivity with the workforce. Recruitment for a Maintenance Manager was also in process.

Comment: It would be great to see an increase in the take-up of apprenticeships, which had declined lately.

Response: The Housing service was looking at increased apprenticeships in the form of work experience and succession planning. We would provide practical day to day job experience coupled with a training grade. A meeting would be held with Lincoln College in due course to discuss this further.

RESOLVED that the financial performance for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 December 2023 be noted.

54. Target Setting 2024/25 (To Follow)

Michelle Hoyles, Business Manager – Corporate Policy and Transformation:

- a) presented a range of proposed performance measures for the upcoming financial year 2024/25, intended to support Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to effectively scrutinise the Council's role as a social landlord
- b) requested approval of the range of performance indicators as attached at Appendix A of the report for presentation to the Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis
- c) advised that there were a total of thirty-seven measures for the Sub-Committees consideration; a significant increase on twenty-one measures reported in 2023/24
- d) explained that the increase in the number of performance measures was largely due to the introduction of new national reporting requirements, and

recognition that some of these reporting requirements added value to the council's scrutiny process by providing context to support existing measures

e) summarised the proposed changes to performance measures, proposed to be deleted and new measures as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report

f) invited Housing Sub-Committees questions and comments:

RESOLVED that the performance measures proposed at Appendix A of the report be approved for inclusion in the quarterly performance reporting for 2024/25.

55. Update on Insurance Claims Paid- Disrepair Claims Lodged (Verbal Report)

Adam Oxley, Principal Finance Business Partner, provided a verbal update in relation to insurance claims paid for disrepair claims lodged, covering the following main points:

- The Council was seeing an increase in disrepair claims and associated costs, increasing from 12 claims in 2019 to 42 cases in the current financial year, exacerbated by claim farming solicitors who cold-called and targeted specific areas.
- The total estimated cost of disrepair claims to date, (since 2019), including current cases amounted to £668,000, with the Council successfully defending against around 50% of claims. On average tenants received less than 10% of this amount, the lions share being paid to solicitors on both sides.
- We were currently in discussions with our legal representatives, regarding intervention before any claim was submitted, if for example during the complaint stage we had accepted repair delays we could look to offer compensation prior to tenants going to a solicitor, generating savings in solicitors fees (this incentivised tenants to come to us first rather than approach a claim farm).
- The authority continued to network nationally with other social landlords on best practice to tackle disrepairs and how best to defend them. We had provided feedback to the Association of Retained Council Housing that claim farm firms needed to be more regulated and we were exploring property technology to increase our identification of building use and defects.
- The Council was also making efforts to improve the defence rate of disrepair claims by improving record keeping and system processes, getting to the root cause of damp and mould and being more proactive in re-arranging operative visits cancelled by tenants.
- Around 80% of claims settled during the financial year across the Council (value wise) were disrepair claims, around £150k to date, this being a direct cost to the Housing Revenue Account.

The Chair requested that a comparison be provided at the next scheduled meeting in June 2024 of disrepair claims paid between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The Assistant Director, Asset Management reported that the introduction of a compensation policy to reimburse customers directly would generate savings. Also, damp sensors were being fitted in disrepair claim properties to assist customers who needed support.

RESOLVED that:

1. Members be provided with a comparison of disrepair claims paid between years 2022/23 and 2023/24 at the next meeting of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee scheduled for 12 June 2024.
2. The content of the verbal update be noted with thanks.

56. Timescale for Scheduled Repairs (Verbal Report)

Amy Larder, Interim Maintenance Manager, provided a verbal update on the current timescales for scheduled repairs, covering the following main points:

- Following the Scheduled repair performance review report in June 2023 one of our recommendations for development of the service was to reduce the weekly cycle from 12 weeks to 9 weeks.
- It was envisaged due to the number of repairs in certain areas that the cycle of new calendar areas would be broken down to the following:

North	2 weeks
East	2 weeks
Central	3 Weeks
South	2 weeks

- We agreed that we would review our calendar and look to implement the new schedule repair calendar by December 2023.

Introduction of New Calendar

- Following the review, work started throughout August 2023 to create a new scheduled repair calendar based on the agreed weeks mentioned previously. This was produced to start from the new cycle starting in the North area on 2 October 2023 now for the reduced 2-week period.
- Once the calendar was created this was communicated with the necessary teams including customer services, housing officers and issued to the Communications team.
- A large amount of work had to be done to input the calendar changes made to our scheduling system to enable customer service to still be able to offer appointments at the point of call in most cases and within the newly defined appointment slots for each area.
- We went live with the new calendar and booking schedule from 2 October 2023.

Comparison on Data since Changes

- We had not seen a drop in service delivery through these changes being implemented and when comparing Q3 performance this year compared to 22/23 data we had completed an additional 1571 scheduled repairs.
- Quarter 3 Comparison
 - 2022/2023 - 2364 completed repairs, 99.24% completed in target.
 - 2023/2024 - 3935 completed, 99.70% completed in target.

- The central area remained consistently large reporting on average 7% more repairs than the other areas so we had no intention currently to reduce this any further.

RESOLVED that the content of the verbal report be noted with thanks.

57. Tenant Involvement Strategy Action Plan

Donna Lyons, Resident Involvement Manager:

- a) presented a report to update the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on the progress of the Tenant Involvement Strategy Action Plan 2022 to 2025
- b) explained that the Tenancy Involvement Strategy Plan 2022 to 2025 was reviewed by Lincoln Tenant Panel on an annual basis
- c) gave an overview of the main achievements over the last twelve months as contained at paragraph 3 of the report
- d) referred to paragraph 4 of the report and explained how the action plan would be delivered and how the outcomes of the strategy would be monitored
- e) advised that the City of Lincoln Council Landlord Services had successfully progressed to silver star status in co-design services with residents, expanded the way residents could get involved, facilitated community involvement and had progressed to gold star status in co-regulation with Lincoln Tenants Panel
- f) invited Housing Sub-Committees questions and comments:

RESOLVED that the contents of the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy and action plan assessments 2023 be noted.

58. Progress Report: Draft Downsizing Policy (Verbal Report)

Paula Burton, Assistant Director, Housing Management provided a verbal update on the Draft Downsizing Policy, covering the following main points:

- All Housing Officers had been asked to promote the downsizing scheme to people it may benefit.
- All tenants in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to cover 'bedroom tax' had received letters in the last two weeks saying that DHP was only a temporary payment and would be withdrawn, but that a downsizing scheme was available to help them move to a more suitable property.
- The web form was up and running and we had received 4 expressions of interest so far, which had been passed to Housing Officers/Tenancy Sustainment Officer to follow up as per the policy.
- The downsizing panel met on 29 February 2024 to discuss the first case that had been assessed fully. It was approved and would free up a 3-bed ground floor flat with a wet room (& clear approx. £2300 arrears). The vulnerable tenant would be assisted with referrals for white goods and furniture from charities and having new floor coverings fitted at any new property.

Members of Lincoln Tenant's Panel hoped the scheme would encourage tenants to downsize and asked whether there would be a questionnaire feedback form available both for those taking part and those who didn't take up the scheme.

Paula Burton, Assistant Director, Housing Management advised that she would implement a feedback questionnaire form as part of the review of the pilot scheme. A further update would be scheduled in at the end of the pilot scheme

RESOLVED that:

1. Enquiries regarding the implementation of a feedback questionnaire form be pursued by officers.
2. A further update on the pilot Downsizing Policy be reported to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee at the end of the pilot scheme.
3. The content of the verbal update be noted with thanks.

59. Tenancy Strategy

Paula Burton, Assistant Director of Housing Management and Andrea Ripley, Housing Strategy Officer

- a) tabled a quick guide which assisted members to understand the different purposes of the Tenancy Strategy, Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Agreement
- b) presented the draft Tenancy Strategy for review prior to consideration by Executive
- c) gave the background of the report as detailed at paragraph 2 of the report and advised that the main purpose of the strategy was to make the best use of existing housing stock with mechanisms such as flexible tenancies, succession rights and affordable rented tenures
- d) advised that consultation of the draft strategy was sent out to all known registered providers operating within the City during December 2023; the responses were contained at Appendix 2 of the report
- e) referred to the draft Tenancy Strategy contained at Appendix 1 of the report and advised that it focussed on the following areas:
 - Fixed/Flexible Tenancies
 - Reviewing Fixed Tenancies
 - Starter/ Introductory tenancies
 - Assured Tenancies
 - Secure Tenancies
 - Non-Secure Tenancies
 - Licenses
 - Family Intervention Tenancies
 - The Use of Demoted Tenancies
 - Existing Social Tenants, Security of Tenure
 - Succession

- Affordable Rent
- Intermediate Rent
- Tenancy Reviews

f) explained that the Tenancy Strategy would be reviewed every three years to ensure compliance with current legislation and as part of a validation exercise to ensure that Registered Providers were letting homes in line with the Tenancy Strategy

g) invited Housing Sub-Committees questions and comments:

Members discussed the content of the report in further details, asked questions, made comments and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

Question: When would demoted tenancies be used and what would this mean for existing tenants encountering more Anti-Social Behaviour in their local communities?

Response: Demoted tenancies were introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, to enable housing providers to demote a tenancy as a positive tool to help anti-social behaviour to be managed and controlled, as an alternative to eviction. This was a stepped mechanism, once a final warning was issued, if breached then the possession action route would be used as a last resort.

Question: Was a period of twelve months not a long time to take to alleviate such problems?

Response: The tenancy could remain demoted up to twelve months; possession action could be taken at any time during this period. if breaches of the tenancy occurred. A demoted tenancy would either go to Court or revert back to a periodic secure or assured tenancy.

Question: Was it possible to take away a tenancy without making a Court application?

Response: No There must be a possession order in place from the Courts.

Comment: We needed a strategy to address issues of tenancies being sub-let to family members. There were instances where tenancies were being sub-let at the same time as housing benefit was being claimed by the individual not living there, although it was difficult to prove. We needed to know who our tenants were.

Question: Could surveillance be carried out on properties via interaction with the DWP?

Response: Subletting was a breach of tenancy and taken seriously by the Council and where evident, enforcement action was taken. Often the Councils first indicator of proven fraud cases was when Housing Benefit ceased. The DWP worked independently to the Council due to data protection law which restricted information being shared so the Council would not be aware of surveillance levels for these cases.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Tenancy Strategy be supported.

60. **Acquisitions Policy (To Follow)**

Andrea Ripley, Housing Strategy Officer:

a) presented the revised Acquisition Strategy (Appendix 1) for review prior to consideration by Executive

- b) highlighted that the renewed Acquisitions Policy represented a refresh of the old one
- c) advised that the sale of council homes continued to create pressure to replace sold properties via Right to Buy (RtB) and to ensure that capital receipts were utilised within the required timescales for the purposes of replacing social housing
- d) explained that the process of purchasing homes from the open market or via direct approaches continued to work well; to date the policy had facilitated the purchase of 99 homes and this number would continue to increase following the structured process set out in the revised Acquisitions Policy
- e) summarised the amendments made to the Acquisitions Policy as set out in paragraph 3 of the report
- f) advised that following the budget update by Government the previous week, up to 50% of capital costs could now be apportioned to the Right to Buy (RtB) fund
- g) invited Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committees questions and comments.

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail. Questions raised were responded to by officers as follows:

Question: How did the Housing Authority use the 50% costs it was apportioned?

Response: Rtb receipts could be used for 50% of the capital costs for the purchase and repair of a property or new build development/acquisitions. Each purchase would undergo financial viability modelling on funding and revenue with delegated authority in place to authorise before proceeding with a purchase. Each year the government determined the level of RtB receipts the Council was able to retain from the sales of council properties. The receipt and spend of these funds was tracked by Finance and Housing Strategy to ensure compliance and to reduce any risk to pay back unspent funds within the required timescales. As only 50% of each purchase could be funded via the RtB receipts the remaining cost was funded via prudential borrowing or direct revenue financing. The Housing Strategy team would provide members with an example of how funding had been apportioned and potential future availability of funding for 2024/2025.

RESOLVED that:

1. A breakdown of Rtb receipts apportionment and potential future availability of funding to be forwarded to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
2. The revised Acquisition Policy be supported and referred to Executive for approval.

61. **Work Programme- 2024/25**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented a draft outline work programme for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- b) advised that the draft work programme for 2024/25 would be circulated to the Chair/Vice Chair of the Housing Scrutiny-Sub Committee and the Chair/Vice Chair of Lincoln's Tenant's Panel for individual input/comments, once membership was confirmed for the new Municipal Year
- c) highlighted that the work programme would be used as a working document and could be added to or amended at the Sub-Committee's discretion at any time during the 2024/25 Municipal Year
- d) reported that the work programme included those areas for scrutiny linked to the strategic priorities of the Council and themed housing matters, to ensure that the work of the committee was relevant and proportionate
- e) referred to a copy of the Terms of Reference for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee attached to the report for information.

RESOLVED that the content of the draft outline work programme for 2024/25 be noted.

Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) Project Update

LTP continue to work with tenancy services, fire safety assurance, maintenance, business management and resident involvement on a variety of projects and hold monthly meetings, weekly void inspections, quarterly complaints and ASB complaint reviews.

LTP has created additional working groups focusing on the building safety engagement strategy action plan, reviewed, and made recommendations on City of Lincoln Council Pet Policy, Tenancy Agreement, Rent & Garage Review, Aids & Adaptations, Complaints Policy Review and Unacceptable Actions Policy.

Mick Barber continues to attend Social Housing Quality Network Panel, ARCH committee meetings.

All members of LTP have attend the following training and seminars hosted by Four Million Homes and Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). LTP are also attending the annual ARCH conference in October. LTP are also attending the annual ARCH conference in October.

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Housing policy & regulation
- How to make an effective complaint
- Strategic thinking and working
- How to run an effective residents' association
- Know your rights to engage and be heard.
- New standards for social housing

The Vice Chair and a member of LTP attended North Kesteven District Council's (NKDC) Tenant Advisory Panel (TAP) committee meeting to share best practices. We have arranged to hold a joint training session on equality and diversity, scrutiny, consumer standards and understanding tenant satisfaction measures data with NKDC TAP

In May LTP attended an awareness seminar delivered by the stop loan sharks liaison officer for Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire

Thank you.

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SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 4 – 2023/24

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: CORPORATE POLICY AND TRANSFORMATION TEAM

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee a report on performance indicators for the Directorate of Housing and Investment, for Quarter 4 of 2023/24 (January - March).

2. Lincoln Tenants' Panel Consultation

- 2.1 Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) have been consulted about this report and have confirmed they have no comments.

3. Summary

- 3.1 Regular monitoring of the Council's performance is a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework and supports its ongoing commitment to continuous improvement of council services. This report provides an overview of the Council's performance against performance indicators monitored by the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI), and covers those measures related to the Council's responsibility as a landlord.
- 3.2 There were, in total, twenty-one performance indicators monitored by DHI and reported quarterly to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee in 2023/24. An overview of performance for the fourth and final quarter of 2023/24, against these indicators, is attached as '**Appendix A**' to this report.
- 3.3 The template for Appendix A has been amended for Quarter 4, and for the first time includes benchmarking comparisons where these are available. The template now also includes performance 'direction of travel' information, to aid interpretation of how performance has changed for each measure year-on-year. It is intended that benchmarking comparisons will be provided annually each fourth Quarter.

4. Overview of Quarter 4 Performance Indicators

- 4.1 Performance measures in '**Appendix A**' that are highlighted green were those performing at or above the agreed target. Measures shown highlighted amber were performing close to target, and those highlighted red were performing below target. Performance measures within '**Appendix A**' are grouped into categories, and for comparison purposes includes the previous year's outturn.
- 4.2 During the fourth quarter of 2023/24, eleven performance measures met or exceeded their agreed target; three were performing close to target; six performed

below target; and one was volumetric. This included the three year-end measures that relate to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) expenditure on responsive and programme maintenance, and decent homes.

- 4.3 Sections 5 - 10 of this report highlight the key conclusions drawn from '**Appendix A**'.

5. Overview of Performance Indicators – Housing Repairs Service (HRS)

- 5.1 Overall, repairs performance in 2023/24 was mixed. The HRS was severely impacted by Storm Babet (Quarter 3) and Storm Henk (Quarter 4), both of which required an emergency response to tenants living in homes in lower lying parts of the city most affected by flooding. Flood-related responses are categorised as 'priority' repairs, and it is notable that measure 29A continued to perform above target despite these emergency demands on the service. The Council's performance against measure 29A was in the top benchmarking quartile nationally.
- 5.2 As a consequence of responding swiftly to these emergencies, measure 32 (3-day 'urgent' repairs) was affected by a reduction in performance. Following some recent process and staffing changes within the HRS that reflect the changing demands on the service, and the new Repairs Policy, the service was well placed to meet its performance target for urgent repairs. Early signs suggested these changes were working well, with performance in March being at 99% and there being only 4 repairs completed outside of target.
- 5.3 The previous performance report in Quarter 3 highlighted there having been a more than 50% increase in the number of urgent and priority repairs since 2022/23. This trend continued, and in 2023/24 the HRS allocated 11 operatives to respond to these repair types. In stark contrast, in 2016 only two operatives were needed to be allocated to these repair types. This substantial shift in repair patterns demonstrates the extent of demand on this part of the service. Initial categorisation of repairs remained an issue in Quarter 4, however this was improving by the end of the quarter.
- 5.4 Notwithstanding these service pressures, the service was very close to achieving its 97% target for keeping of appointments and was performing above target for the proportion of first time fixes. For first time fixes, the Council's performance was in the top quartile nationally.
- 5.5 The HRS continued to face ongoing challenges related to sourcing specialist contractors and high materials costs. These challenges were persistent, and there still remains little indication that they will ease in the foreseeable future.

6. Overview of Performance Indicators – Voids and Decent Homes

- 6.1 Voids performance improved substantially since Q4 2022/23 with re-let times for all voids, including those requiring major works, reducing by 9 days over the year. Re-let times for 'standard' voids also reduced by 4 days over the year. Targets for each of these measures were changed for 2024/25, allowing an additional 4 days for each measure to reflect benchmarking trends and service constraints. Both voids re-letting measures were performing well up to Quarter 4, and the Council's

performance was in the top quartile nationally for standard voids re-letting and vacant dwelling rent loss.

- 6.2 There was nonetheless a small reduction in performance against the measure for rent loss from vacant dwellings in Quarter 4.

7. Overview of Performance Indicators - Rents

- 7.1 Performance on rents continued to be very strong, and there was a notable reduction in the proportion of rent arrears since Quarter 1. This was due to focused campaigns to recover arrears throughout the year. The Council significantly exceeded the target for rent collection, ending the year at 99.69%. This was a significant achievement, given the ongoing cost-of-living pressures households continue to face.

8. Overview of Performance Indicators – Antisocial Behaviour

- 8.1 Antisocial behaviour continued to perform well, albeit with a small reduction in performance in both measures. Future quarterly performance reports will include more detailed analysis of the types of antisocial behaviour reported to the service, and how structural changes within the service are supporting ongoing improvement of this aspect of tenancy and estate management.

9. Complaints and Calls to Customer Contact Centre (CCC)

- 9.1 Complaints performance has been consistently underperforming throughout 2023/24, with the year-end outturn significantly below that of the preceding year. There have been substantial improvements to the complaints process, and the affects of this are already evident in quarterly reporting for 2024/25 with performance at just over 94%.
- 9.2 Call wait times in the customer contact centre remain persistently high, with 20% of housing related calls having been answered within the 90 second target. Performance of the customer contact centre is outside of the service's control.

10. Finance

- 10.1 Total expenditure on responsive maintenance was at 104.55% at year end, whilst the approved budget for capital programme expenditure was reduced. The increase in expenditure on responsive repairs is a result of both storms Babet and Henk in quarters 3 and 4, and there having been a sharp increase in the number of priority and urgent repairs throughout the year.
- 10.2 These two finance measures were removed from the list of performance measures for 2024/25, as the Sub-Committee now receives a quarterly finance report containing more detailed income and expenditure information for the Housing Revenue Account.

11. Strategic Priorities

- 11.1 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.' Monitoring and reporting performance provides the means for the Council to assess its progress against this corporate priority and identify areas for improvement.

12. Organisational Impacts

12.1 Finance

Although there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, there are several indicators that do affect the HRA including the amount of rent collected and repairs and improvements.

The financial position of the HRA and HRS are continually monitored, with quarterly reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

12.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

12.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

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

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

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

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

13. Risk Implications

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

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

14. Recommendation

- 14.1 That the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee reviews and comments on the content of this report and the performance 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?

One
(Appendix A)

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

Michelle Hoyles, Business Manager – Corporate
Policy and Transformation
Michelle.hoyles@lincoln.gov.uk









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LANDLORD SERVICES – PERFORMANCE 2023/24

APPENDIX A

Figures in brackets are the standalone quarterly figure.

PI	Description	Actual 22/23	Target 2023/24	23/24 Q1	23/24 Q2	23/24 Q3	23/24 Q4	Status (R,A,G) *Blue = No target	Benchmarking	Annual Change
Rents										
125B	% of rent collected as a percentage of rent due	99.91% (98.36%)	97.5%	96.81%	97.24% (97.67%)	100.46% (108.05%)	99.69% (97.50%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
126	Arrears as a % of rent debit	3.40%	4.00%	3.83%	4.25%	2.86%	2.88%		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Voids										
69	% of rent lost due to vacant dwellings	1.32%	1.00%	1.29%	1.15% (1.03%)	1.13% (1.00%)	1.18% (1.14%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
58	Average re-let period – All dwellings (excluding major works) – (days)	43.6 days	32 days	43.28 days	41.97 (40.05)	41.35 (39.31)	39.87 (36.85)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
61	Average re-let period – All dwellings (including major works) – (days)	55.7 days	38 days	48.06 days	48.63 (49.61)	48.29 (47.46)	46.59 (43.46)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Allocations										
85A	% of offers accepted first time	88.10%	85%	83.45%	85.17% (87.10%)	87.03% (91.59%)	88.16% (92.23%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Repairs (Housing Repairs Service)										
29A	% of all priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day)	99.51%	99.5%	99.55%	99.67% (99.75%)	99.45% (99.04%)	99.55% (99.84%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
32	% of urgent repairs carried out within time limits (3 days)	93.67%	97.5%	92.06%	93.20% (94.22%)	89.49% (83.28%)	89.29% (88.76%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
33	Average time taken to complete urgent Repairs (3 days)	2.2 days	3 days	2.2 days	2.12 days (2.07)	2.18 days (2.28)	2.17 days (2.15)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
34	Complete repairs right on first visit (priority and urgent repairs)	93.24%	92%	91.69%	92.75% (93.52%)	93.40% (94.32%)	93.08% (92.29%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>

PI	Description	Actual 22/23	Target 2023/24	23/24 Q1	23/24 Q2	23/24 Q3	23/24 Q4	Status (R,A,G) *Blue = No target	Benchmarking	Annual Change
37	Repair appointments kept against appointments made (%) (priority and urgent repairs)	98.46%	97%	97.32%	96.92% (96.60%)	96.64% (96.24%)	96.95% (97.71%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Repairs (Aaron Services)										
29B	% of all priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day)	99.89%	99.5%	100.00%	100.00% (100%)	100.00% (100%)	99.98% (99.93%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Decent Homes										
50	% of non-decent homes (excluding refusals)	0.81%	1.00% (year-end target)	1.35%	1.09%	0.86%	0.24%		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
48	% of homes with valid gas safety certificate	99.00%	99.00%	98.50%	98.52% (98.54%)	98.29% (97.83%)	98.38% (98.66%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Complaints										
22	% of complaints replied to within target time	63.43%	95%	20.65%	27.49% (35.44%)	31.71% (37.93%)	35.18% (44.14%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
	% of complaints replied to in line with Corporate policy	100.00%	-	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
ASB										
89	% of ASB cases closed that were resolved	99.57%	94%	100.00%	98.55% (97.01%)	98.96% (100%)	98.88% (98.68%)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
90	Average days to resolve ASB cases	42.9 days	70 days	44.3 days	46.2 days (48.3)	43.7 days (37.3)	46.5 days (53.8)		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Other										
	Expenditure against target set for year – responsive maintenance	98.24%	100% (year-end target)	13.40%	28.75%	62.53%	104.55%		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div> £8,112,549 YTD, against a total approved budget of £7,759,770	N/A
	Expenditure against target set for year – capital programme	100.00%	100% (year-end target)	6.92%	30.47%	41.94%	100%		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div> £7,752,285 YTD, against a total approved budget of £7,752,285	N/A

PI	Description	Actual 22/23	Target 2023/24	23/24 Q1	23/24 Q2	23/24 Q3	23/24 Q4	Status (R,A,G) *Blue = No target	Benchmarking	Annual Change
Customer Contact										
	% of calls answered within 90 seconds	11.70%	80%	Data not available	33.7%	26.4%	20.1%		. <div></div>	<div></div>

Legend

Benchmarking	<div></div>	Quartile 1 (top 25%)
	<div></div>	Quartile 2 (top 50%)
	<div></div>	Quartile 3 (top 75%)
	<div></div>	Quartile 4 (bottom 25%)
	<div></div>	No benchmarking data available
Annual Change	<div></div>	Improved performance year-on-year
	<div></div>	No change/minimal change year-on-year
	<div></div>	Reduced performance year-on-year

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SUBJECT:	TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES ANNUAL REPORT – 2023/24
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHORS:	BUSINESS MANAGER, CORPORATE POLICY AND TRANSFORMATION, RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee a report on performance against the National Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures for the year 2023/24; and
- 1.2 To propose, based on the key findings arising from 2023/24 TSMs, the key areas of focus for Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI) over the coming year to further improve tenant satisfaction.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

- 2.1 Lincoln Tenant's Panel (LTP) have been consulted about this report and have confirmed they have no comments.

3. Summary

- 3.1 The national Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) came into force in April 2023, as part of the Social Housing Regulation Act. In April 2024 these were incorporated into the Regulator's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, and some minor changes made.
- 3.2 The purpose of TSMs is to ensure openness and transparency among social housing providers; specifically, how they treat tenants with fairness and respect so they can access services, raise complaints, and influence decision making and hold their landlord to account. Landlords are also required to understand the diverse needs of their tenants; engage with them and take their views into account when making decisions; communicate with their tenants and provide information; and encourage effective scrutiny.
- 3.3 The TSMs are in two parts:
 - 12 'tenant perception measures', obtained by surveying tenants for their views; and
 - 10 'management information measures', derived from data held by the landlord as part of their housing management and asset management activities.
- 3.4 To ensure consistency and comparability between housing providers, there is a data standard for each TSM. This is defined by the Regulator in the form of

technical guidance. There is both a national standard for [tenant survey requirements](#), and [technical requirements](#) for each TSM. Every housing provider with a stock size of more than 1,000 is required to submit an annual return to the Regulator.

- 3.5 A copy of the performance data for the Council's TSM annual return is attached as '**Appendix A**' to this report. A summary of the tenant perception findings will be presented to the Sub-Committee during the meeting.

4. Approach

- 4.1 In 2023 the Council procured services from Acuity Research and Practice to undertake the tenant perception survey element of the TSMs on its behalf. Based on the Council's stock size, the TSM technical guidance requires it to survey 600 households each year. In 2023/24 Acuity completed 617 tenant perception surveys (299 in November 2023 and 318 in February 2024). In future years it is intended that Acuity will complete 150 surveys each quarter.
- 4.2 All tenant perception surveys were completed by telephone. In addition to the core TSM tenant perception questions, the Council's contract with Acuity enables it to ask up to three additional, non-statutory questions. In 2023/24 the Council chose to ask the following, as an opportunity to gain enhanced insights into tenants' views:
- **Easy to deal with** – “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that City of Lincoln Council is easy to deal with?”
 - **Net promoter score** – “how likely would you be to recommend City of Lincoln Council's Housing Service to other people?”
 - **Cost of living** – “how concerned are you about the cost of living crisis for you personally?”
- 4.3 Acuity's approach to the mandatory tenant perception questions included clarification/follow up questions, to help tenants to provide more detailed responses. This has been very beneficial and has enabled the Council to gain greater insights into tenants' views beyond the standard tenant perception questions. Tenants were also asked if they were willing to consent to being contacted by the Housing Service to discuss their responses in more depth.
- 4.4 Data for the ten management information measures has been compiled in-house, using the same internal data collection arrangements as established quarterly performance reporting.
- 4.5 All data in '**Appendix A**' complies with the technical guidance referred to in paragraph 3.4.

5. Results and Benchmarking – Tenant Perception Measures

- 5.1 Benchmarking for all twelve tenant perception measures is based on 'quartiles.' The Council's performance against the quartile thresholds for each measure is set out in '**Appendix A**.'
- 5.2 Overall, 71% of City of Lincoln's tenants are satisfied with the service they receive from their landlord. Based on Housemark year-end benchmarking data, the

Council's performance against all tenant perception measures is in the top quartile nationally. This demonstrates that, compared to other social housing providers in England, tenants' perceptions of the City of Lincoln Council's landlord function is positive.

- 5.3 The Council's performance is strongest for the perception measures that focus on how it manages communal areas, and the extent to which tenants feel they are treated fairly and with respect (75% and 77% respectively). The tenant perception measures with the lowest levels of satisfaction related to the Council's approach to tackling ASB (53%), listening and acting upon tenants' views' (60%), and complaints handling (37%). These are the tenant perceptions where, across most landlords, satisfaction is lowest.

6. Results and Benchmarking – Management Information Measures

- 6.1 Some Housemark benchmarking comparisons for the ten management information measures are based on the national median rather than quartiles. Where this applies, this is set out clearly in '**Appendix A.**'

- 6.2 The highest performance across the management information measures are:

- Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes standard. At only 0.24% of the Council's housing stock, performance is significantly above the national Housemark median.
- Proportion of homes for which all fire risk assessments have been carried out. At 100% compliance, this is the maximum amount achievable and places the Council above the national Housemark median.
- Proportion of homes for which all communal passenger lift checks have been completed. As with fire risk assessments, a compliance rate of 100% is the maximum achievable.
- Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out. At 100%, this is the maximum compliance achievable against this measure.
- Emergency repairs completed within target timescale. With year-end performance at 99.77%, the Council is placed in the top quartile among Housemark members nationally.
- Non-emergency responsive repairs carried out within target timescale. At 94.66%, this places the Council in the top quartile of Housemark members. The threshold for placement in the top quartile is 88.5%, therefore the Council's performance against this measure significantly exceeds this.
- Proportion of homes for which all gas safety checks have been carried out. The Housemark median for this measure is 99.97%; whilst the Council's performance against this measure is below the median, at 99.71% this is nonetheless considered to be good performance.
- The proportion of ASB cases reported per 1,000 homes is just above the national Housemark median. At 0.01 per 1,000 homes, the proportion of reported hate incidents is significantly lower than the national Housemark median of 0.7 (low is good) and relates to one report.

- 6.3 There are some improvement areas identified, related to asbestos management surveys and complaints handling. Both areas are expected to improve over the

coming year, with complaints handling in particular having undergone significant improvement in performance since 1st April.

- 6.4 These results indicate that the Council's key areas of focus are improving communication with tenants, and improving understanding of tenants' perceptions of ASB. Whilst the Council's performance on ASB is good compared to other social housing providers, tenants' perceptions nonetheless indicate that ASB remains an area of concern.

7. Other Findings

- 7.1 The presentation to the Sub-Committee at the meeting will include a detailed analysis of the tenant perception survey findings. Notable observations from this analysis are summarised below.

- 7.2 The 'Keeping Properties in Good Repair' section of the tenant perception survey indicates that, whilst the Council's overall performance on repairs is in the top quartile of Housemark members, this does not align with tenants' perceptions. The top two reasons expressed by tenants for dissatisfaction with the repairs service were:

- The timescales for completion of repairs; and
- Outstanding and forgotten repairs.

- 7.3 As shown in Figure 1 below, there is close correlation between length of tenancy and overall tenant satisfaction. Tenants reporting highest levels of satisfaction are those who have lived in City of Lincoln housing stock for less than one year, or more than 20 years. Dissatisfaction appears to peak between 1 and 5 years, before steadily improving over time.

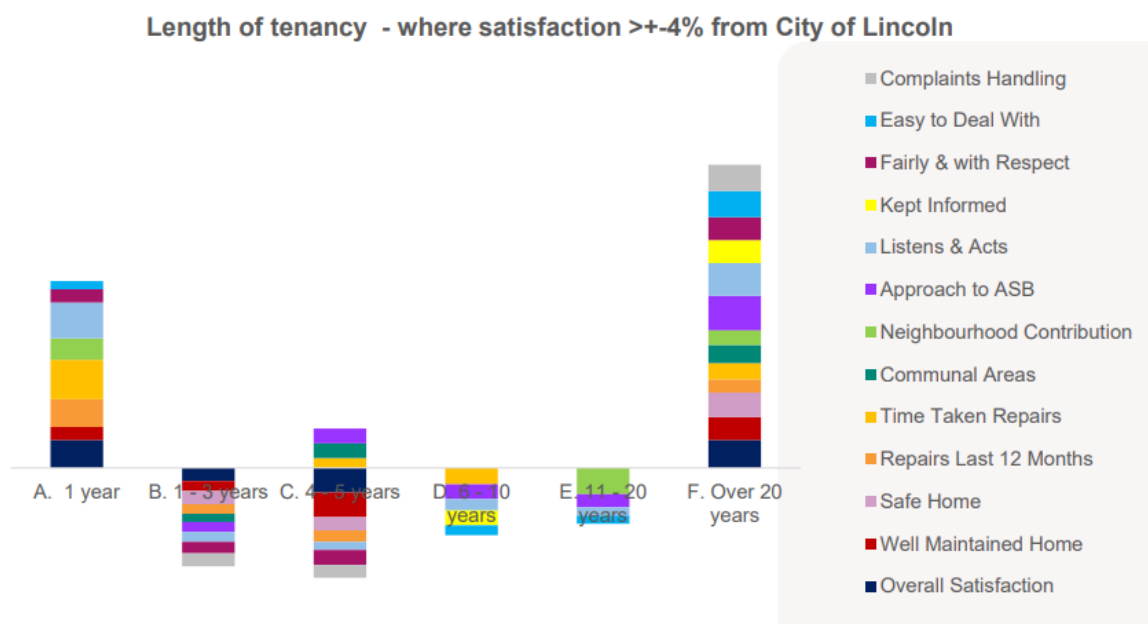


Figure 1: Summary of relationship between tenant satisfaction and length of tenancy

- 7.4 Figure 2 highlights the correlation between satisfaction and age, with satisfaction generally improving as tenants get older. This correlation will be linked to tenancy length, as set out in Figure 1.

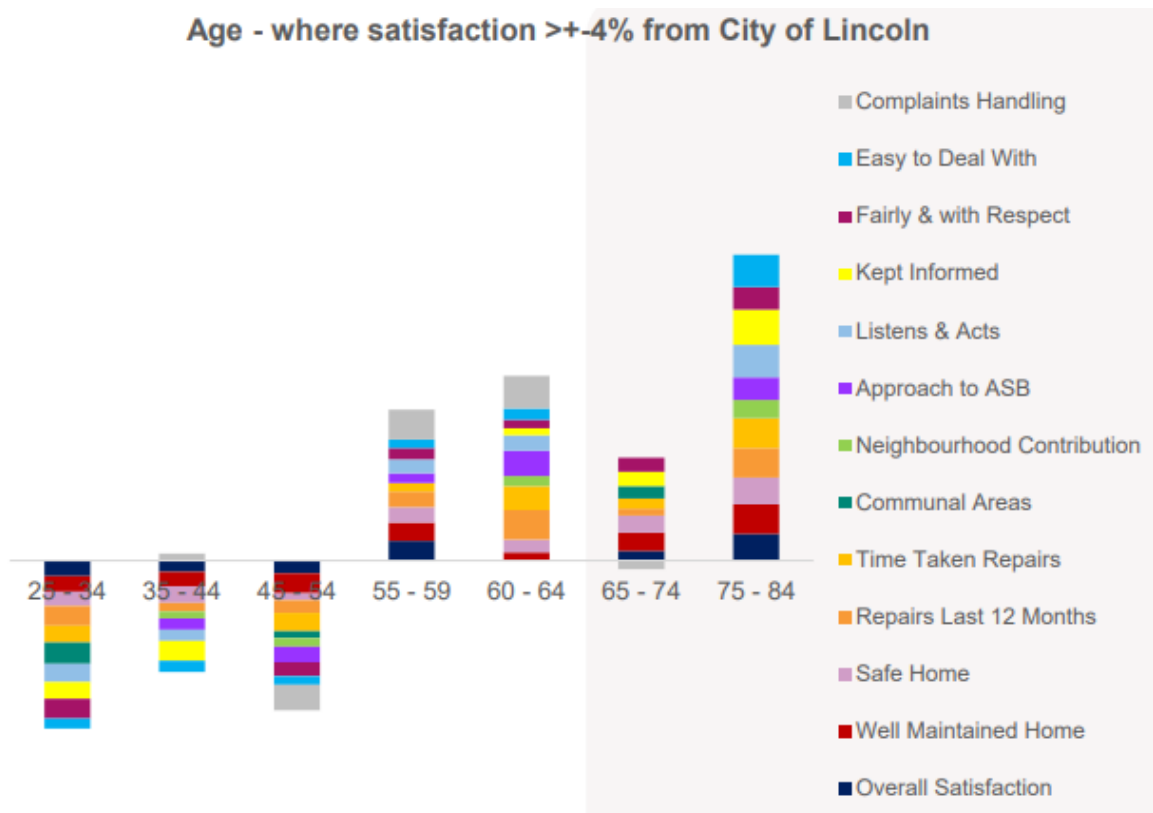


Figure 2: Summary of relationship between tenant satisfaction and age

- 7.5 The Council chose to ask tenants three additional questions as part of its tenant perception survey. One additional question sought to improve understanding of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on tenants. Analysis by Acuity demonstrates a strong relationship between tenants' concern about the cost-of-living crisis and their satisfaction with the Council's landlord function. Analysis by Acuity indicates that, if the cost-of-living crisis had no effect, overall satisfaction would likely be over 85%. Figure 3 below visualises the extent to which respondents said they were satisfied with the Council's landlord services, and how much their responses were influenced by concerns about the cost-of-living crisis:

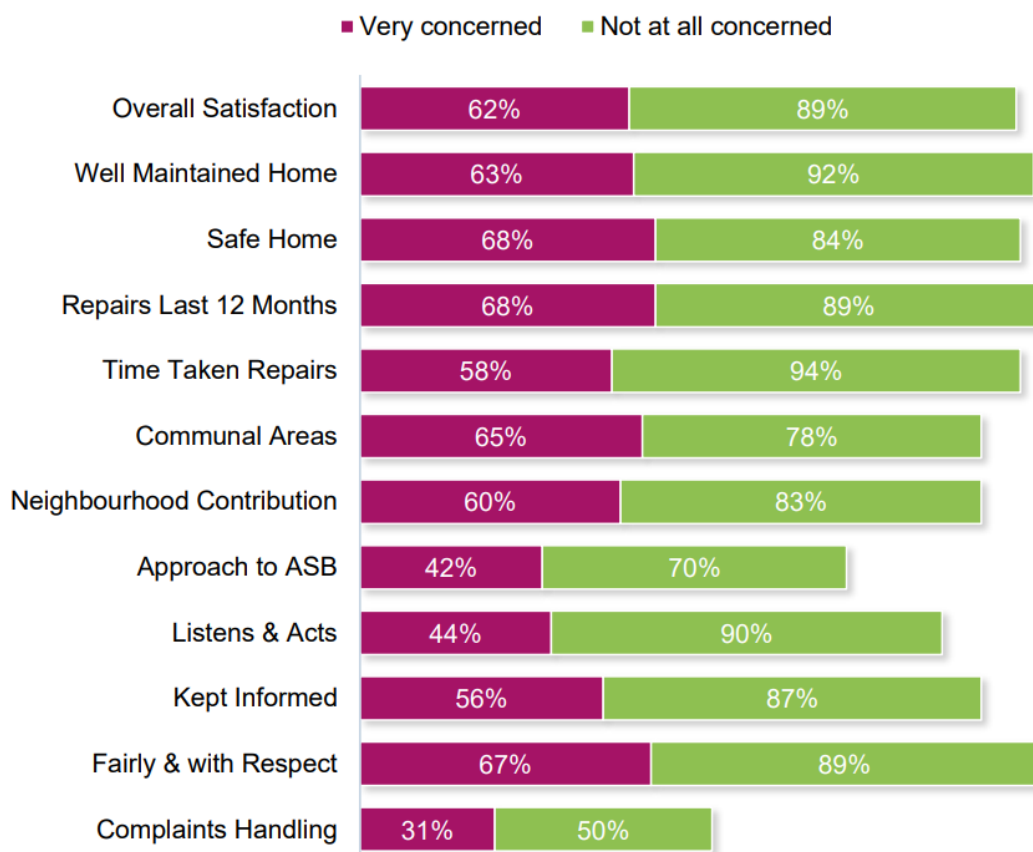


Figure 3: Summary of how the cost of living crisis affects tenant perception

7.6 An additional question related to 'net promoter score' indicated that 33% of tenants were 'detractors' (scoring 6 out of 10 or lower), 41% were 'promoters' (scoring 9 or 10 out of 10) and 26% were 'passives' (scoring 7 or 8 out of 10). The top reasons tenants gave for scoring the Council less than 10 out of 10 were:

- Time taken to complete repairs, or forgotten/outstanding repairs
- Listening and taking interest
- Communication (general)

7.7 The third and final additional question asked tenants to what extent they agreed the Council is easy to deal with. 70% of respondents stated they agreed with this.

8. Conclusion - Key Drivers of Tenant Satisfaction

8.1 Acuity's analysis reveals the key drivers that influence satisfaction among City of Lincoln tenants. The most important driver for tenant satisfaction is for the Council to provide a well maintained home. This, and the other key drivers, are set out in Figure 4 below:

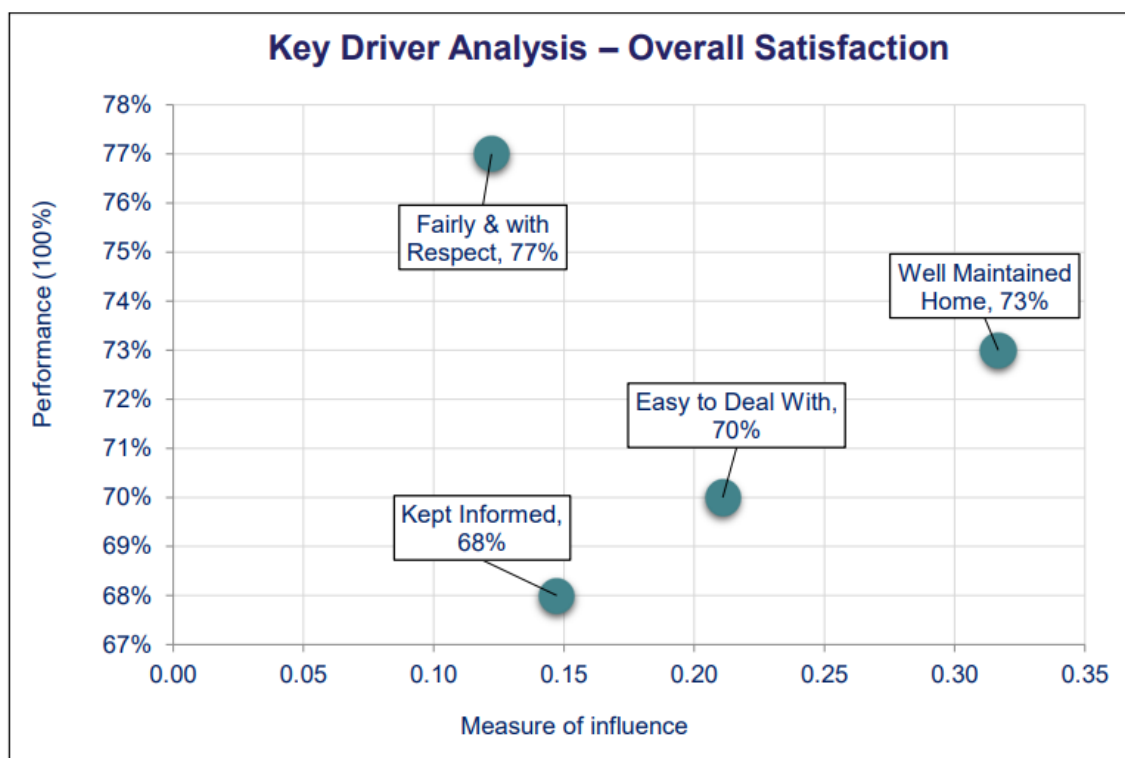


Figure 4: Acuity analysis of key driver of Lincoln tenants' overall satisfaction

8.2 This, and TSM performance data summarised in '**Appendix A**,' indicate that the key areas of focus for the coming year should be:

- Improving how the Council responds to complaints;
- Further analysis of tenants' perceptions around ASB and what the Council can do to improve this; and
- Improve approaches to tenant participation and keeping tenants informed.

9. Strategic Priorities

9.1 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.' Monitoring and reporting performance, and tenant satisfaction, provide the means for the Council to assess its progress against this corporate priority and identify areas for improvement.

10. Organisational Impacts

10.1 Finance

Although there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, there are several indicators that do affect the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) including the amount of rent collected and repairs and improvements.

The financial position of the HRA and Housing Repair Service (HRS) are continually monitored, with quarterly reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

10.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

10.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

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

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

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

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

11. Risk Implications

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

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

12. Recommendation

12.1 That the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee reviews and comments on the content of this report and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures data contained therein;

12.2 That the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee supports the priorities listed in section 7 of this report; and

12.3 That the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee notes the TSM data contained within '**Appendix A**' has been submitted to the National Regulator for Social Housing.

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?

One
(Appendix A)

List of Background Papers:

None

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Appendix A

City of Lincoln Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) 2023/24

This document contains City of Lincoln Council's Tenant Satisfaction Measures performance data. So our tenants know how our performance compares with other social housing landlords, we've included 2023/24 year-end benchmarking information.









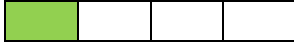
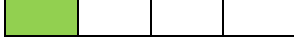
This benchmarking information is provided by Housemark, and compares our performance to 221 other social housing landlords in England. The legend below explains what this benchmarking information means:



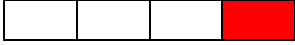
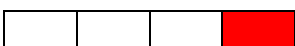
Benchmarking (quartile)		The council's performance is in Quartile 1 (top 25%)
		The council's performance is in Quartile 2 (top 50%)
		The council's performance is in Quartile 3 (top 75%)
		The council's performance is in Quartile 4 (bottom 25%)
Benchmarking (median)		The council's performance is above the median (top 50%)
		The council's performance is below the median (bottom 50%)

Part 1: Tenant Perception Measures Performance Data

Q5e. Tenant perception measures		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2023/24)
TP01	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from their landlord.	71%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP02	Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service.	75%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP03	Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair	68%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP04	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained.	73%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP05	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe.	75%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP06	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.	60%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP07	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them.	68%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP08	Proportion of respondents who report that they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect.	77%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP09	Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling.	37%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP10	Proportion of respondents with communal areas who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.	75%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP11	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.	69%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
TP12	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.	53%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

Part 2: Management Information Measures Performance Data

Building safety		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2023/24)	Social housing providers who are fully compliant
BS01	Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out (%)	99.71%		39.4%
BS02	Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out (%)	100.00%		72.7%
BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or inspections have been carried out (%)	90.92%		65.3%
BS04	Proportion of homes for which all legionella risk assessments have been carried out (%)	100.00%		80%
BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out (%)	100.00%		80.8%
RP01	Proportion of homes that do not meet the DHS (%)	0.24%		25.6%
ASB			Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2023/24)
NM01 (1)	Number of ASB cases opened, per 1000 homes	38.15		
NM01 (2)	Number of ASB cases that involve hate incidents, per 1000 homes	0.01		
Repairs		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2023/24)	
RP02 (1)	Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	94.66%		
RP02 (2)	Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	99.77%		

Complaints		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2023/24)
CH01 (1)	Number of stage 1 complaints received per 1000 homes	45.72	
CH01 (2)	Number of stage 2 complaints received per 1000 homes	5.39	
CH02 (1)	Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code timescales (%)	38.67%	
CH02 (2)	Proportion of stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code timescales (%)	55.56%	

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

8 AUGUST 2024

SUBJECT: HOUSING FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – OUTTURN 2023/24

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK

LEAD OFFICER: LAURA SHIPLEY, FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee (HSSC) the provisional 2023/24 financial outturn position on the Council's revenue and capital budgets, including:
 - Housing Revenue Account
 - Housing Repairs Service
 - Housing Investment Programme
- 1.2. This report will provide HSSC with a summary of actual income and expenditure compared to revised budget and how any surpluses have been allocated/are proposed to be allocated to reserves.
- 1.3. HSSC should note that the financial outturn is still subject to Audit by KPMG, the Council's external auditors.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

- 2.1. Lincoln Tenants Panel are invited to comment on the content of this report.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. This report covers the Housing Revenue Account budgets and Housing Investment Programme for the current financial year and sets out the provisional financial outturn position.
- 3.2. During the last quarter of 2023/24, the position on the Housing Revenue Account and Housing Repairs Service has improved since quarter three with budget surpluses achieved within HRA at the end of the financial year.
- 3.3. Despite this positive outturn position the Council continues to face escalating cost pressures, above those already factored into the MTFS. The positive outturn in 2023/24 has been largely driven by investment income with interest rates continuing above the levels assumed within the MTFS. This will not be the case in 2024/25 with budgets adjusted to reflect the base rate forecast, as such strong financial discipline and delivery of the significant savings targets underpinning the MTFS will remain critical in ensuring the Council maintains a sustainable financial position in the medium term.

- 3.4. The table below sets out a summary of the financial position of the Council for the financial year 2023/24, based on the provisional outturn:

Revenue Accounts	2023/24		
	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Housing Revenue Account – Contribution (to)/from balances	59	53	(6)
Housing Repairs Service – (surplus)/deficit	0	289	289*

*any HRS variance is repatriated to the HRA and as such included within the HRA balances above

Capital Programme	2023/24		
	Budget following Q3 Report £'000	Revised Outturn Budget £'000	Movement £'000
Housing Investment Programme	16,120	14,732	(1,388)

Balances	2023/24		
	Budgeted Balance @ 31/03/24 £'000	Actual Balance @ 31/03/24 £'000	Movement £'000
Housing Revenue Account Balances	(1,125)	(1,131)	(6)
Housing Repairs Service Balances	0	0	0

Reserves	2023/24		
	Opening Balance @ 01/04/23 £'000	Actual Balance @ 31/03/24 £'000	Movement £'000
HRA Earmarked Reserves	(3,510)	(4,507)	(997)

- 3.5. The detailed financial position is shown in sections 3-6 and accompanying appendices.

4. Housing Revenue Account

- 4.1. For 2023/24 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £58,930, resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £1,125,516 (after allowing for the 2022/23 outturn position).
- 4.2. The financial performance quarterly monitoring report for the 3rd quarter predicted an overspend of £13,787. The provisional outturn for 2023/24 now indicated an improvement of £19,515 resulting in an overall budget underspend of £5,728 (including additional transfers to earmarked reserves). This would result in HRA balances as at 31st March 2024 of £1,131,244.

- 4.3. There are a significant number of variations in income and expenditure against the approved budget, full details of the main variances are provided in the Appendix B, while the table below sets out the key variances:

Housing Revenue Account Year-end key variances:	Outturn £'000
National Pay Award Settlement	126
Less:	
Increased Investment Interest	(764)
HRA Repairs Account	(384)
Bad Debt Provision write back	(333)
Additional Rental Income	(283)
Plus:	
Net movement in Earmarked Reserves	1,016
<u>HRS Recharges:</u>	
Housing Repairs Service Overall Deficit Repatriation	289
HRS Repairs – increased Responsive, Aids & Adaptations, Cleansing jobs	795
HRS Repairs – reduced level of Voids jobs	(299)
Net Other Variances	(169)
Overall deficit/(surplus)	(6)

- 4.4. The key variances are predominately driven by the impact of external economic factors, which far exceed the assumptions underpinning the MTFS. However, in addition, the HRA and HRS continue to experience a number of other variances due to demand pressures and the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges.
- 4.5. The main variances, both positive and negative, cover:

- Pay award inflation pressure - the 2023/24 pay offer, made by the National Employers for Local Government Services earlier this year, was accepted by the Trade Unions on 31st October and was paid in December. The award reflects the higher of either, a flat rate increase of £1,925, or 3.5-3.8% to all employees, equivalent to a 9.4% increase for the lowest paid members of staff and with the majority of officers receiving pay rises above 5% for a second consecutive year.
- Investment income – as a result of the rising Bank of England Base Rate, which has maintained at 5.25% during quarter four, the level of interest earned on the Council's cash balances has increased significantly. At present there has been a limited consequential impact on the cost of borrowing as all debt is at fixed rates and no new borrowing has been undertaken (one loan has been re-financed in year, but this was at a lower interest rate).

- HRA Repairs Account – repairs and maintenance costs across various contracts are underspent as a result some of the work being undertaken as part of the voids works programme, alongside fluctuations due to the cyclical nature of some jobs.
- Bad Debt Provision – as a result of the year-end review of the provision for outstanding debtors, in line with the Credit Loss model (IFRS9 Financial Instruments), a one off write back from the provision was required.
- Rental income – income levels are higher than anticipated due to a higher than budgeted opening Housing stock at the start of the financial year, coupled with higher than expected occupancy, and rent levels, at the new Rookery Lane development.
- Housing Repairs Services (HRS) – the service has reported a forecast deficit, which is consequentially repatriated to the HRA, as a result of the issues set out in Section 4 below. In addition, demand for responsive housing repairs and aids and adaptations has significantly increased in year, though partially offset by a reduction in the level of voids repairs and cleansing works, resulting in a switch in the nature of HRS rechargeable works.

4.6. In response to the key cost pressures that have occurred in 2023/24; the additional staff costs arising as a result of the pay award were unavoidable and have required the resetting of budgets for 2024/25 (this was taken into account in the latest MTFS). In relation to the additional costs transferred from the HRS, the Housing Directorate Management Team are commissioning work to review the individual repairs service areas, i.e. Aids & Adaptations, Voids, Responsive Repairs etc, in order to identify a range of specific mitigations to manage demand and cost drivers. In addition, work continues within the HRS to address the recruitment and retention challenges, (this also forms part of a wider scope of work developing the Council's Workforce Development Strategy), which is already seeing some success with a reduction in level of vacancies at the end of the financial year.

4.7. HRA Earmarked Reserves

The provisional outturn of a £5,728 budget underspend includes a number of additional transfers to earmarked reserves, in addition to those transfers to/from earmarked reserves already approved and budgeted for. These further contributions to/from earmarked reserves are set out below:

Reason for Reserve Transfer	Amount £
30 Year HBP initiatives: High rise review and remediation, carbon reduction and home safety and further area reviews.	800,000
Regulator of Social Housing: Competency and conduct standard and inspection costs.	180,000
De Wint Court sinking fund additional outturn contribution.	92,500
HRS Social value contributions ringfenced for future schemes.	49,890
Total Reserve Transfers:	1,122,390

- 4.8. Following contributions to earmarked reserves the underspend of £5,728 would result in HRA general balance of £1,131,244 as at 31st March 2024, remaining within prudent levels.
- 4.9. The level of each of the current earmarked reserves, as at 31st March 2024 is attached at Appendix E. The appendix takes account of the contributions to earmarked reserves agreed as part of the revised budget and the drawdown of funding to cover expenditure and the additional transfers set out in para. 3.7 above.

5. Housing Repairs Service

- 5.1. For 2023/24 the Council's Housing Repairs Service net revenue budget was set at zero, reflecting its full cost recovery nature.
- 5.2. The outturn for 2023/24 shows the HRS had a deficit of £288,844, an improvement of £263,218 since quarter three, which was repatriated to the HRA, Appendix C provides a forecast HRS Summary. Full details of the main variances are provided within Appendix D of this report, while the key variances are summarised below:

Housing Repairs Service Year-end key variances:	Outturn £'000
Increased use of sub-contractors and increases in sub-contractor prices	1,825
National Pay Award Settlement	125
Less:	
Staff vacancies due to recruitment and retention challenges	(651)
Transport Costs	(78)
Increased income for HRS jobs for increased works	(941)
Net other variances	9
Overall deficit/(surplus)	289

- 5.3. The main contributory factor to the deficit is the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, which is being felt not just by the council but across the construction industry as a whole. This inability to attract and retain staff results in a greater reliance on the use of sub-contractors to ensure that service demands are met. The cost of using subcontractors is however more expensive than the HRS's own workforce, due to the ongoing impact of inflationary factors, a reduced national workforce and a reduced pool of contractors from which to secure services. These additional costs are therefore not fully offset by the vacancy savings achieved by not carrying out the work internally.
- 5.4. As the increased subcontractor costs are not reflected in the service hourly rate and overhead recovery is not recouped on sub-contractors this results in an under recovery of full costs from the HRA.

- 5.5. Whilst last year high vacancy levels, and the use of sub-contractors rather than the Council's own workforce, resulted in an underspend on materials for the Council, this year higher than anticipated inflation levels, an industry wide issue, and an expected increase in repairs jobs has resulted in a very small underspend.
- 5.6. The deficit also includes the impact of the national pay award, which is significantly over and above the assumptions included within the MTFS as outlined in both the General Fund and HRA variances.
- 5.7. It should be noted that due to the interconnection of the HRS and HRA the consequential costs in the HRA are ordinarily reduced, and therefore offset any repatriated deficit. However, due to the increased usage of more expensive sub-contractors and materials, and an increased volume of works, this is not the case this financial year, as detailed above, and there is a significant additional cost for repairs and maintenance of the housing stock that is being incurred by the HRA. This additional cost is currently being offset against the overall HRA position as set out in section 3 above.

6. Earmarked Reserves

- 6.1. The Council holds a number of earmarked revenue reserves within the HRA. These reserves are sums set aside for specific purposes and to mitigate against potential future known or predicted liabilities. Key reserves include the Housing Repairs, HRA Strategic Priorities, HRA Invest to Save and Disrepairs Management, etc. A number of these reserves are budgeted for use over the period of the MTFS.
- 6.2. The details of all the earmarked reserves and their balance as at 31st March 2024 are attached in Appendix E, with further details in the MTFS 2024-2029. In summary:

Earmarked Reserves	Opening Balance 01/04/23 £'000	Increase £'000	Decrease £'000	Closing Balance 31/03/24 £'000
Housing Revenue Account	3,510	1,185	(188)	4,507

7. Capital Programme

7.1. Housing Investment Programme

- 7.2. The revised Housing Investment Programme for 2023/24 amounted to £16.120m following the Quarter 3 position. At quarter 4 the programme has been decreased by £1.388m to £14.732m, as shown below:

Housing Investment Programme	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Revised Budget at Q3	16,120	21,043	15,955	14,834	14,855
Budget changes for approval – Quarter 4	(1,388)	1,720	523	(115)	(121)
Revised Budget	14,732	22,763	16,478	14,718	14,734

- 7.3. All changes over the approved limit require approval by the Executive. The following changes require Executive approval for Quarter 4:

Changes requiring Executive Approval:	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Budget Under/Overspends returned to available resources (major repairs reserves)					
Bathrooms & WC	(105)	0	0	0	0
Environmental Works	(137)	0	0	0	0
Stamp Duty Refunds	(328)	0	0	0	0
Transfers between schemes					
New Build Programme (Borrowing/DRF for 141 eligible following increase to 50% retention)	0	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
New Build Programme (141 eligible following increase to 50% retention)	0	100	100	100	100
Infrastructure Upgrade	(166)	0	0	0	0
Housing Support Services Computer Fund	166	0	0	0	0
Increased budget allocations					
Void Capitalised Works (funded from major repairs reserve)	214	0	0	0	0
New Build – Hermit Street (correction to agree budget to original Executive report)	138	0	0	0	0
New Build – Capital Salaries (funded from 1-4-1 and borrowing)	15	0	0	0	0
Property Acquisitions – this includes individual purchase and repair and LAHF acquisitions approved under officer delegations (funded from grant and 1-4-1 receipts with borrowing as match element).	279	724	0	0	0
Total changes requiring Executive Approval	76	724	0	0	0

- 7.4. All new projects are subject to Executive approval. The following schemes have been added to the HIP, and require approval by the Executive:

Changes requiring Executive approval	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Jasmin Green feasibility/development (funded through DRF).	0	50	0	0	0
Total changes requiring Executive Approval	0	50	0	0	0

- 7.5. The Chief Finance Officer has delegated authority to approve financial changes up to an approved limit as set out under Financial Procedure Rules. The following changes were approved during Quarter 4:

Changes approved by the Chief Finance Officer:	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Reprofiled Expenditure					
New Build – Hermit Street – reprofiled	(212)	212	0	0	0
Western Growth Corridor Phase 1a infrastructure – reprofiled	359	(359)	0	0	0
Fire Doors	0	(500)	500	0	0
Housing Support Services Computer Fund	(70)	306	0	(115)	(121)
DH Central Heating Upgrades	(23)	0	23	0	0
Thermal Comfort Works	(20)	20	0	0	0
Ermine Church Land	(350)	350	0	0	0
Lincoln Standard Window Replacement	(90)	90	0	0	0
Door Replacement	(129)	129	0	0	0
Replacement Door entry systems	(137)	137	0	0	0
Garages	(30)	30	0	0	0
Fire Compartment Works	(10)	10	0	0	0
HRA Buildings	(25)	25	0	0	0
Hiab and Mule	(122)	122	0	0	0
Telephony	(6)	6	0	0	0
Ermine Church Land	(350)	350	0	0	0
Property Acquisitions	(367)	367	0	0	0
Budget Under/Overspends returned to available resources (major repairs reserve and DRF)					
Kitchen Improvements	45	0	0	0	0
Rewiring	(12)	0	0	0	0
Re-roofing	(20)	0	0	0	0
Structural Defects	(10)	0	0	0	0
New Services	26	0	0	0	0
Renew Stair Structure	(40)	0	0	0	0
Communal Electrics	10	0	0	0	0
Communal TV Aerials	2	0	0	0	0
Fire Doors	(59)	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Removals	(87)	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Surveys	(69)	0	0	0	0
Operation Rose	(11)	0	0	0	0
Thurlby Crescent	(8)	0	0	0	0

Increased budget allocations					
New Build – De Wint Court (funded from DRF)	1	0	0	0	0
Total Changes Approved by the CFO	(1,449)	945	523	(115)	(121)

Total HIP Delegated Approvals and Approvals by/for Executive	(1,388)	1,720	523	(115)	(121)
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- 7.6. The table below provides a summary of the projected outturn position for the Housing Investment Programme:

Housing Investment Programme - Outturn	2023/24			
	Budget	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
	Q3 £'000	Q4 £'000	£'000	to Q3 Budget £'000
Decent Homes / Lincoln Standard	6,741	6,549	6,549	(192)
Health and Safety	673	339	339	(334)
Contingent Major Repairs / Works	0	0	0	0
New Build Programme	7,445	6,980	6,980	(465)
Other Schemes	755	446	446	(309)
Computer Fund / IT Schemes	506	419	419	(87)
Total Capital Programme	16,120	14,732	14,732	(1,388)

- 7.7. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme for the final quarter of 2023/24 was £14.732m, which is 91.3% of the budget. This is detailed further at Appendix G.

8. Strategic Priorities

- 8.1. The MTFS underpins this policy and financial planning framework and set out the overall framework on which the Council plans and manages its financial resources to ensure that they fit with, and support, the direction of the Council's vision and strategic priorities. Vision 2025 identifies the Council's strategic priorities, setting the vision and direction for the council and the city for the next five years. The proposals in this report allow the Council to achieve a balanced budget position for 2023/24 in order that it can continue to deliver services in support of Vision 2025.

9. Resource Implications

- 9.1. The financial implications are contained throughout the report.

Under the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) is required to give Council an opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves.

General Balances, on the HRA, are the only resource not ear-marked to a particular future need. The prudent minimum level of balance that should be maintained on the HRA are £1m-£1.5m. Based on the provisional outturn the level of balances as at 31st March 2024 will be maintained within these ranges, with the General Fund slightly higher.

Although this report sets out the financial outturn, which for the HRA has resulted in a positive position, this does not mean that the financial issues for the Council are resolved. Beyond 2023/24 the Council is set to face ongoing pressures as a result of increasing baseline costs due to inflationary impacts, escalating service demands and income pressures arising from the cost-of-living crisis. The Council will continue to face further financial challenges as it responds to the impact of these issues and an increased need to deliver ongoing reductions in the net cost base, as set out in the MTFS 2024-2029.

9.2. Legal implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9.3. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

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

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

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

Due to the nature of the report, there are no direct equality, diversity, or human rights implications.

10. Risk Implications

A full financial risk assessment is included in the MTFS, this is continually reviewed in light of changes in the underlying financial assumptions. There are currently a significant number of critical risk factors to the budget and MTFS, with further details provided within the MTFS 2024-29.

11. Recommendations

HSSC are recommended to:

- 11.1. Note the provisional 2023/24 financial outturn for the Housing Revenue Account, Housing Repairs Service and Capital Programme as set out in sections 3 – 6, and in particular the reasons for any variances.

Key Decision	No
Key Decision Reference No.	N/A
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
List of Background Papers:	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2028 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029 Housing 30 Year Business Plan 2023/24
Lead Officer:	Laura Shipley, Financial Services Manager Laura.shipley@lincoln.gov.uk

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FUND SUMMARY – OUTTURN 2023/24

	Ref	Revised Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Gross Rental Income	A	(32,643)	(32,937)	(294)
Charges for Services & Facilities	B	(554)	(650)	(96)
Contribution towards Expenditure	C	(50)	(11)	39
Repairs Account – Income	D1	0	(133)	(133)
Supervision & Management – General	D2	(664)	(813)	(149)
Supervision & Management – Special	D3	(66)	(82)	(16)
Repairs & Maintenance	E	10,834	10,947	113
Supervision & Management – General	F1	6,901	7,239	338
Supervision & Management – Special	F2	1,991	2,127	136
Rents, Rates and Other Premises	G	846	777	(69)
Increase in Bad Debt Provisions	H	250	(83)	(333)
Insurance Claims Contingency	I	174	282	108
Contingencies	J	149	0	(149)
Depreciation	K	7,750	8,199	449
Impairments	L	0	0	0
Debt Management Expenses	M	16	9	(7)
HRS Trading (Surplus) / Deficit	N	0	289	289
Net Cost of Service	O	(5,067)	(4,839)	228
Loan Charges Interest	P	2,356	2,317	(39)
Investment/Mortgage Interest	Q	(308)	(1,073)	(764)
Net Operating Inc/Exp	R	(3,020)	(3,595)	(575)
Major Repairs Reserve Adjustment	T	3,000	2,552	(447)
Transfers to/from reserves	U	79	1,096	1,016
(Surplus)/Deficit in Year	V	59	53	(6)

Housing Revenue Account Variances – Outturn 2023/24

The variances analysed in the table below exclude any technical adjustments and only cover the true under of overspends. Figures in brackets indicate an underspend of expenditure or additional income.

Ref		£	Reason for variance
	<u>Reduced Income</u>		
C	Court Costs	38,730	Reduction in recovered income from court costs as less cases in year than anticipated.
	<u>Increased Income</u>		
Q	Investment Interest	(764,430)	Increased investment income as a result of higher interest rates.
A	Gross Rental Income	(282,650)	Additional rental income as a result of reduced voids and higher rent levels at Rookery Lane development, plus higher than budgeted opening housing stock levels.
D1	Repairs Account	(132,550)	Additional income from rechargeable void works HRS social value contribution and in year profit share income
D2	Supervision & Management: General	(52,080)	Additional income from contractor admin fee and internal fees.
	<u>Reduced Expenditure</u>		
T	Major Repairs Reserve Adjustment/Direct Revenue Finance	(447,100)	Contribution from Major Repairs Reserve to offset the increase in depreciation costs following revaluations of properties in year.
H	Bad Debt Provision	(332,510)	Write back from provision for outstanding debts, following year-end review of ongoing requirements.
E	Repairs & Maintenance	(409,590)	Underspend on Repairs Account expenditure predominantly due to cyclical repair/replacement works.
F	Supervision & Management	(319,230)	Reduced expenditure on employee costs due to staff vacancies, offset by agency costs below (excl. Pay Award below).
E	Repairs & Maintenance - HRS	(298,780)	Reduced HRS expenditure on Voids, partially offsets increases on Responsive, Aids & Adaptations and Cleansing below (net overspend £497k).

Ref		£	Reason for variance
G/E	Rent, Rates & Other Premises	(127,980)	Underspend on Utility costs and Council Tax liability across the HRA (excluding De Wint Court).
P	Loan Charges Interest	(38,650)	Repayment of existing borrowing & re-borrowing at lower interest rate
	<u>Increased Expenditure</u>		
N	HRS Surplus/Deficit	288,840	HRS deficit position (refer to HRS variances – Appendix D).
E	Repairs & Maintenance - HRS	795,450	Increased HRS expenditure on Responsive Repairs (£335k), Aids & Adaptations (£446k) and Cleansing (£14k) partially offset by underspend above (net overspend £497k).
K	Depreciation	449,100	Increase in depreciation costs following revaluation of housing stock, offset in full by a Major Repairs reserve adjustment above.
F1	Supervision & Management – General	323,030	Cost of agency staff to cover staff vacancies within Supervision & Management, partially offset by Vacancy savings above.
F1	Supervision & Management – General	366,410	Increased expenditure due to consultancy costs on void work & garden/hedge/tree work costs (£205k), HRA Business Plan schemes (£99k), caretakers tipping (£46k), additional consultancy costs (£54k), housing needs survey (£25k), partially offset by increased call on reserves.
I	Insurance Claims Contingency	108,170	Increase in disrepair claims, offset by increased call on Insurance reserve.
F	Supervision & Management	126,000	Impact of National Employers pay award over and above budgeted assumptions.
U	Transfers To/(From) Reserves	1,016,420	Net additional contribution to reserves, over and above budgeted levels (as outlined in paragraph 3.7 and Appendix E).

HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE SUMMARY – OUTTURN 2023/24

	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Employees	3,852	3,326	(526)
Premises	171	165	(6)
Transport	432	354	(78)
Materials	1,519	1,511	(8)
Sub-Contractors	2,154	3,979	1,825
Supplies & Services	333	381	49
Central Support Charges	586	559	(26)
Capital Charges	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	9,047	10,277	1,230
Income	(9,047)	(9,888)	(941)
(Surplus)/Deficit	0	289	289

Housing Repairs Service Variances – Outturn 2023/24

Many items of income and expenditure are demand led and difficult to predict. Consequently, judgement has been applied in order to provide the most realistic indication of the financial position at the year-end. Figures in brackets indicate an underspend of expenditure or additional income.

	£	Reason for Variance
<u>Reduced Expenditure</u>		
Employee Costs	(651,017)	Vacancies within the Operative staff.
Fleet Charges	(78,352)	Reduction in lease costs due to delay in receiving new vehicles from supplier.
Central Support Costs	(26,330)	Reduction in Corporate Support Service charges to the HRS.
<u>Increased Expenditure</u>		
Employee Costs	125,230	Impact of National Employers pay award over and above budgeted assumptions.
Sub-Contractors	1,825,033	Increased use of sub-contractors to meet increased demand and cover vacancies within the operative team.
<u>Increased Income</u>		
Income	(940,786)	Increased income as a result of increase in number of jobs, offset by increased costs of sub-contractor spend above.

EARMARKED RESERVES – OUTTURN 2023/24

	Revised Opening Balance	In Year Increase	In Year Decrease	Closing Balance
	01/04/2023 £'000	£'000	£'000	31/03/2024 £'000
HRA				
Capital Fees Equalisation	110	-	-	110
De Wint Court	73	-	-	73
De Wint Court Sinking Fund	10	103	-	113
Disrepairs Management	300	-	(13)	287
Housing Business Plan	177	800	(134)	842
Housing Repairs Service	76	-	-	76
HRA IT	135	35	-	170
HRA Repairs Account	1,351	-	-	1,351
Housing Strategic Priority	764	-	-	764
HRS Social Value	61	50	-	111
Invest to Save (HRA)	416	-	(41)	375
NSAP/RSAP Sinking Fund	9	9	-	18
Regulator of Social Housing	0	180	-	180
Strategic Growth Reserve	5	-	-	5
Tenant Satisfaction Survey	23	9	-	31
Total Earmarked Reserves	3,510	1,185	(188)	4507

CAPITAL RESOURCES – OUTTURN 2023/24

	Opening balance	Contributions	Used in financing	Closing balance 31/03/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Grants/Contributions HRA	275	817	(817)	275
Capital receipts HRA	2,660	900	(1,000)	2,560
Capital receipts 1-4-1	4,274	1,062	(1,557)	3,780
Major Repairs Reserve	22,631	10,749	(9,645)	23,735
Total Capital Resources	29,840	13,528	(13,019)	30,350

Currently the HIP has schemes planned to facilitate use of all 1:4:1 receipts with no repayment required in 23/24.

Housing Investment Programme – Summary of Expenditure as at 31st March 2024

<u>HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME</u>	Budget 2023/24 - Reported at Q3	Q4 Budget Increase / Decrease	Q4 Budget Reprofile	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Total Spend	2023/24 % Spend to Revised Budget
<u>Contingency Schemes</u>						
Contingency Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contingency Schemes Total	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Decent Homes</u>						
Bathrooms & WC's	300,000	(104,582)	0	195,418	195,418	100.00%
DH Central Heating Upgrades	2,253,948	0	(22,542)	2,231,406	2,231,406	100.00%
Door Replacement	900,000	0	(129,420)	770,580	770,580	100.00%
Fire Compartment works	10,000	0	(10,000)	0	0	0.00%
Fire Doors	60,000	(58,821)	0	1,179	1,179	100.00%
Kitchen Improvements	700,000	45,155	0	745,155	745,155	100.00%
Lincoln Standard Windows Replacement	789,732	0	(89,692)	700,040	700,040	100.00%
New services	76,774	26,246	0	103,020	103,020	100.00%
Re-roofing	20,000	(20,000)	0	0	0	0.00%
Rewiring	20,000	(12,272)	0	7,728	7,728	100.00%
Structural Defects	10,000	(10,000)	0	0	0	0.00%
Thermal Comfort Works	30,000	0	(19,858)	10,142	10,142	100.00%
Void Capitalised Works	1,570,320	213,534	0	1,783,854	1,783,854	100.00%
Decent Homes Total	6,740,774	79,260	(271,512)	6,548,522	6,548,522	100.00%
<u>Health and Safety</u>						
Asbestos Removal	190,000	(87,465)	0	102,535	102,535	100.00%
Asbestos Surveys	129,000	(69,440)	0	59,560	59,560	100.00%
Fire Alarms	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%

<u>HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME</u>	Budget 2023/24 - Reported at Q3	Q4 Budget Increase / Decrease	Q4 Budget Reprofile	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Total Spend	2023/24 % Spend to Revised Budget
Renew stair structure	40,000	(40,000)	0	0	0	0.00%
Replacement Door Entry Systems	313,757	0	(136,846)	176,911	176,911	100.00%
Health and Safety Total	672,757	(196,905)	(136,846)	339,006	339,006	100.00%
<u>IT/Infrastructure</u>						
Housing Support Services Computer Fund	319,743	166,383	(70,078)	416,048	416,048	100.00%
Infrastructure Upgrade	166,383	(166,383)	0	0	0	0.00%
Operation Rose	10,903	(10,903)	0	0	0	0.00%
Telephony	8,758	(5,558)	0	3,200	3,200	100.00%
IT/Infrastructure Total	505,786	(10,903)	(70,078)	419,248	419,248	100.00%
<u>Lincoln Standard</u>						
Over bath showers (10 year programme)	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Lincoln Standard Total	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
<u>Other Current Developments</u>						
CCTV	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Communal Electrics	30,000	10,270	0	40,270	40,270	100.00%
Communal TV Aerials	3,000	2,351	0	5,351	5,351	100.00%
Environmental works	400,000	(137,232)	0	262,768	262,768	100.00%
Garages	30,000	0	(30,000)	0	0	0.00%
Eco Welfare Unit	24,729	0	0	24,729	24,729	100.00%
Hiab and Mule	122,330	0	(122,330)	0	0	0.00%
HRA Buildings	25,000	0	(25,000)	0	0	0.00%
Landscaping & Boundaries	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Thurlby Crescent	120,000	(7,607)	0	112,393	112,393	100.00%
Other Current Developments Total	755,059	(132,219)	(177,330)	445,510	445,510	100.00%
HOUSING INVESTMENT TOTAL	8,674,376	(260,767)	(661,324)	7,752,285	7,752,285	100.00%

<u>HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME</u>	Budget 2023/24 - Reported at Q3	Q4 Budget Increase / Decrease	Q4 Budget Reprofile	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Total Spend	2023/24 % Spend to Revised Budget
<u>HOUSING STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT</u>						
<u>New Build Programme</u>						
Property Acquisitions	3,483,328	279,287	(367,270)	3,395,344	3,395,344	100.00%
Ermine Church Land	350,000	0	(349,893)	107	107	100.00%
Stamp Duty Refunds	0	(327,800)	0	(327,800)	(327,800)	100.00%
New Build Capital Salaries	46,032	14,758	0	60,790	60,790	100.00%
New Build- De Wint Court	52,913	603	0	53,517	53,517	100.00%
New Build Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
New Build Programme (141 eligible)	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
New Build Programme (Borrowing for 141 eligible)	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
New Build Site – Hermit Street	1,412,640	138,316	(212,401)	1,346,557	1,346,557	100.00%
New Build Site - Queen Elizabeth Road	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
New Build Site - Rookery Lane	123,768	0	0	123,768	123,768	100.00%
New Build Site - Searby Road	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Western Growth Corridor	1,968,678	0	358,982	2,327,660	2,327,660	100.00%
New Build Programme Total	7,445,362	105,164	(570,583)	6,979,944	6,979,944	100.00%
HOUSING STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT TOTAL	7,445,362	105,164	(570,583)	6,979,944	6,979,944	100.00%
TOTAL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	16,119,738	(155,603)	(1,231,907)	14,732,229	14,732,229	100.00%

SUBJECT:	INCOME MANAGEMENT AND ARREARS POLICY
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the reviewed Income Management and Arrears Policy (previously Rent Arrears Recovery Policy) document and highlight changes.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

- 2.1 LTP have been consulted about this report and have made the following comments:
- 2.2 The Panel agree with the revised policy in general terms.
- 2.3 They would like to see some more information on the outcomes of the Eviction Prevention Panel that is referenced in the document.
- 2.4 LTP would like to see review information in 6-months' time about the performance of pilot structure with a dedicated Rent Team.
- 2.5 The Panel would like to work on looking at how we sustain tenancies, particularly for first time tenants and people who are being resettled from other types of accommodation.
- 2.6 There will need to be further work to look at what makes up the total amount of arrears, and this will include considering any coming from "bedroom tax" and a working group to review the Downsizing Scheme pilot.

3. Background

- 3.1 This Policy is scheduled for its 3-year review in 2024.

4. Proposed Amendments

- 4.1 All references to legislation and guidance have been updated.
- 4.2 The Policy has had no significant changes to its content and purpose so has not been widely consulted on. It has been re-written in a clearer format and elements that are more procedural have been removed.
- 4.3 It is proposed to look at further work on the technical aspects of income collection, that do not impact on the content of this policy, later this financial year.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

To have a fair and consistent approach to collecting rental income and arrears.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in reviewing this policy.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are legal implications of reviewing this policy as there were for the previous policy because it can result in taking possession proceedings.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The review of the policy has no implications for Equality, Diversity or 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

An Equality Impact Assessment was not required as part of this review as any amendments were not a change to the existing policy.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the contents of the attached Policy are noted.

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

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City of Lincoln Council

Income Management and Arrears Policy



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July 2024

Contents

Section	Page
Scope	3
Aims	3
Objectives	3
Approach	4
Procedure	5
Service Standards	5
Related Policies	6



Scope

Paying the rent on time is a key condition of our tenancy agreement and the council is committed to providing an efficient and effective process for the prevention and collection of arrears.

Tenants are offered a variety of payment methods to choose from, but with an emphasis on Direct Debit as the preferred method in all cases.

Tenants wishing to pay by other methods will be advised of the options available to them, which currently includes, but is not limited to, Standing Orders, payments online, by telephone, at a PayPoint, or at a Post Office.

Dedicated Officers are available to give individual debt and benefits advice to those who need it.

The council will also offer referrals to specialist, independent services that provide help and advice for tenants about debt and benefits.

The council will closely monitor the effects of the continuing introduction of Universal Credit on individuals, as well as other welfare reforms within the Welfare Reform Act 2012 that continue to affect our tenants.

The council will also consider, when taking possession action, the Housing Act 1996, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, and our duties under the Public Sector Equalities Duty within this Act, as well as any other relevant information or Acts, and will make assessments accordingly. Any application for possession will be supported by a signed Equality Impact Assessment that will be kept under review until the outcome of the hearing.

This policy relates to secure and introductory tenancies and reflects a balanced and holistic approach to the collection of rent and recovery of rent arrears.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to sustain tenancies by offering a fair and balanced approach to the collection of rental income, and to ensure that early intervention measures are adopted in all instances.

Possession action should be used as a last resort, and only where all other methods of intervention have failed.

The policy aims to be fair and consistent, whilst also being efficient and effective in its approach.

Objectives

- To prevent rent arrears accruing.
- To clarify the policy for dealing with current tenant arrears.
- To summarise the assistance the council can provide for tenants to assist them with paying the rent and clearing their debts.
- To prevent homelessness and promote tenancy sustainment.



Approach

The council will work closely with other council departments and outside agencies to ensure early intervention measures are adopted and timely referrals are made where appropriate.

The Council's Housing Solutions Team, in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, will be notified of all cases where the tenant may be threatened with homelessness.

Where a tenant is considered vulnerable the council will work closely with them to avoid possession action where possible, and each case will be referred to the Eviction Prevention Panel (EPP) before any eviction order is sought. The panel will generally consist of (but not exclusively) a manager from the Tenancy Services Team, a manager from the Benefits Team, and a manager from the Housing Solutions Team. Legal advice will be taken if needed.

Our primary aim is to recover the debt rather than taking possession action, and evictions are to be considered a failure rather than a success. However, it is recognised that there will be instances where possession action or evictions are unavoidable.

Where possession action is unavoidable, and recovery action becomes necessary, each case should be carefully considered and any specific details, such as affordability, disability, etc, considered.

The council will ensure that it fully complies with the Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlords before processing any court applications, including:

“2.6 Possession proceedings for rent arrears should not be started against a tenant who can demonstrate that –

(a) the local authority or DWP have been provided with all the evidence required to process a housing benefit or universal credit (housing element) claim;

(b) there is a reasonable expectation of eligibility for housing benefit or universal credit (housing element); and

(c) they have paid other sums due that are not covered by housing benefit or universal credit (housing element).”

All possession action must be proportionate to the debt owed to prevent tenants from being unnecessarily drawn further into debt with the addition of court costs.

The council will ensure that all tenants with an entitlement to housing benefit (HB) make prompt claims, and where necessary will help complete an application. Staff will then monitor each case regularly to ensure there are no delays within the claim where they could otherwise be avoided.

Tenants needing to make a claim for Universal Credit (UC) will be directed towards the Department for Work and Pensions website (DWP) to make their online claim. Where a tenant is identified as being vulnerable and unable to get alternative assistance to make a claim, an Officer will help and will notify the DWP 'vulnerable work coaches' of the case.

Where appropriate, and in cases of under occupation, staff will assist tenants to make a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) claim to cover the shortfall in HB or Universal Credit (UC). It is recognised that this is a short-term solution and may not be approved in all cases



so alternatives such as moving to smaller accommodation should be discussed with the tenant at the outset.

Staff will closely monitor UC claimants to ensure they are paying the rent on time and will offer guidance and assistance to the most vulnerable and those facing financial hardship.

Where appropriate staff will apply for an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) through the Landlord Portal for any tenant who is unable to manage their money or budget appropriately. These will be monitored, and tenants will be removed from the service when, or if, it is felt they can take responsibility for paying the rent themselves.

All staff are trained in basic advice and can offer advice and assistance to any tenants falling into arrears, making arrangements with them to pay off the debt rather than seeking possession action where it is appropriate to do so.

Where tenants require more specialist debt advice, they will be formally referred to the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or other specialist debt advisory services.

Tenants requiring additional support will be referred to the most appropriate agency for their needs.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, tenants will need to consent to any support before a referral is made to an outside agency.

Any information relating to individuals will be dealt with sensitively and only information that is 'necessary and relevant' to taking possession action will be used.

Procedure

The council have a set of comprehensive procedures and flowcharts for income management (including overpayment of rent) and rent arrears recovery to support the policy, covering the process from early intervention to eviction. The procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain current and relevant.

The procedures provide detailed guidance for staff when dealing with rent arrears cases and comply with the Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlords.

In line with our procedures all possession claims are entered onto the Possession Claims Online (PCOL) website by staff after approval from the relevant Manager.

Eviction requests are subject to rigorous checks, and a checklist completed, before approval is sought from the EPP.

Where Tenants want to challenge a decision to evict them, they have a right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel (HAP), whose decision will be final.

Service Standards

The council has developed a procedure to encourage early intervention and help for tenants to avoid accruing debt and has adopted formal referral processes to ensure tenants are being sign posted to the most appropriate agency for their needs.

Staff are well trained and can offer basic advice and appropriate sign posting to any tenant in arrears that is seeking assistance.

Where a tenant requires specialist debt advice a referral will be made to the most appropriate agency.



Staff will be proactive in their approach and will contact tenants at all stages in the rent arrears recovery process.

Staff will liaise with other departments where necessary and take a holistic approach to ensure that the tenant receives a seamless service.

Recovery of all debts owed to the council will continue to be a high priority, and every effort will be made to recover the debt before any legal action is taken.

Any debts left at the end of a tenancy, following eviction, will be subject to the Former Tenant Arrears Procedures, and any items left in the property will be dealt with under the Disposal of Possessions Procedures.

Any recharges as a result of damage to the property at the end of the tenancy will be dealt with under the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Related Policies

- Fair Collection and Debt Recovery Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy

SUBJECT:	PET POLICY (REVIEWED)
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the reviewed Pet Policy document and highlight changes.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

- 2.1 LTP have been involved in this area of work.
- 2.2 LTP were asked at a meeting in January 2024 to co-create an updated version of the Pets Policy which was due for review.
- 2.3 LTP members created a sub-group to review the existing policy and research best practice and policies of other housing providers in the local area.
- 2.4 The group provided amendments to the policy document and made suggestions about making it easier to read. They provided examples of information from other organisations that they found easy to engage with.
- 2.5 They were fundamental in the inclusion of information about Medical Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support animals and recognising the importance of animals in supporting tenants with their wellbeing.
- 2.6 The amended policy was discussed at a meeting in February and further amendments agreed with LTP and a final version circulated in May 2024 that incorporated all of the LTP suggestions.

3. Background

- 3.1 A report was presented to HSSC on 1st February 2024 to highlight the intention to fully review the Pet Policy following a new Dangerous Dogs ban and because it had not been reviewed since 2013.
- 3.2 This review has been completed in partnership with Lincoln Tenants Panel, who are satisfied that the attached Policy meets legislation and the needs of our tenants.

4. Proposed Amendments

- 4.1 All references to legislation and guidance have been updated.
- 4.2 The Policy now makes clear reference to current, and future, banned breeds with exemptions and how the council will respond to them.

- 4.3 There is information in the policy about supporting the health and wellbeing of tenants by clarifying our approach to Medical Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support animals.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

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

5.2 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.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in reviewing this policy.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications of reviewing this policy.

6.3 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 can be carried during the policy review to consider actions the council can take to support tenants with the changes and information that can be provided.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the contents of the attached Policy are noted.

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? One

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Marianne Upton, Tenancy Services Manager
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City of Lincoln Council Pets Policy



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July 2024

Contents

Section	Page
Policy Objectives	3
Policy Scope	3
Policy statement	3
Medical Assistance dogs and Emotional Support animals	5
Short-term fostering of pets	6
Visiting pets	6
Changing circumstances	6
Right of appeal	7
Monitoring and review	7
Other external and internal influences on this policy	7



Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- to provide a framework that will deliver a positive, fair and sensitive policy on council tenants keeping pets in their homes
- to align our policy on pets with the relevant conditions of tenancy as set out in our secure and introductory tenancy agreements
- to enable us to create operational procedures that deliver this policy in a consistent manner but also allowing for the correct degree of flexibility when considering individual requests to keep pets that fall outside of this policy statement
- to express through this policy the acknowledgment of the importance of pets to people's well-being, including their psychological, emotional and physical health
- to acknowledge the disruption to people's lives that uncontrolled and irresponsible pet ownership can have on the welfare of the animal and on the lives of others. This policy sets out our position on dealing with uncontrolled and irresponsible pet ownership in our properties

Policy Scope

This policy applies to everyone who is currently housed or eligible to be housed by us, including independent living schemes. It does not apply to leaseholders, whose lease terms will determine the matter of pet ownership.

Policy Statement

We actively support the responsible keeping of pets in our properties, recognising the health benefits that pets can bring to people's lives but also recognising the damage to other people's lives that the irresponsible keeping of pets can cause.

We are positive about residents keeping pets, not just cats and dogs but rabbits, budgerigars and fish. The type of pet we consider suitable include, but is not necessarily restricted to:

- dogs
- domestic, non-feral cats
- domesticated rabbits
- budgerigars and other similar caged birds
- fish suitable to be kept in domestic aquariums
- domesticated rodents such as rats, mice, gerbils and hamsters
- non-poisonous insects and spiders
- non-poisonous snakes and reptiles under two feet in length fully grown.

We recognise that some of our properties are more appropriate for keeping certain types of pets than others.

Anyone wishing to have a pet in their home must ask us for permission first.



There are certain overriding terms and conditions that must be satisfied in order that consent to keep a pet will be given. They are:

- that, unless explicitly agreed otherwise, no more than two domestic pets will be allowed in any one property; but there may be properties whose size and/or layout means that only one may be kept
- that any dog kept is not a breed that is prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, unless it is subject to an Exemption and all the exemption criteria are met, such as XL Bully dogs
- that the animal is considered suitable for the property. No wild, dangerous or poisonous creatures, or livestock, including horses, ponies, fowl or game birds or similar or animals covered by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 will be allowed
- that the pet will not be the subject of any breeding or business activity from the property or locality

Consent to pet ownership will not be given for multi-storey flat blocks (4 floors or more) for dogs or cats (except registered medical assistance dogs or emotional support animals).

Consent to pet ownership will not normally be given unless we are satisfied that the prospective owner will be able to care for the animal's needs correctly and continuously in flats and maisonettes that do not have direct access to outside space.

All tenants seeking permission to keep a pet will be required to complete an application and sign a declaration and undertaking. This will include the following conditions:

- All pets, except for caged birds, insects and fish must be registered with a local vet
- The pet will not be the subject of any breeding or business activity from the property (this includes outside and inside)
- The owner will look after their pet in compliance with the principal terms of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, including:
 - ✓ feeding them a proper diet
 - ✓ protecting them from pain, suffering, injury or disease. This includes physical and psychological/emotional suffering or distress etc (for example leaving a dog alone in a property for an unacceptable length of time, usually no more than 4 hours)
 - ✓ providing a suitable environment that will allow the pet to exhibit normal behaviour patterns with or apart from, other animals.
- The owner will walk their dog away from where they live and keep it on a lead at all times within the communal parts of where they live, inside and outside
- The dog will not be allowed to wander unaccompanied and unrestrained in the communal parts of where they live, inside and outside
- Except for house cats that will never leave the internal property, cats must have access to the outside (this may be the tenant carrying their cat to the main door and collecting them upon their return or through a window or patio door). Owners must provide the cat with a litter tray inside the dwelling (at least one per cat), which must be emptied regularly, securely bagged and placed in their outside bin or communal bins



- The pet is properly house-trained (if applicable) and must not be allowed to foul communal areas, inside and outside. If any incident of fouling occurs the owner must clean it up and disinfect the area immediately
- Cat flaps may only be fitted to external property doors (not communal doors) and only after seeking and being given permission to make changes to the home. When the tenant leaves, they must reinstate the door as it was originally
- That owners must not allow their pets to create unreasonable levels of noise
- Relevant licences are obtained and shown to our satisfaction in the case of rare or exotic creatures. We must satisfy ourselves of the proper security of the animal
- Dogs and cats must be microchipped, and the owner's details kept up to date, and their certificate must be open to examination by us
- Dogs and cats must be neutered
- Dogs must wear a collar with an ID tag displaying their owner's name and address, including postcode.

Although the conditions above might seem extensive, when viewed collectively as above they are considered to be normal and reasonable elements of responsible pet ownership.

If the pet owner refuses to comply with relevant conditions above permission will not be given for the pet to be kept; and the tenant will be liable to enforcement action for breach of tenancy if they go ahead and acquire the animal anyway.

Similarly, if permission is sought and given and subsequently we find that relevant conditions above have not been complied with we may revoke permission and take enforcement action after giving the tenant reasonable time to comply.

If a tenant acquires a pet without first seeking and being granted permission:

- they will be required to find an alternative permanent home for the animal if it falls outside acceptable groups of pets as set out above; or
- they will be required to complete a pet application retrospectively and be shown to have complied with all the conditions set out above if the pet falls in to acceptable groups of pets, failing which they may be required to find an alternative permanent home for the animal.

If the pet owner subsequently breaks any of the conditions set out above and, after a reasonable period of time, does not remedy that breach they will cause themselves liable to enforcement action in breach of tenancy.

Where an external structure such as an aviary, is considered necessary, tenants must apply for permission to make changes to your home before starting any work.

Medical Assistance dogs and Emotional Support animals

Medical Assistance dogs and Emotional Support animals will still need permission granting to live in a council property, so that a record is kept of an animal being present at the property.

Medical Assistance dogs are trained to support disabled people and people with medical conditions in a variety of ways. An assistance dog is a highly trained dog that is prepared and trained to carry out tasks and alerts to mitigate a person's disabilities, regardless of whether those disabilities are related to a physical condition or a mental health condition.



The Equality Act 2010, (EA2012 section 173) lays out that in relation to protecting the rights of disabled people accessing private hire transport, an Assistance dog means:

- a) a dog which has been trained to guide a blind person
- b) a dog which has been trained to assist a deaf person
- c) a dog which has been trained by a prescribed charity to assist a disabled person who has a disability that consists of epilepsy or otherwise affects the person's mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- d) a dog of a prescribed category which has been trained to assist a disabled person who has a disability (other than one falling within paragraph (c)) of a prescribed kind.

A task trained assistance dog is an 'auxiliary aid,' so classed as medical equipment and not a dog. They are often identified by wearing a jacket, a harness, or a brightly coloured collar and lead. By law, an assistance dog cannot be denied entry to a public place even if it is not a pet friendly place.

Permission will be granted for all medical assistance dogs, even if there are already two animals at the property. Should one of the existing pets no longer be at the property, permission will not be granted to replace that pet so that there will only be two animals at the property.

Emotional support animals do not need any specific task-training like an assistance animal because they are simply an emotional companion. The bond with their owner and their presence helps alleviate the emotional symptoms associated with the disability. They may for example boost confidence and reduce loneliness.

Emotional support animals do not have the same legal rights as assistance animals. There is no legal registration process for emotional support animals, but people in need of them can have a "prescription" from a qualified medical professional that outlines their need for an emotional support animal.

Permission for an emotional support animal, in line with the policy on other pets, will not be unreasonably refused if a prescription has been provided. Emotional support animals must meet the requirements in the Policy Statement above.

Short-term fostering of pets

If permission has been sought & the conditions above (including the maximum number) are met, short term fostering will be considered the same as long term ownership.

Tenants will be responsible for informing us when the fostering arrangements have ended.

Visiting pets

Friends and relatives are allowed to visit tenants with their pets. These pets will be expected to comply with all relevant conditions as set out in the Policy Statement above.

Changing circumstances

Some tenants may at some point become unable to care for their pet in accordance with the conditions set out in the Policy Statement above. In such circumstances we will make every effort to work with the tenant to try to enable the pet to remain with them and be cared for properly with adequate additional support. In the end, however, the pet's welfare and



neighbouring tenants must be factors to consider when deciding whether the pet owner is able to keep their pet.

Where a tenant is unable to care for their pet, or has died, it is the tenant's responsibility (or their Executor) to contact the responsible person listed on the application for permission to re-house the pet.

Where a tenant has died without a will or any relatives, the council will contact a local animal charity to collect the pet(s).

Right of appeal

If a tenant is either refused permission to keep a pet or previous permission is withdrawn, they have a right of appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel (HAP) within 28 days of the letter being sent refusing permission. The decision of HAP will be final.

Monitoring and review

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

Other external and internal influences on this policy

This policy has been created and should be implemented in conjunction with the following internal documents:

- Allocations policy
- Equality, diversity and human rights policy and strategy
- Anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crime policies
- Tenancy Agreement
- Communal Areas Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Tenant Improvements Policy
- Animal Policy

Similarly, this policy has been created and should be implemented in conjunction with the external documents and publications, including but not limited to:

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Dogs Exemption Schemes (England and Wales) Order 2015
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- The Animal Welfare Act 2006
- The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023

SUBJECT:	NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present a new Neighbourhood Management Policy to Members.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

- 2.1 LTP have been consulted about this report and have made the following comments:
- 2.2 The Panel have agreed with the policy in principle and understand that it is an overall umbrella for other policies and procedures.
- 2.3 They would like further work to be done with them on a separate policy looking at handling noise issues and communal living.
- 2.4 The approach in the policy needs to be linked to work being done on ASB procedures. It needs to align with this process and the Allocations process.
- 2.5 The panel are happy to work with officers on the policies and procedures that feed directly into this policy, such as grounds maintenance, untidy gardens and communal areas.

3. Background

- 3.1 This policy meets the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator, specifically the Consumer Standards: Neighbourhood and Community, Safety and Quality, and Transparency, Influence and Accountability (including the Tenant Satisfaction Measures).
- 3.2 Included in these Standards are required outcomes that neighbourhoods and communal areas associated with homes are clean and safe. This reinforces our aims to ensure that neighbourhoods are attractive, clean and safe places to live, work and socialise in.
- 3.3 It was a recommendation of the Housing Ombudsman's "Spotlight on noise complaints – time to be heard" report that social housing landlords should have a neighbourhood management policy distinct from their ASB policy, and procedures in place for triaging neighbourhood management issues through early intervention and creating an environment that is attractive, clean and safe.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy only applies to c.7,800 properties which are owned and managed by City of Lincoln Council and the areas Housing are responsible for throughout the city.
- 4.2 This is an 'umbrella' Policy that signposts a number of specific delivery policies that determine how we provide services.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

The policy aims to deliver a fair and consistent approach to managing the neighbourhoods our homes are in.

5.2 Let's deliver quality housing

This policy brings together the work covered by our strategies and policies relating to Property Development, Property Maintenance, Tenancy Management, Communal Areas and Grounds Maintenance to outline a holistic approach to deliver quality housing.

5.3 Let's enhance our remarkable place

There are wider impacts to the communities in Lincoln if our neighbourhoods are well-managed.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

The policy is an "umbrella" policy for the work that is already carried out through other policies and is included within the HRA Business Plan, so there are no financial implications.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

This policy does not change any of the other policies in place, so has no legal or financial implications.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

This policy aims for a fair and consistent approach to managing our homes and neighbourhoods and commits to work with all stakeholders on any schemes, including tenant and resident engagement.

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

7. Human Resources

7.1 Land, Property and Accommodation

7.2 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

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

7.3 Corporate Health and Safety implications

8. Risk Implications

8.1 (i) Options Explored

8.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the contents of this proposed policy are noted.

9.2 That work is undertaken to review the contents of the proposed policy with LTP.

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:

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

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City of Lincoln Council

Neighbourhood Management Policy



Let's deliver
quality
housing

July 2024

Contents

Section	Page
Purpose	3
Objectives	3
Scope	3
Approach	4
Roles and Responsibilities	5
Publicity	5
Related Policies	5



Purpose

This Policy sets out our approach to developing and maintaining attractive, clean and safe neighbourhoods.

This is an 'umbrella' Policy that signposts a number of specific delivery policies that determine how we provide services. It recognises the linkages and inter-relationships that exist across a range of service areas that influence how popular and ultimately lettable homes are within our neighbourhoods. This is the key not only to satisfied tenants but also underpins the sustainability of the council as a provider of social housing

This policy meets the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator, specifically the Consumer Standards: Neighbourhood and Community, Safety and Quality, and Transparency, Influence and Accountability (including the Tenant Satisfaction Measures).

Included in these Standards are required outcomes that neighbourhoods and communal areas associated with homes are clean and safe. This reinforces our aims to ensure that neighbourhoods are attractive, clean and safe places to live, work and socialise in.

There is an expectation that we will consult with tenants in developing a programme for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with our properties/their homes. We will work in partnership with our tenants, residents and other relevant stakeholders to do this.

We acknowledge that as the major social landlord in Lincoln we must play a lead role in developing and ensuring attractive, clean and safe neighbourhoods.

Delivering an effective Neighbourhoods Management Policy will involve not only sound day to day operational practice to ensure timely interventions but also more strategic oversight to inform good investment planning that, where possible, addresses underlying issues to enhance the appearance and sustainability of neighbourhoods.

Objectives

- To ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of our approach to developing and maintaining attractive, clean and safe neighbourhoods; this includes tenants, residents, staff members and partner organisations.
- To ensure that we plan and target resources effectively and in a consistent way, while considering our diverse customer base and their needs so that neighbourhoods are popular and sustainable places to live.
- To ensure that we always seek to deliver effective and efficient services which offer real value for money.
- To ensure we adopt a partnership approach, encouraging collaboration and maximising the resources available.
- To ensure we closely monitor the quality of our services and that we quickly and fairly deal with complaints.
- To ensure that we actively benchmark ourselves against other providers both locally and nationally and report our performance both accurately and regularly.

Scope

This policy applies to c.7,800 properties which are owned and managed by City of Lincoln Council and the areas Housing are responsible for throughout the city.

Approach



We will encourage and support our tenants and other residents in the community where appropriate to develop a joint approach to maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with our properties/tenants' homes to ensure that neighbourhoods are attractive, clean and safe and where tenants, residents and visitors feel pride in their immediate surroundings and have a sense of ownership.

Through the work of our Housing Teams, Lincoln Tenants Panel and Resident Involvement Team we will encourage tenants, Members, residents and partner organisations to jointly inspect neighbourhoods, deliver priorities important to this group with work carried out to a high standard, to the satisfaction of the majority and which offers value for money.

We will encourage tenants and residents to be responsible citizens who are considerate of their neighbours.

We will provide clear information to tenants about our statutory and contractual obligations whilst clearly explaining their own responsibilities.

We will provide a variety of ways for tenants to contact us to report issues or enquire about progress, including an out of hours service for emergency issues.

We will operate in a proactive and responsive manner, drawing on good practice and working in partnership, to get the most cost-effective service outcomes for our tenants.

We will let homes promptly and to a high standard and monitor void property performance to identify at an early stage any adverse trends.

When designing new homes or making changes to existing ones; we will take into account crime prevention, safety measures, energy efficiency, noise reduction measures and the way public space can be used to enhance the environment and quality of life. We will have regard to the standardisation of components wherever possible in order to simplify servicing and repairing arrangements and provide better value for money.

In addition to responding appropriately to day-to-day works that arise, we will maintain the elements of our properties/tenants' homes that we are responsible for through programmed works, and this includes maintaining communal areas and keeping them in a good condition. There will be timely redecoration, repair and where appropriate improvement to communal buildings, fencing, garage areas, paths and drying areas to maintain an attractive overall appearance and to help reduce the need for costly responsive repairs.

We will have in place grounds maintenance and other relevant contracts for communal areas to ensure that open spaces, borders and shrub bed areas are looked after according to the plant species and are weed and litter free. Grassed areas are cut as appropriate during the different seasons, hard landscaped areas are free of debris, bin areas are tidy, and windows are cleaned.

We will have in place appropriate arrangements for the timely removal of large items of refuse, caravans and abandoned cars.

We will, where leaseholders are sub-letting their homes, send any information on matters relevant to the property or the neighbourhood to the occupant as well as the leaseholder to ensure that all parties are informed.

We will ensure that all required health and safety inspections and checks are carried out on a programmed basis.



We will work with tenants, residents or partner organisations to put in place parking improvements and control measures.

Roles and responsibilities

Tenants, and their visitors

These can all play a part in sustaining the objectives of this Policy by:

- Complying with the obligations of tenancy agreements
- Being involved and engaged in decision making through the established channels
- Responding to satisfaction survey requests
- Identifying – formally or informally – opportunities for improvement within communities

Staff, Contractors, LTP and Members

- To deploy resources effectively and efficiently and on a value for money basis
- To ensure a high level of responsiveness in responding to service issues such as environmental decline, breaches of tenancy and in particular antisocial behaviour
- To work effectively within a partnership setting – being ‘eyes and ears’ within communities
- To serve as ambassadors for the wider housing service
- To identify opportunities for improvement and innovation
- To engage customers as part of a listening organisation

Other residents/the wider community

- All members of the community have an obligation to live their life in accordance with the law and enable ‘peaceful enjoyment’ of tenancies
- To alert the council to issues affecting our neighbourhoods that impact on quality of life and physical appearance
- To participate in consultation when appropriate opportunities arise

Publicity

We will consider publicity in all cases where activity has had a positive impact.

The benefits of publicity include:

- a) Motivating tenants and other residents to get involved
- b) Promoting confidence in our services
- c) Highlighting our successes to a wider audience

Related Documents

- Housing Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Tenancy Policy
- Allocations Policy
- HRA Business Plan
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Communal Areas Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

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SUBJECT:	PILOT OF A NEW STRUCTURE FOR THE TENANCY SERVICES TEAM
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information to Members about the pilot structure being implemented in Tenancy Services.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Tenancy Services Team worked generically with all Area Housing Officers, Housing Officers and Housing Assistants covering all aspects of housing and estate management for a geographical “patch.”
- 2.2 The team was split into 3 smaller teams splitting the city into north, south and central areas.

3. Purpose of the Pilot

- 3.1 To improve the service to tenants.
- 3.2 The report about the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) highlighted much lower satisfaction among tenants about how Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is managed. This made it very clear that managing ASB needs to be priority, which requires dedicated Officers with enhanced skills and knowledge focussing on it.
- 3.3 To remove the conflicting responsibilities within the team roles. Officers were expected to support tenants to maintain their tenancies and act as enforcers. An example of how this could be a conflict was given in the Housing Ombudsman’s “Spotlight on noise complaints – time to be heard” report relating to whether tenants reporting issues would receive a different level of service from their Housing Officer if they were in arrears and the same Officer was responsible for recovering those arrears.
- 3.4 To respond to feedback from staff that they were trying to manage such a wide variety of tasks, that they were unable to always give them their full attention. So the pilot will enable staff to focus on specific areas of their role and have the capacity to fully manage their work to an even higher standard, rather than needing to respond to all aspects of housing and estate management.

4. Pilot Details

- 4.1 The pilot structure began on 15th July 2024.
- 4.2 The team remains split into 3 smaller teams – Rents, ASB, and Tenancy and Estate Management. Officers still have geographical “patches” within their specialism so that tenants have a named point of contact when contacting the team.
- 4.3 All staff within the team have remained on their original job description as this is a pilot structure to be reviewed after 6 months. It also allows flexibility to meet the needs of the service as staff can be moved between teams if there are peaks in workload to be managed.
- 4.4 Formal consultation with staff was not required because their job descriptions did not change, and all elements are included in them. There was a 28-day feedback period for staff to provide ideas about how the new structure could work well and express a preference for a specialist area.
- 4.5 There are new email addresses and phone numbers being set up for each area of the team so that tenants can easily contact the right specialist team.
- 4.6 There is a new Housing Officer patch list available in Teams, so that staff and Members can see which Officer is responsible for rents, ASB or tenancy/estate management for each street. Arrangements are being made for paper copies of this list to be provided as needed.
- 4.7 All procedures for the team will be reviewed during the pilot period to maximise the opportunity for service improvements for tenants.
- 4.8 The workload and performance of the team will be monitored closely by the Tenancy Services Manager and the Area Housing Managers during the pilot, so we can demonstrate the benefits it brings.
- 4.9 The review of the pilot will need to be completed by 15th January 2025 (6 months).

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's deliver quality housing

Part of being a social housing tenant is the quality of the service received from the landlord. Tenants need the reassurance that staff responsible for managing their tenancies are well-trained and knowledgeable and can be relied upon to respond to them.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

The pilot structure is within existing Establishment for the team so has no financial implications.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

The pilot does not change the content of the services, just the way it is delivered, but may have implications for the Legal Team if enforcement action for ASB increases. There will be increased pressure on their workload.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

There are no implications to equality, diversity or Human Rights as it is the same service delivered in a different way.

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

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the content of this report is noted.

8.2 That a further report be presented following the review of the pilot period.

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

SUBJECT:	DIRECTORATE OF HOUSING AND INVESTMENT COMPLIANCE REPORT 2023-2024
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MARTIN KERRIGAN, FIRE SAFETY ASSURANCE MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on City of Lincoln Council's (CoLC's) position regarding building safety compliance to the Housing stock.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

- 2.1 Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) have been consulted about the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI) compliance report with it being presented at the LTP meeting on 11/07/2024, the report was discussed but no significant comment made, and the report was accepted. In addition, the LTP members were given eight days to respond with any additional comments and none were received.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Safety Assurance Team (SAT) have been requested to produce a report to provide an overview relating to building safety compliance across the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI).
- 3.2 The DHI Compliance Report gives a summary of the key areas of health and safety compliance to DHI property stock for 2023-2024. In the attached report each area of compliance has been introduced with a short narrative on the current position and any compliance mitigations. They have then been concluded with recommendations and comments on issues and successes. After this initial report once comments are received the report can be altered to a more regular report at a frequency to be agreed to monitor compliance.

4. Overview of Performance Report

- 4.1 The report contains information on compliance performance to provide the Director (DHI) with oversight and input into these essential services. The report includes, amongst other matters, information on our landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures commonly known as the 'Big 6' shown below, in addition as an emerging key area where the Council is working to ensure compliance, Radon will be added for monitoring purposes to future compliance reports.

- Fire Safety
- Electrical Safety

- Water Safety (Legionella)
- Asbestos Management
- Gas Safety
- Lifts
- Radon.

4.2 Overall performance has been monitored using the attached template and will be shown by percentage of compliance and Risk Advisory Group (RAG) rated. This will then provide the method for future reporting to enable measurement of improvement and inform the Director of highlighted risk; to allow for comment, direction and action.

4.3 To assist the reader the areas of compliance, relevant legislation and landlord responsibilities, have been summarised to add context on each requirement. The idea being that this report captures requirement, risk, mitigation and performance to complete the context and to allow for clear responses to questions arising.

4.4 The Performance against the indicator are RAG rated, as follows:

- Green 😊: At target.
- Amber 😐: Within 10% of target.
- Red 😞: below 10% of target.

4.5 From the DHI compliance report the top three key issues identified related to building safety compliance are:

- Building Safety Case for each high-rise tower block outstanding and needs completing.
- Lack of Asbestos Management of low-rise communal areas due to annual re inspections of known ACM's outstanding.
- Fire Door Inspection Programme in relatively early stages.

4.6 The DHI Compliance Report is attached as Appendix 1, with full performance data shown.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's deliver quality housing

The programme to undertake planned preventative maintenance and statutory testing as detailed within the DHI Compliance Report are in places and the relevant service areas including Safety Assurance, HRS and Investment Team are working to ensure compliance.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

Existing budgets are already in place for all planned preventative maintenance and statutory testing including any repairs arising.

Any remedial works or improvement works to be costed as and when identified, with costs being funded from existing resources within existing revenue budgets or the capital programme.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

Any works or agency appointment to be made in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

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

6.4 Human Resources

Asbestos Surveyor post was previous vacated and subsequently removed from the establishment. However, the Safety Assurance team is to be reviewed with a possible proposal being the reintroduction of post to meet the needs of the service, potential for future recruitment within Safety Assurance.

6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

None.

6.6 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

None.

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety implications

None.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 None compliance with legislation.

8. Recommendation

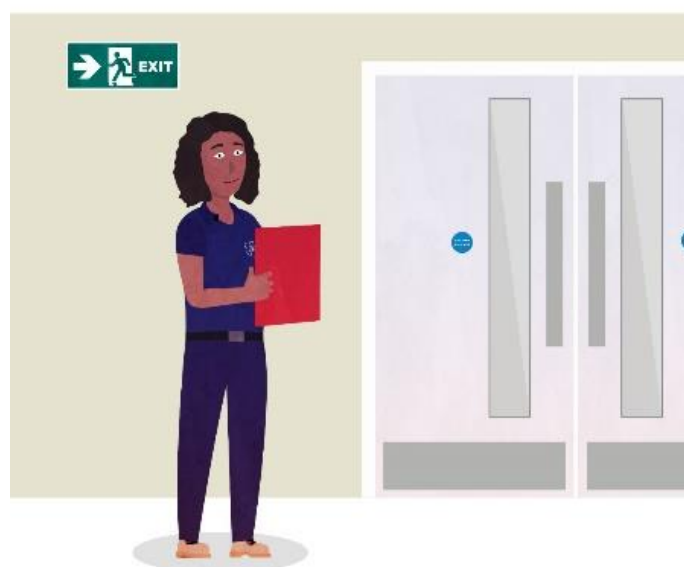
8.1 Members are asked to note the DHI Compliance Report to CoLC's Housing stock.

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?	One <i>DHI Compliance Report 2023-2024</i>
List of Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Martin Kerrigan, Fire Safety Assurance Manager Email address: martin.kerrigan@lincoln.gov.uk

Directorate of Housing and
Investment

Compliance Report 2023 - 2024

Produced by.
Martin Kerrigan. MIFSM
Fire Safety Assurance Manager
June 2024



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

Together, let's deliver
Lincoln's ambitious future



Introduction

The Safety Assurance Team (SAT) have been requested to produce a report to provide an overview relating to building safety compliance across the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI).

The following report gives a summary of the key areas of health and safety compliance to DHI property stock for 2023-2024. Each area of compliance will be introduced with a short narrative on the current position and any compliance mitigations. They will then be concluded with recommendations and comments on issues and successes. After this initial report once comments are received the report can be altered for a more regular report at a frequency to be agreed to monitor compliance.

Performance Report

The report contains information on compliance performance to provide the Director (DHI) with oversight and input into these essential services. The report includes, amongst other matters, information on our landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures commonly known as the 'Big 6' shown below, in addition as an emerging key area where the council is working to ensure compliance, Radon will be added for monitoring purposes to future compliance reports.

- ▶ Fire Safety
- ▶ Electrical Safety
- ▶ Water Safety (Legionella)
- ▶ Asbestos Management
- ▶ Gas Safety
- ▶ Lifts
- ▶ Radon

Overall performance will be monitored using this template and will be shown by percentage of compliance and RAG rated. This will then provide the method for future reporting to enable measurement of improvement and inform the Director of highlighted risk; to allow for comment, direction and action.

To assist the reader the areas of compliance, relevant legislation and landlord responsibilities, have been summarised to add context on each requirement. The idea being that this report captures requirement, risk, mitigation and performance to complete the context and to allow for clear responses to questions arising.

The Performance against the indicator are RAG rated, as follows:

- ▶ Green 😊: At target.
- ▶ Amber 😐: Within 10% of target.
- ▶ Red 😞: below 10% of target.



Top three key issues:

1. Building Safety Case for each high-rise tower block outstanding and needs completing.
2. Lack of Asbestos Management of low-rise communal areas due to annual re inspections of known ACM's outstanding.
3. Fire Door Inspection Programme in relatively early stages.

Key Legislation and Guidance

Below is a list of key legislation followed by a summary of the required level of compliance, for each area covered.

- ▶ Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- ▶ The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- ▶ Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- ▶ Fire Safety Act 2021
- ▶ Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- ▶ Building Safety Act 2023
- ▶ Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- ▶ Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- ▶ L8 Approved Code of Practice - Legionnaires disease – The control of Legionella Bacteria in water systems 2013
- ▶ The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- ▶ The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (“the Gas Safety Regulations”)
- ▶ Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- ▶ The Ionising Radiation Regulation 2017

Fire Safety

Landlords have a legal obligation to ensure that their properties comply with fire safety regulations. This is critical: with an average of 32,000 fire in domestic premises every year, in the wake of the Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017 and recent changes in fire legislation the importance of complying with fire safety regulations could not be clearer.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, landlords must undertake a fire risk assessment in all areas of their property, including individual rooms, shared hallways and corridors, communal areas, stairways, and exits. They must carry out an individual fire risk assessment for each separate property.

A fire risk assessment should include five key stages:

1. Identify the fire risks - (e.g. non-compliant furnishings, blocked stairways, or faulty electrics).
2. Consider who is at risk - (e.g. the tenants, employees and any potential visitors etc.).
3. Implement appropriate control measures - (e.g. improving escape routes, installing smoke alarms, ensuring people in shared properties can raise the alarm, etc.).
4. Record the findings of the risk assessment – (this is crucial for evidence of compliance and for future reviews).
5. Review and update the risk assessment regularly - (e.g. if there are any significant changes).

In addition to a fire risk assessment, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 landlords must ensure all the appropriate fire safety arrangement and any necessary installations are in place and that they maintain fire safety on an ongoing basis.

The landlord should ensure that fire doors are inspected, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 which came in to force on 23 January 2023 states for buildings over 11m the responsible person must:

- ▶ use best endeavours to check all flat entrance doors at least every 12 months: and
- ▶ carry out checks of any fire doors in communal areas at least every 3 months.

No inspection frequency is stated for fire doors of buildings under 11m.

There is a requirement under the Building Safety Act 2022 that the Principal Accountable Person must ensure that any high-rise residential building of at least 7 storeys or at least 18meters high with 2 or more residential units be registered with the Building Safety Regulator. There is also a requirement for the Principal Accountable Person to ensure that there is a Building Safety Case Report to summarise the buildings' safety case which identified the buildings' safety risks and explain how the risks are being managed.

Electrical Safety

Electricity has the potential to cause serious damage, including injuries or fires. Faulty or old wiring is one of the main causes of electrical fires in domestic premises. Therefore, it's crucial for landlords to:

- ▶ Ensure all electrical installations are safe, including wiring, sockets, light fittings, kitchen appliances, washing machines etc. They should check this before tenants move in and maintain them throughout the duration of the tenancy.
- ▶ Ensure that all appliances provided to tenants have the 'CE' marking. This shows that they meet EU requirements for safety.



- ▶ Use a qualified electrician to carry out checks on the building fixed wiring, this includes that landlords arrange for these at least every five years or on a change of tenancy. A registered electrician will issue an Electrical Installation Condition Report (sometimes referred to as an electrical safety certificate) after they have inspected installations.
- ▶ Ensure that all alterations, repairs, and improvements to the fixed electrical system comply with the latest Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Wiring Regulations.

An electrical installation condition report should feature:

- ▶ The results of the inspection and testing.
- ▶ The date of the next recommended inspection.
- ▶ Details of any damage or wear and tear. Wear and tear is categorised into 3 different severity levels
 - C1 There is a danger present, risk of injury and immediate remedial action required.
 - C2 There is a potential danger present and urgent remedial work is required.
 - C3 Improvement is recommended.
- ▶ Details of any parts of the installation that don't meet IET Wiring Regulations BS 7671.

If the electrical system is being installed for the first time, then the registered electrician carrying out the work will issue an Electrical Installation Certificate. This confirms that the work they have done is safe and complies with regulations.

The aim is to complete any repairs highlighted in a condition report within 28 days of notification in line with best practice guidelines.

Water Safety (Legionella)

Anyone who has control of a premises, including landlords, must be able to show that they understand and have considered the health risks associated with legionella and legionnaires' disease. Legionella is a type of pathogenic bacteria that causes a range of pneumonia-like illnesses and legionnaire's disease is the most serious one. Legionella bacteria commonly live in natural water sources, but only pose a risk of illness when the water enters more favourable conditions. Certain conditions increase risk from legionella including:

- ▶ An ideal temperature for legionella bacteria growth is 20-45°C.
- ▶ A source of nutrients or the organism e.g. sludge, scale, rust, algae and other organic matter.
- ▶ Stagnant or recirculating water with insufficient turnover and;
- ▶ A way of creating and spreading breathable droplets e.g. aerosols created by a shower or tap etc.

To effectively prevent legionella and legionnaire's disease in their properties, landlords must undertake a legionella risk assessment.



As with any other form of risk assessment, the legionella risk assessment should include the five key stages:

1. Identify the risks (e.g. stored water, condition of storage tanks etc.).
2. Consider who is at risk (e.g. the tenants and their visitors).
3. Implement appropriate control measures (e.g. keeping water hot, removing impurities, etc).
4. Record the findings of the risk assessment.
5. Review and update the risk assessment (e.g. bi-annually or if changes are made to the water system of the property).

In a premise, legionella bacteria may be found in any water system between 20-45°C. Therefore, it's crucial for landlords to ensure that all water systems are correctly operated and maintained, such as hot and cold-water tanks, pipework and air conditioning units. The risk can be lowered if hot water is kept above 50°C and cold water is kept below 20°C, and if water is used regularly to keep it fresh and free of stagnation.

Asbestos Management

Although it was banned from use in 1999, asbestos is still present in many old buildings including within the councils housing stock. Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulation 2012 gives a duty to manage Asbestos. Landlords must ensure they manage the risks posed by asbestos, as it can significantly harm those exposed to it. To help them manage these risks, landlords should carry out an asbestos risk assessment. This involves identifying where asbestos is present, who it might harm, and what they need to do to prevent it from being disturbed. They should keep a record of this information and regularly review it, such as at the start of a new tenancy.



If there is asbestos in their property, the landlord must inform employees, contractors, and anyone else at risk about where the asbestos is located and prevent them from disturbing it.

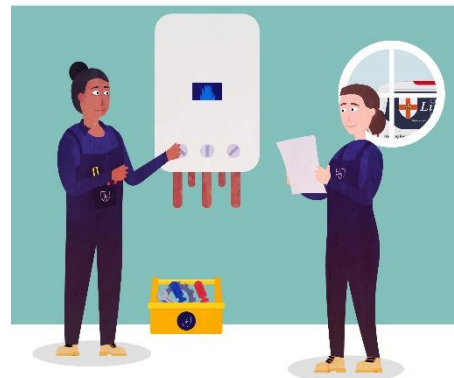
Gas Safety

Landlords must ensure that all gas appliances in a property are safe for tenants to use, which requires them to:

- ▶ Arrange for a Gas Safe registered engineer to install and maintain gas supplies. These checks must occur every 12 months.
- ▶ Have an up-to-date gas safety record. This is sometimes referred to as a landlord's gas safety certificate. The landlord should issue this to tenants when they move in, or within 28 days of the safety checks.
- ▶ Inform tenants of where to turn off the gas and what to do in case of an emergency.

The Gas Safe Register says that, as a minimum, the record of a gas safety check must contain:

- ▶ A description and location of each appliance and/or flue that has been checked.
- ▶ The name, registration number and signature of the engineer who carried out the check.
- ▶ The date which the appliance and/or flue was checked.
- ▶ The address of the property at which the appliance and/or flue is installed.
- ▶ The name and address of the landlord (or their agent where appropriate).
- ▶ Any defects identified and any action required or taken to fix it.
- ▶ Confirmation of the results of operational safety checks carried out on the appliances



Lifts

Lifts are subject to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulation (LOLER). Lifting equipment such as passenger lifts are installed across various DHI premises to provide access for our residents and visitors etc. Landlords have a duty for its safety including to ensure routine maintenance and inspection. In addition to the maintenance and inspection undertaken by the lift maintenance contractor, there is a mandatory legal requirement for lifts to be inspected with a thorough examination every 6 months, these inspections must be carried out by a competent person to ensure the lifts continue safe use under the LOLER and are sometimes known as insurance inspections.

As part of the insurance inspections the inspector might call for supplementary tests of the equipment which are not able to be checked during the thorough examination or need a periodic test to check the operation in accordance with Safed guidance.

Without regular maintenance passenger lifts can pose a risk to users such as sudden stop caused by mechanical and electrical issues, as a result passengers can be jolted leading to injuries and/ or panic. In addition, getting caught between the lift doors is another common risk that can cause injuries, however modern lifts have safety mechanisms to prevent door entrapments, by undertaking regular maintenance and inspections can ensure that the safety features are working correctly.

Radon

Radon is a colourless, odourless radioactive gas. It is formed by the radioactive decay of the small amounts of uranium that occur naturally in all rocks and soils. Radon poses a risk to health as the radioactive elements decay and emit radiation, any exposure to this type of radiation is a risk to health as is a form of energy and can cause damage to living tissue increasing the risk of cancer.



Landlords have a responsibility to their tenants under the Health and Safety at Works Act, Duty of Care and the Housing Act to provide a safe home including safety from the risk posed by radon.

Landlords should identify and monitor any properties that may be affected by Radon, this includes to carry out risk assessments and have clear procedure in place for the management of radon in affected buildings.

Compliance Performance Data...

Fire Safety

Fire Risk Assessments

The number of outstanding Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) has reduced significantly over the last 12 months by engaging with an agency fire risk assessor.

Regular meetings are held with Safety Assurance, Investment, HRS and Tenancy Service/ Supported Housing to monitor and complete the actions arising from the FRA's.




A program is in place for fire risk assessment to be undertaken moving forwards. Recruitment continues to be an issue within the SAT with the Technical Officer – Fire Safety currently vacant, there is a potential for use of agency staff to cover the vacancy.

Following the FRA's at the low risk blocks some common actions identified include:

- ▶ Fire Detection to be upgraded to LD2 from LD3. – Investment Team to complete report as has cost implications.
- ▶ Fire Door Inspection Programme – see below, inspection programme underway.
- ▶ Communal Areas/ Escape Routes being used to store bikes and prams etc – leaflet sent out and being monitored and appropriate action undertaken as necessary.
- ▶ Emergency Lighting – Annual Drain down test not completed – (see below) new contractor in place and testing programme being undertaken.
- ▶ Emergency Lighting monthly test not being carried out/ recorded – working with Tenancy Services to get this undertaken and recorded by the Mobile Caretakers (ROSS) through Photo Book.

Updated compartmentation survey required and some fire stopping to high rise tower blocks.


The three high rise tower blocks have all been registered with the Building Safety Regulator, however, now need the Building Safety Case Reports to be completed asap.

Types of building	Percentage complete with current FRA	Compliance
High Rise	100%	
Sheltered Schemed	100%	
Low Rise Communal Areas	95%	

Fire Alarms

The Investment Team manages the contracts related to fire alarm planned maintenance, no issues identified, and regular service and maintenance undertaken.

Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.



Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Fire Alarm Planned Maintenance	100%	

Fire Fighting Equipment – Fixed and Portable

The Investment Team manages the contracts related to firefighting equipment planned maintenance, no issues identified, and regular service and maintenance undertaken.

Note. Automatic Opening Vents (AOV's) not included in the Investment Performance Dashboard and Service/ maintenance not undertaken in 2023/24. This has now been completed and only Shuttleworth House and De Wint Court affected / have AOV's. AOV's to be added to the Investment Team Performance Dashboard.


Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Fixed Fire Fighting Equipment Planned Maintenance	100%	
Portable Fire Fighting Equipment Planned Maintenance	100%	

Emergency Lighting

A new contractor has been appointed by the Investment Team to undertake the annual drain down test on the Emergency Lighting, the contractor has a service schedule and is currently working to complete. It is expected that the performance be at 100% and then be maintained moving forward after the first year of testing.

Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Emergency Lighting Annual Test	76.38%	

Fire Door Inspection

Fire Door inspection schedule in place and in early stages of being implemented. Some concerns with resources for inspection to low rise stock/ flat front doors. HRS looking at structure and expanding the fire door team.


Access issues to high rise flat front doors, but procedure in place.

Continued work is required on monitoring and record keeping of the fire door maintenance. Record keeping needs to improve. Currently using Teams Form and spreadsheets. Some data to follow on future reports.

Regular meetings in place between Safety Assurance, Investment and HRS for fire doors inspections and to monitor progress and any remedial works arising from the inspections.

Although the Fire Safety (England) Regulations do not specify a frequency for fire door inspections on buildings less than 11m, the fire doors to our Sheltered Schemes will have the fire doors checked at the same frequency as the three high rise buildings over 11m (Shuttleworth House, Jarvis House and Trent View) as identified earlier in the report, whereas we aim to check the fire doors to our low rise stock all less than 11m:

- ▶ with best endeavours to check all flat entrance doors at least every 18 months: and
- ▶ carry out checks of any fire doors in communal areas at least every 6 months.



Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
High Rise Communal Doors	100%	
High Rise Flat Front Doors	Data to follow in future reports.	
Sheltered Schemed Communal Doors	Data to follow in future reports.	
Sheltered Scheme Flat Front Doors	Data to follow in future reports.	
Low Rise Communal Doors	Data to follow in future reports.	
Low Rise Flat Front Doors	Data to follow in future reports.	

Electrical Safety

Fixed Wire Test/ Electrical Installation Condition Report

Access to properties remains a key issue for electrical safety management and all efforts are made to carry out the testing, including final warning letters and action via the Tenancy Services. The Investment team have appropriate procedures in place for arranging access to ensure the testing can be undertaken.



Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Dwellings	94.91%	
Communal Areas	99.37%	

Electrical Appliance testing – Portable/ Fixed

The Investment Team manages the contracts related to PAT and FAT, no issues identified, and regular testing and maintenance undertaken.

Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)	100%	
Fixed Appliance Testing (FAT)	100%	




Water Safety (Legionella)

The Investment Team manages the contracts related to Water Hygiene, no issues identified, and regular testing, maintenance and sampling regime all undertaken as per the service schedule.

The investment team completed domestic legionella risk assessment on the housing stock and selected 168 properties that have previously refused upgrades to their heating system and are therefore a higher legionella risk. A high percentage have stored water and are a higher risk of allowing access to the property. 168 properties were selected for the period starting in Aug 23 – Mar 24. The additional risk assessment program has been identified following guidance provided by the Water Hygiene Specialist to create a program over 10 years with the objective to schedule year one and two 400 properties which are a higher risk, and then increase the program in the subsequent years with properties that are of a lower legionella risk.

Access to properties remains a key issue, with performance only being at 50%, however the Investment Team continue at best efforts to gain access.

Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Planned Maintenance Visits	100%	
Domestic Risk Assessments	50%	
Risk Assessments – other than Dwellings e.g. High Rise and Sheltered Schemes	100%	

Asbestos Management




Asbestos Pro software is used for managing asbestos data, however asbestos pro is not being utilized to its full potential, additional training required for SAT.

Safety Assurance Team to work with Corporate Policy and Transformation to develop a Performance Dashboard for Safety Assurance similar to that of the Investment Team for better performance monitoring.

Asbestos Surveyor post was previously vacated and subsequently removed from the establishment. However, the Safety Assurance team is to be reviewed with a possible proposal being the reintroduction of post to meet the needs of the service, potential for future recruitment within Safety Assurance.

Additional Asbestos Surveying Software required to streamline asbestos surveying procedure for in house asbestos surveyors. Flow looks to be the best option.


Note. No issues identified during any re inspections completed to communal areas or AIB in terms of condition of ACM's.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Stock with Asbestos Survey Completed	91.2%	
Annual Reinspection to Communal Areas	60%	
Annual Reinspection to AIB	47%	

Gas Safety

The Investment team managed the contract in relation to Gas Servicing. Access to properties remains a key issue, however there are appropriate procedures in place for arranging access to ensure that the servicing can be completed.



Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance. .

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Gas Servicing	99.72%	

Lifts

The Investment team managed the contract in relation to Lift Maintenance and have a lift consultant., no issues.

Investment Team Performance Dashboard used to monitor performance.

Type	Percentage complete	Compliance
Monthly Service Visits	100%	
Annual Safed Testing/ LG1	100%	

Radon

No Data to report at present, a procurement exercise is currently in progress to appoint a contractor to undertake radon monitoring. Performance data to be included in future compliance reports when data available.

Responsible Officer

There is a Responsible Officer Framework in place across the organisation with designated Responsible Officers (RO's) and where required Responsible Officer Support Staff (ROSS) to assist the RO's for having responsibility for ensuring the day-to-day safety and management of the council's property stock.

Audits have been completed in October 2023 by the SAT at the three high-rise tower blocks and De Wint Court which included looking at the building checks that the RO's/ ROSS undertaken. No issues identified and the operational fire safety inspections such as Weekly Fire Alarm Tests and Monthly Emergency Lighting Test all being undertaken, and records maintained in the fire logbook.

There is a training programme in place that sets out the training requirements for RO's and ROSS to be able to undertake their duties, training has recently been delivered for all RO's and ROSS with good uptake as had not been undertaken since before Covid. IOSH Managing Safely Training hasn't been delivered for some years and is going to be picked up this financial year (2024-25) and arranged by Corporate H and S. Training matrix maintained to monitor compliance with training requirements.



Further information

For further information on the compliance report contact the Safety Assurance Team.

Email customer.services@lincoln.gov.uk

Tel 01522 873333

Website www.lincoln.gov.uk

Write to DHI, City of Lincoln Council
City Hall, Beaumont Fee
Lincoln, LN1 1DE



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Lincoln's ambitious future



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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**8 AUGUST 2024**

SUBJECT: WORK PROGRAMME - 2024/25

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 draft work programme for 2024/25 (Appendix A).

2. Background

- 2.1 The draft work programme for 2024/25 has been agreed by the Chair and Vice/Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel in consultation with senior housing officers.
- 2.2 This work programme can be further populated in accordance with Housing Scrutiny Sub Committees requests for topics of discussion and areas of preferred scrutiny. It will be used as a working document and can be added to or amended at members discretion at any time during the 2024/25 Municipal Year.
- 2.3 The work programme includes those areas for scrutiny linked to the strategic priorities of the Council and themed 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 2024/25.

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

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Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2024/25

12 June 2024

CANCELLED

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair LTP	Regular report by MB
Quarter 4 (2023/24) – Performance Report	Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report
Quarter 4 (2023/24) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Adam Oxley	Regular Report
Policy Updates (TBC)	TBC	Reports as Required
Work Programme 2024/25	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

8 August 2024 – Core Landlord Services

124

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Quarter 4 (2023/24) – Performance Report	Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report
Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report	Michelle Hoyles & Denise Raine (Acuity)	Regular Report
Quarter 4 (2023/24) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Adam Oxley	Regular Report
Income Management and Arrears Policy	Marianne Upton	Policy review
Pets Policy	Marianne Upton	New policy
Neighbourhood Management Policy	Marianne Upton	New policy
Tenancy Services Structure Update	Marianne Upton	Update
Building Compliance Report	Martin Kerrigan	Compliance report
Work Programme 2024/25	Paula Burton	Regular Report

12 September 2024 – Core Landlord Services/Additional Housing

125

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Voids Cleansing - Cost Recovery	LTP	Mick Barber, Chair LTP
Quarter 1 (2024/25) – Performance Report inc ASB update	Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report ASB at request of LTP/Members
Quarter 1 (2024/25) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Adam Oxley	Regular Report
Housing Management Structure Updates	Paula Burton	Update
Allocations policy review	Paula Burton	Policy review
Downsizing Policy and Update	Marianne Upton	New policy
Briefing on Right to Buy and Section 106 Funds	Andrea Ripley	Requested by HSSC
Acquisitions Strategy	Andrea Ripley	New strategy
Disposals Strategy	Andrea Ripley	New strategy
Draft Housing Development Pipeline	Daren Turner/Paula Burton	Briefing
Work Programme 2024/25	Paula Burton	Regular Report

31 October 2024 – Core Landlord Services/Estate Regeneration

126

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Quarter 2 (2024/25) Performance Update inc ASB update	Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report ASB at request of LTP/Members
Quarter 2 (2024/25) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Adam Oxley	Regular Report
Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Quarter 2 performance	Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report
Anti-Social Behaviour Update	Marianne Upton/Ben Jackson	Update
Complaints Report	Paula Burton	Update
Tenancy Agreement	Marianne Upton	Policy report
Estate Inspections	Marianne Upton	Regular report
Estate Regeneration Investment Programme	Marianne Upton/Kevin Bowring	HRABP
Caretaking Review	Marianne Upton/Amy Larder	HRABP
Work Programme 2024/25	Paula Burton	Regular Report

6 February 2025 – Core Landlord Services/Decarbonisation

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Review Update Report	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Tenancy Agreement Update	Marianne Upton	Policy report
Rent Increase Update	Jordan Allmond	Regular report
Work Programme 2024/25	Paula Burton	Regular Report

17 March 2025

128

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Matters	Mick Barber, LTP	Regular Update
Quarter 3 (2024/25) – Performance Report-Inc ASB	Yvonne Fox	Regular Report Quarterly ASB at request of LTP/Members
Quarter 3 (2024/25) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Adam Oxley	New Regular Quarterly Report
Setting of Performance Targets 2025/26	Daren Turner	Annual Review
Policy Updates (TBC)	TBC	Reports as Required
Report from PH Cllr Nannestad to Performance Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Nannestad	Annual Report
Work Programme 2025/26	Paula Burton	Regular Report

Other Agenda topics to be scheduled into 2024/25 as appropriate.

- Complaints
- Lincoln Standard