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CITY OF Lincoln
COUNCIL

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11 June 2025 | **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: Kevin Bowring, Laura Brown, Paula Burton, Democratic Services, Emily Holmes, Michelle Hoyles, Donna Lyons, Janine Mills, Jessica Robinson, Daren Turner, Martin Walmsley and Lara Wells

A G E N D A

You are asked to resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items because it is likely that if members of the press or public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information'.

SECTION B

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee   **17 March 2025**

Present:	Councillor Gary Hewson *(in the Chair)*
Councillors:	Alan Briggs, Natasha Chapman, Calum Watt and Loraine Woolley
Independent Person(s):	Mick Barber, Mike Asher, Sean Newton and Debbie Rousseau
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Liz Bushell and Caroline Coyle-Fox

53.   Confirmation of Minutes - 06 February 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

54.   Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

55.   Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) Project Update (Verbal Report)

Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP), apologised for not having provided a written report on LTP activity for this meeting. He gave a verbal update which highlighted the Panel's continued work on a variety of projects with tenancy services, fire safety assurance, voids, garden assistance, maintenance, business management, estate inspections and resident involvement teams. He further advised:

- Mick Barber continued to attend Social Housing Quality Network Panel and ARCH committee meetings.
- It was hoped that ARCH would hold a conference in the city in the near future.
- LTP had been working with the Resident Involvement Team for the co-creation of a digital newsletter/magazine - HOME covering important updates, how to stay connected in communities, tips and advice, updates from Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) and more.
- Catch up meetings had been held with senior members of staff.

LTP Members were working hard to achieve outcomes of quality housing and quality of life in the city.

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

Question: Was Lincoln Tenant's Panel managing to retain and recruit new members?
Response: Yes, there continued to be a varied mixture of membership including older and younger members of the community serving on the panel over different periods of time. LTP was involved in various other community projects and received good feedback on its work.

Question: Would a link to the digital copy of Home Magazine that had always been sent to tenants be advertised online?

Response: An in-depth paper copy of the newsletter had been sent to Councillor Hewson as Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The paper copy was very expensive to produce, therefore, an on-line link was available for those tenants with e mail addresses. They were invited to register to receive regular updates. The newsletter/magazine was also sent out with rent payment statements. Tenants were asked for feedback on what they thought about its content.

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

56. **Directorate of Housing and Investment Compliance Report -Six Monthly Update**

Martin Kerrigan, Fire Safety Assurance Manager:

a. presented an update to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on City of Lincoln Council's (CoLC's) position regarding building safety compliance in relation to Housing stock; focussing on three of the 'Big 7' areas of building safety compliance including Electrical Safety, Water Supply (Legionella) and Gas Safety, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the officer's report

b. reported that the compliance report was distributed to Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) on 21 February 2025 and discussed at a resident involvement meeting on 24 February 2025; comments received were responded to and the report was accepted

c. advised that the Council monitored performance on our landlord responsibilities as a whole in the following areas

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

d. highlighted that at the meeting of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 8 August 2025, members requested a six-monthly update on performance related to building safety compliance, focussed on three of the six key areas to give an understanding of performance for all safety measures

e. reported that overall performance would be monitored and shown by percentage of compliance and Risk Advisory Group (RAG) rated, this would then provide the method for future reporting to enable measurement of improvement and inform the Directorate of highlighted risk to allow for comment, direction and action

f. explained that to assist the reader the areas of compliance, relevant legislation and landlord responsibilities, had been summarised to add context on each requirement to capture risk, mitigation and performance to complete the context and to allow for clear responses to questions arising

g. highlighted performance against the indicator were RAG rated, as follows:

   - Green ☺: At target

- Amber ☺: Within 10% of target
- Red ☹: below 10% of target

h. summarised that from the Directorate of Housing and Investment compliance report the key issues identified relating to building safety compliance were:

- Increased timescales with getting injunctions and gaining access to properties that had an expired Landlord Gas Safety Certificate.
- Low access rates to complete Domestic Legionella Risk Assessments.

i. invited members questions and comments.

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail.

Questions and comments received were responded to by officers as follows:

Question: The number of electrical inspections carried out was not at a par with gas inspections. Hopefully improvements could be made to performance figures and tenants informed we would be carrying out electrical testing.

Response: The Building Compliance Team were trying to get the message across to tenants that access to properties was required for electrical testing. Improvements were being made to the website and information sent out with the January rent leaflets regarding electrical safety, fire safety and asbestos awareness.

Question: What happened in the cases of the eleven dwellings that operatives could not access?

Response: Various action was taken including telephone calls, final warning letters, action via the Tenancy Services, and injunctions obtained through the Legal Team.

Question: Could the Council not get access to the rented properties it owned at all times?

Response: Immediate access could only be obtained if there was an imminent risk of danger to life or safety.

The Chair commented that the current performance targets should be supported with a summary by officers of the reasons behind why these targets were not being achieved.

Members referred to historical problems with gaining access to properties in some areas and a great deal of work behind the scenes to try to secure this.

Response: There were multiple problems and reasons why access could not be achieved. For example tenants passed away, or went into prison. It was an exhaustive process engaging with customers regarding compliance safety.

Question: In cases where access was denied was this due to more elective basis reasons?
Response: Yes there were severe mental health issues and complex cases.

Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing highlighted that once a court order was achieved to gain access to a property it remained in place for the lifetime of the tenancy.

RESOLVED that:

1. The next six-monthly update report be presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee around September 2025, focussing on Asbestos Management, Lifts and Radon. (Fire Safety 'was reported annually at Performance Scrutiny Committee.)

2. The content of the Directorate of Housing and Investment Compliance Report to the City of Lincoln Council's housing stock be noted.

3. Any additional reports required in the future be requested through the committee process.

57. **Tenancy Fraud Policy (Housing Tenants)**

Paula Burton, Assistant Director, Housing Management:

a. presented the reviewed Tenancy Housing Fraud Policy document to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

b. advised that following consultation with Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) in this area of work the following comments had been received:

- They found the policy easy to read and that it provided a clear understanding of preventing, identifying and acting on tenancy fraud.
LTP requested the following:
- On page 5, the start of the last paragraph to be reworded from "we accept" to "we understand" – this was updated
- On the final page, a brief explanation for why references, legal frameworks, and regulatory framework was included, e.g. why was it important to the policy? – this was updated to be clearer
- Adding a section in the policy that explained where an individual could get support either from the Council or from other extra support – this was not added because it related to procedures and information to the public, but it had been requested that the web page be updated to include this
- On the website there was a link to different forms for reporting and these could be included – the link to the relevant web page was added
- Adding a section for if you suspected someone/yourself as a victim of tenancy fraud then you could report it - this was not added because it related to procedures and information to the public, and it was already on the web page

c. highlighted that as a Registered Provider of social housing, we had obligations under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 to identify and prevent tenancy fraud, it was also a requirement of the Regulator's Tenancy Standard that we made every effort to identify and prevent tenancy fraud

d. referred to the reviewed Tenancy Fraud Policy originally created in November 2020, found at Appendix A to the officer's report, which:

- provided the legal and regulatory context for managing tenancy fraud

- made clear reference to measures we would take to identify, prevent and minimise the risk of tenancy fraud occurring
- reflected a clear intent that we would take decisive action where we had evidence that fraud had taken place, including supporting prosecutions

   e. requested members' feedback on the content of the report.

Mick Barber, Chair of LTP, advised he was pleased to have been given the opportunity to review the Tenancy Fraud Policy for Housing Tenants which was a good document. It had been a pleasure working alongside officers.

Members commented on the content of the report, raising the following questions:

Question: When tenants signed up to a council property, did the relevant estate officer attend the 'sign-up' appointment to introduce himself/herself to the new tenant?

Response: Normally an officer from the Voids Team was in attendance, followed by a visit from the Housing Estate Officer within six-weeks' time.

Question: The new tenant should know who their housing officer would be when signing up to the property.

Response: There had been officer discussions around this matter. With the new IT system, housing officers would be able to access photo ID. Everyone received a six-week follow up visit.

Question: Why was ID taken from the tenant and not the residents moving in?

Response: The tenant was responsible for the tenancy agreement. The Housing Authority had limited rights over household members.

Comment: There could be a safeguarding issue, should the tenant sub-let to another person who may be a potential danger to others, hence the need for the housing officer to be aware of the tenant's identity when he visited the property.

Response: The Tenancy Agreement was discussed in great length with all new tenants at 'sign-up'. This included the strict rules around sub-letting.

Comment by LTP Chair: It was important for the Housing Officer to visit the property to make contact with the tenant and make sure there was no overcrowding.

Response: That was true. When visiting the tenant, all officers were always alert to any under/over occupancy.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Tenancy Fraud Policy for Housing Tenants be noted.

58. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 - 2024/25

Lara Wells, Business Manager, Corporate Policy and Improvement:

a) presented a report on performance indicators for the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI) for Quarter 3 of 2024/25 (October – December) which covered those measures related to the Council's responsibility as a landlord

b) reported that Lincoln Tenant's Panel had been consulted about this report and their comments had been responded to by the relevant services, as detailed at paragraph 2.1 of the officer's report
'

c) 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

d) confirmed that there were a total of thirty-three performance indicators monitored by DHI; an overview of performance for the third quarter of 2024/25 against such indicators was attached at Appendix A to the report

e) explained that the template for Appendix A included performance 'direction of travel' information to aid interpretation of how performance fluctuated between quarterly reporting periods; benchmarking comparisons would be provided annually at each fourth quarter

f) reported that during the third quarter of 2024/25, 16 performance measures had met or exceeded their agreed target, four had performed close to target and five had performed below target, the remaining measures were volumetric

g) highlighted that of the 5 measures performing below target, one was a corporate measure related to call handling in the customer contact centre; this measure 'CS3' related to all calls received by the contact centre, and therefore included data not linked to Housing Services, and was also reported to Performance Scrutiny Committee

h) explained that measure 'HSSC3' related to Anti-Social Behaviour and consisted of 16 sub-measures as detailed further within section 9 of the officers' report

i) confirmed that sections 5 to 12 of the report highlighted the key conclusions drawn from Appendix A

j) invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee.

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

Question: Was the income from the approved former Victory Pub site on Boultham Park Road earmarked for spending later?
Response: The development would be completed by the end of May 2025 and hopefully occupied mid-summer.

Question: Performance targets in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) were showing as green. It was noted as a serving Tenant's Panel representative on the Anti-Social Behaviour Group, and there were two ASB Groups in existence, one of these groups had closed some cases without the tenants' consent.
Response: The team in charge of generic housing complaints had become too busy. The ASB Housing Manager was now dealing with lower level ASB to assist

with workloads and was working well with the Public Protection and ASB Team to assess problems.

Question: Instances of ASB in relation to pets and animal nuisance had reached 29 cases by Quarter 3. Which cases had been resolved?

Response: It had been agreed that these new volumetric performance indicators would be reviewed by this Committee once every six months. The work programme for 2025/26 would be amended accordingly to include data on cases resolved.

Comment: Since the introduction of three housing officers in his Ward to cover ASB, Rent and Tenancy Management, the member in question had seen significant improvements in issues being addressed.

Comment by Chair: It would be helpful to see further information provided within this report with reasons why problems had been encountered which affected performance figures.

Question: Performance Indicator 22 in respect of percentage of complaints replied to within target time was shown as green, although we were being told average time to answer a call to Customer Services had increased.

Response: The figures were based on outturn in 2023/24 , however the officer would check the figures and advise members accordingly.

RESOLVED that:

1. Further information be provided to members as requested above.

2. The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Work Programme be amended for 2025/26 to include six monthly updates on number of cases resolved in respect of performance indicator HSSC 3: number of ASB cases by type.

3. The current performance outcomes during Quarter 3 of the financial year 2024/25 to date, be noted.

59. Financial Performance - Quarterly Monitoring

Janine Mills, 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 2024), on the Council's:

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

b) sought approval for changes to the capital programme

c) invited members of Lincoln Tenant's Panel to comment on the content of the report

d) advised that although there were still a number of variables, which were subject to a level of uncertainty, based on the latest level of assumptions, at the end of the third quarter, provided information on the Council's:

- **Housing Revenue Account** — For 2024/25 the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £101,220, resulting in estimated general balances at year-end of £1,030,024, after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position. The HRA was currently projecting a forecast underspend of £714,390, which would result in HRA balances of £1,744,414 as at the end of 2024/25 (Appendix A provided a forecast Housing Revenue Account summary). Although the forecast position was an underspend there were a number of significant variations in income and expenditure. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix B.

- **Housing Repairs Service** – For 2024/25 the Council's Housing Repairs Service (HRS) net revenue budget was set at zero, which reflected its full costs recovery nature. At quarter 3, the HRS was forecasting a surplus of £32,882 in 2024/25, an improvement of £50,136 since quarter 2, which had subsequently been repatriated to the HRA. Full details of the main variances were provided at Appendix D.

- **Housing Investment Programme** – The revised programme for 2024/25 amounted to £17.432m following the quarter 2 position. At quarter 3 the programme had been decreased by £0.20m to £17.411m as shown at paragraph 7.2 of the report. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme at the end of quarter 3 was £8.861m, which was 50.89% of the 2024/25 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 £1.3m) as detailed at Appendix G of the report. A further £0,680m had been spent as at the end of January 2025, although this was still a low percentage of expenditure at this stage of the financial year, works had been constrained by the availability of contractors and billing of capital works.

e) invited members questions and comments.

Members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the content of the report in further detail, asked questions and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

Question: Could officers give advice as to how the burden of increases in employers NI contributions would be met/balanced in the housing budget?
Response: Officers would look into this matter and report back to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee under separate cover.

Question: Could officers advise whether the Aids and Adaptations budget was ring-fenced and provide figures for current forecast underspend?
Response: Officers would provide the requested information/figures to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee under separate cover.

RESOLVED that:

1. Further information be provided to members as requested above.

2. The financial performance for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024 be noted with thanks.

60. **Target Setting 2025/26**

Lara Wells, Business Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement:

a) presented a range of proposed performance measures for the upcoming financial year 2025/26, 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 forty-one measures for the Sub-Committees consideration; a slight increase on the thirty-seven measures reported in 2024/25

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) added that the new measures would be introduced in Customer Services in the next few weeks

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

g) invited Housing Sub-Committees questions and comments:

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

Question: Concerns were raised regarding the connection between our Control Centre and the Hamilton House Team. Did the out of hours emergency calls include assistance for homeless people?
Response: The Council had a statutory duty towards homeless people at any hour of the day. Lincare would contact the out-of-hours housing officer on-call to arrange temporary accommodation or somewhere to stay.

Question: In relation to performance measure 85A 'Percentage of allocation offers accepted first time, why wasn't the target set at 100%? What were the reasons why properties weren't accepted first time?
Response: Prospective tenants had numerous reasons why they didn't accept a property first time, perhaps due to it not being what they initially imagined it to be. The homeless legislation was different to the Allocations Policy.

Comment: by Lincoln Tenant's Panel Member – Concerns were raised about the assistance offered under the out-of-hours system and the length of time taken for the Call-Centre to answer calls beyond even the new target of 500 seconds proposed.
Response: The response from the out-of-hours service covered legislative responsibilities only. The target for customer call response time was not set by officers, however, the target had been amended to reflect the increase in call volumes and complexity.

Question: Did the figures for call time responses relate to housing calls only or all calls in general? It would be helpful to receive data on how many enquiries were resolved first time, also requested by members at Performance Scrutiny Committee
Response: The figures related to all calls.

Question: In relation to performance measure HSSC4: Percentage of properties at SAP rating C or above, when would work commence on bringing this desired outcome into operation?
Response: Hopefully this would come into operation by May-June 2025, once processed through Legal Services. There were approximately 200 properties affected.

Question: How many vacant garages were there in the Birchwood area?
Response: Officers would provide this information to members of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee under separate cover.

Officers suggested that the new volumetric measures proposed in relation to the Lincare Control Centre were not a landlord function and should not be included in the performance targets listed at Appendix A for this reason.

RESOLVED that the performance measures proposed at Appendix A of the report be approved for inclusion in the quarterly performance reporting for 2025/26.

61. Housing Asset Management Strategy

Michelle Hoyles, Housing Strategy Manager:

a) presented the Directorate of Housing and Investment's draft Asset Management Strategy, and requested the Sub-Committee's feedback on the draft strategy in preparation for its progression to Executive for formal adoption

b) highlighted that Outcome 2 within Section 5 of the Strategy document would be slightly updated

c) reported that Lincoln Tenant's Panel (LTP) had provided feedback on the report stating they supported the content of the strategy and what the service was proposing to deliver, welcoming the strategy's format, finding it clear, easy and engaging to read, and suitable for tenants as its main audience

d) added that LTP suggestions on the strategy's content, had been incorporated into the final draft presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee as appended to this report

e) advised that In November 2023 the Council adopted its 30-Year HRA Business Plan, which sets out a series of core objectives, including:

- Developing and improving core landlord services
- Providing additional affordable housing
- Regenerating our estates and neighbourhoods
- Reducing our carbon emissions

f) reported that alongside development of the Business Plan, the Housing Assets directorate had also developed a series of policies to support effective delivery of its services and there remained a gap in the directorate's governance 'golden thread'; an Asset Management Strategy had been

identified as a means of bridging this gap, and would help ensure the Council met the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards that were introduced in April 2024

g) highlighted that:

- The Strategy had been developed with tenants as its primary audience, with a more visual format and simplified content.
- It addressed all relevant parts of the Regulator's Consumer Standards, and each of the four outcomes was accompanied by an action plan that set out key activities the directorate would undertake to further enhance and improve the quality of the Council's homes and how it engaged with tenants throughout.
- The action plan also identified key activities the Council needed to undertake to ensure it continued to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator.

h) confirmed that the lifespan of the Strategy was five years, both to coincide with Vision 2030 and in anticipation of the energy efficiency standards all landlords were required to meet by 2030, when all rented homes would be mandated to have a minimum EPC 'C' rating

i) requested members' feedback on the content of the report.

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail, commented/raised questions and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

Question: An achievement of EPC rating of C or above for Council homes was very ambitious. Did this relate to all properties?
Response: There were 290 properties which required compliance to be achieved by the year 2030.

Question: Was it better to sell unviable properties and to build better?
Response: The Disposals Policy would be looked at later in the year. Officers would share further background information on the development of the Asset Disposals Policy with the member in question.

Officers were congratulated on the work in this field to date.

RESOLVED that the draft Asset Management Strategy attached as '**Appendix A**' to the report be noted, prior to its progression to Executive for formal adoption.

62. Change to Order of Business

RESOLVED that the order of business be amended to allow Item 13 'Technology to Monitor Alarms and Sensors' to be considered in private as the next item of the agenda, following the Exclusion of Public and Press.

63. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

64. **Technology to Monitor Alarms and Sensors**

Matthew Hillman, Assistant Director, Asset Management, provided comprehensively information in respect of this agenda item entitled 'Technology to Monitor Alarms and Sensors', as detailed in the exempt report to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Members discussed the content of the report in further detail.

RESOLVED that the recommendation to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, as set out in the exempt report, be supported, for referral to Executive for approval.

65. **Re Admittance of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be readmitted to the meeting for the remainder of business to be discussed in the public domain.

It was noted that there were no members of press and public present this evening.

66. **Report by Councillor Donald 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
- Fire Safety
- Additional Homes
- Decarbonisation
- Lincare Control Centre

b) highlighted the major changes since his last report to this committee being the Regulator of Social Housing (ROSH) expansion to cover local authorities from 1 April 2024 and policy announcements by Government since last year's General Election

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: How many opportunities were given by operatives to attempt to gain access to Council properties for repairs ordered where there was no-one at home, or failure to answer the door?
Response: Operatives conducted three attempts to gain access to the property then the appointment was cancelled. A recharge proposal was being investigated to recover costs in such circumstances.

Question: If the Council failed to attend a repair appointment did the tenant receive compensation?

Response: This eventuality was covered under the Remedies Policy.

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

67.   **Work Programme 2025/26**

The Democratic Services Officer:

a) presented a draft outline work programme for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for 2025/26 as detailed at Appendix A of her report

b) highlighted that the work programme would be further populated in accordance with Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committees requests for topics of discussion and areas of preferred scrutiny to be used as a working document, added to or amended at members discretion at any time during the 2025/26 Municipal Year

c) confirmed 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.

RESOLVED that the content of the Work Programme for 2025/26 be noted, subject to the following additional item to be included on the agenda for Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be held on 11 June 2025:

•   Discretionary Housing Payments Update – Follow Up Cases Awarded 30+months – Officers: Martin Walmsley, Laura Brown.

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<u>Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) Project Updates</u>

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

The newly created working groups focusing on tenancy service have completed two reviews and have proposed 23 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) recommendations to the current procedure and 13 garden assistance recommendations to the current procedures. The garden working group have started to scrutinise the untidy gardens policy and tenancy sustainment scrutiny group are continuing to review the pilot project and establish if a preventative model can be considered.

Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel, is a committee member on the Social Housing Quality Resident's Panel and attended a Q & A with **Baroness Taylor**, the Minister for Social Housing Regulation, and chaired by Emma Payne, Director of Social Housing. The Q & A provided an update on developments since the Panel last met, feedback of initial findings from the Panel's online community on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and focus groups on the Long-Term Housing Strategy and reflected on the first year of the new consumer regulatory standards.

We are pleased to confirm the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) Tenant Group voted for Lincoln to host the next tenants' conference in September. Mick Barber has stood down from ARCH after three years and is replaced by Mike Asher who will start to attend meetings in June. Further information will be provided, reference venues, dates, and theme of the conference once we receive confirmation from ARCH committee. Donna Lyons has been liaising with the ARCH tenant chair and provided venue options.

All members of LTP continue to attend training and seminars hosted by Four Million Homes and engaged with Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) national involvement week:

LTP are working with the Resident Involvement Team to co-create a digital newsletter/magazine – HOME covering important updates, how to stay connected in communities, tips and advice, updates from Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) and the first edition went live in February. We have identified the need to introduce additional communications to share messages and provide housing updates and have proposed to relaunch quarterly housing magazine. The editorial panel are working closely with Resident Involvement in creating a template and content.

Thank you.

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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE   **11 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES ANNUAL REPORT – 2024-25**
DIRECTORATE:	**HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**BUSINESS MANAGER - CORPORATE POLICY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT**

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 2024/25; and

1.2   To propose, based on the key findings arising from 2024/25 TSMs, the key areas of focus for DHI over the coming year to further improve tenant satisfaction.

2.   Lincoln Tenants Panel Consultation

2.1   LTP have been consulted about this report and comments noted.

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.

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.

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 2024/25 Acuity completed 150 tenant perception 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 addition, 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 with the service provided by City of Lincoln Council's Housing Service?"
- **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 for you personally"

Tenants were also asked "Are you interested in getting more involved with the City of Lincoln Council to help them improve their service? If you are interested, we will tell City of Lincoln Council".

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. The Residents Involvement Team do follow up calls (customer recovery) with those residents who wish to continue participation.

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   There are twelve tenant perception (TP) measures which are collated on a quarterly basis and these report satisfaction levels of the tenant responding.

The table below sets out the performance data for these measures showing comparisons for each quarter in 2024/25, the annual figure for 2024/25 and the annual figure for 2023/24 for comparison.

Measure	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25	Q3 2024/25	Q4 2024/25	2024/25	2023/24
Overall Satisfaction (TP01)	64%	69%	73%	66%	68% (-3)	71%
Keeping Properties in Good Repair						
Repairs Last 12 Months (TP02)	73%	71%	72%	75%	73% (-2)	75%
Time Taken Repairs (TP03)	67%	66%	61%	71%	66% (-2)	68%
Well Maintained Home (TP04)	71%	70%	71%	68%	70% (-3)	73%
Safe Home (TP05)	75%	75%	76%	73%	75% (0)	75%
Respectful and Helpful Engagement						
Listens & Acts (TP06)	58%	58%	59%	49%	56% (-4)	60%
Kept Informed (TP07)	71%	72%	70%	69%	71% (+3)	68%
Fairly & with Respect (TP08)	80%	78%	79%	77%	78% (+1)	77%
Complaints Handling (TP09)	36%	51%	48%	39%	44% (+7)	37%
Responsible Neighbourhood Management						
Communal Areas (TP10)	64%	79%	76%	68%	72% (-3)	75%
Neighbourhood Contribution (TP11)	65%	65%	65%	67%	65% (-4)	69%
Approach to ASB (TP12)	53%	59%	59%	47%	55% (+1)	53%
Other						
Easy to Deal With	69%	69%	72%	65%	69% (-1)	70%
NPS (Promoters)	35%	34%	43%	31%	36% (-5)	41%

5.2   Overall, 68.2% (TP01) of City of Lincoln's tenants are satisfied with the service they receive from their landlord. This is a slight reduction from previous year of 71% and does usually fluctuate through the year.

The Housing Service highest level of satisfaction for the way the Council treats its tenants fairly and with respect is 78.3% (TP08)

Six of the twelve tenant perception measures in the table have a satisfaction rate of 70% or above and five are between 55% - 69%. One is under 50%, "Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling" which has a satisfaction rate of 44%. It should be noted that this has the highest percentage point increase compared with 2023/24 and when benchmarked against other social housing providers, City of Lincoln is in the top quartile for this measure.

5.3   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**'. This information shows how City of Lincoln Council's performance compared with other social housing landlords, during 2024/25 for these 12 measures.

It should be noted that minor changes in percentage can see a reduction in benchmarking position and measures that are improving locally may still see a reduction in quartile position when compared against other social landlords through national benchmarking.

5.4   As detailed in Appendix A, in 2024/25, for the twelve tenant perception measures;

- 3 are in the top quartile
- 8 are in the second quartile
- 1 is in the 3rd quartile

This is compared with all twelve being in the top quartile in 2023/24.

These will fluctuate depending on the individual circumstances and experiences of tenants surveyed and are a snapshot of a moment in time.

5.5   It should be noted that the measure that has moved to the 3rd quartile in 2024/24 is "TP12 – Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour" which actually saw an increase in percentage satisfaction score.

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 0.26% of the Council's housing stock, performance is in the top quartile.
- 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 99.96%, the Council is placed in the top quartile among Housemark members nationally.
- Proportion of homes for which all gas safety checks have been carried out. Performance is in line with the Housemark median for this measure at 99.87%.
- The proportion of ASB cases reported per 1,000 homes is just above the national Housemark median. At 0.4 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.

- Non-emergency responsive repairs carried out within target timescale. At 89.12%, this places the Council in the top quartile of Housemark members. The threshold for placement in the top quartile is 88.4%, and the Council's performance against this measure exceeds this.

7. **Benchmarking Regulator of Social Housing 2023/24 and other Findings**

7.1 At the end of last year, The Regulator issued the results from all landlords completing their TSM returns, and these results can be used to compare against the results from the Council's survey. Although there is a lag in this full data set and is comparing 2023/24 data instead of the more recent 2024/25 data it is worth noting the Council's result in the wider context and presenting this information for comparison next year to examine direction of travel.

This information has been included in Appendix A and compares the Council's results against all social landlords that submitted data based on both Low-Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA) and against other local authorities.

The Council compares very well against other local authorities, with all measures above the Regulator median. Two measures, the handling of complaints (43.9%) and the upkeep of the communal areas (71.8%), are in the top quartile.

Although these results show good levels of satisfaction when compared to other local authorities, improvements can still be made to further improve satisfaction scores, and recommended areas of focus are highlighted in section 8 of this report.

7.2 Notable observations from this analysis are summarised below:

7.3 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.

Of the 600 tenants who answered this question, (389) 62% said they had a repair completed in the home in the last 12 months. Satisfaction in this area has decreased slightly (-2.1%) as well as a decrease in satisfaction in the speed of repairs (-1.7%).

7.4 When splitting down the results into different subgroups, this confirms that satisfaction does tend to increase with age, those in the Housing for Older People being particularly highly satisfied. No single area stands out from the rest in terms of satisfaction, although those in the city centre appear to be a little more satisfied than those in other areas. Those tenants new to the Council and those with the longest tenures tend to be the most satisfied and male tenants are more satisfied than their female counterparts.

7.5   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.
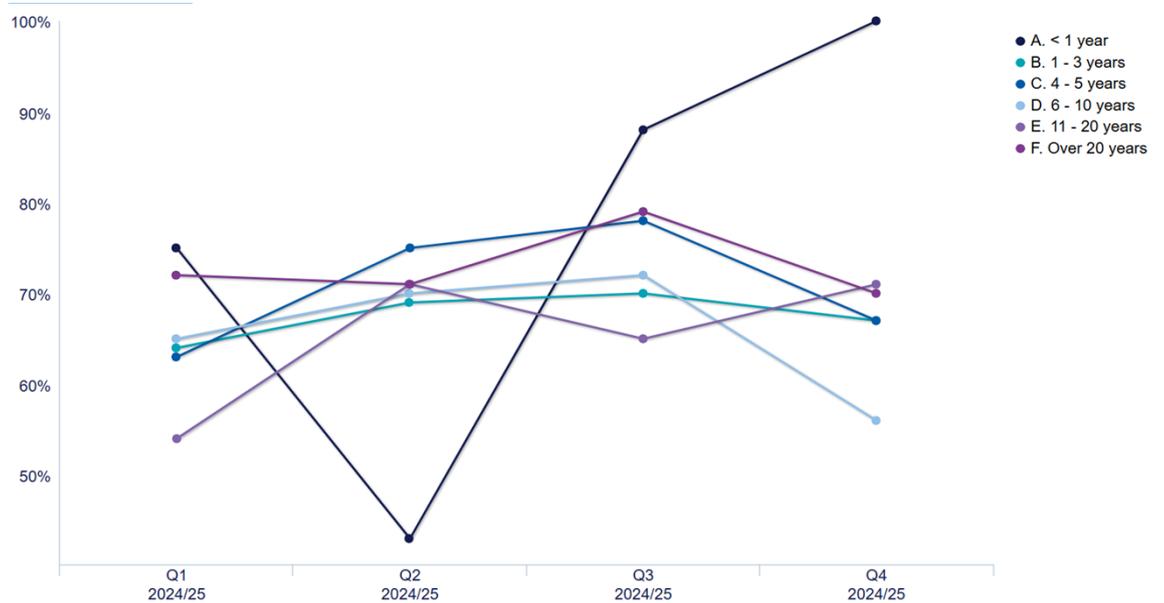
Figure 1: Summary of relationship between tenant satisfaction and length of tenancy

7.6   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.
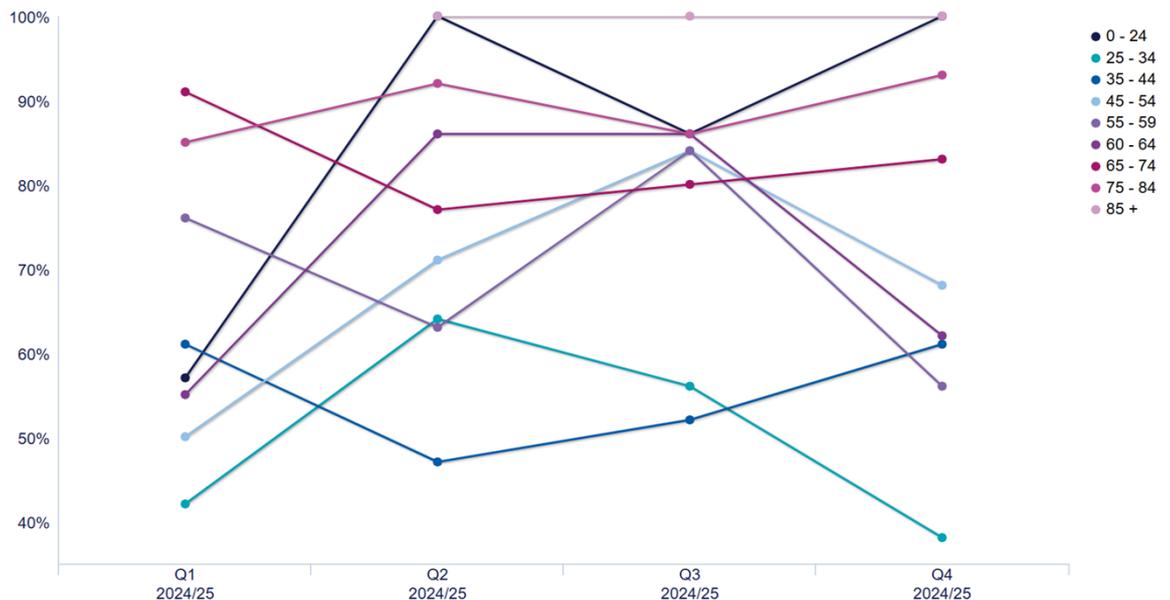
Figure 2: Summary of relationship between tenant satisfaction and age

7.7 Figure 3 highlights the correlation between where tenants live and satisfaction, this does vary however, those living on Newport/Burton Road are overall 100% satisfied in comparison with areas such as Boultham and Birchwood with Ermine having the lowest score.
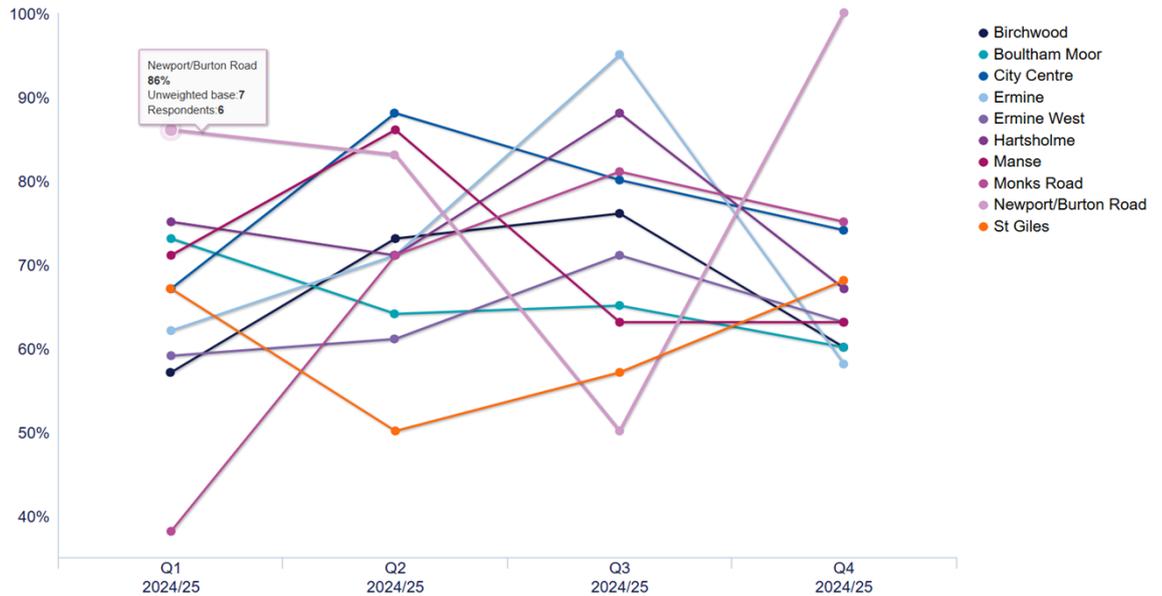
7.8 The Council chose to ask tenants three additional questions as part of its tenant perception survey. More than three-quarters of tenants (77%) are at least slightly concerned about the cost-of-living crisis; 51% are very concerned, slight increase from Q3, with 26% slightly concerned. Just 13% are not concerned at all, although this has increased slightly also.

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. It is often shown that those struggling financially are less satisfied with the range of services provided by their landlord. This does appear to be the case with the City of Lincoln Council. This does suggest that if the Council can relieve some of this concern by helping with budgeting or with benefits, it could lead to higher satisfaction. Promoting the Council's Welfare Team may be of benefit to tenants and outcomes from the developing Lincoln's Anti-Poverty Strategy and action plan will also support tenants.

7.9 A question related to 'net promoter score' indicated just under a third of tenants (31%) are promoters, happy to promote and recommend City of Lincoln Council to other people, with 25% giving a score of 10 out of 10.

The same number of tenants are considered passives, giving a score of 7 or 8. Addressing the specific concerns of this group is likely to increase the number of promoters. However, more are detractors this quarter (38%).

Issues related to the repair service were once again the most frequently mentioned, with the timescales for completing repairs and dealing with outstanding repairs the most common; issues which are hard to resolve. "Quicker responses with

maintenance issues." Communications and customer service are then the next issues, in particular, showing tenants care and support when they make contact, listening to them more carefully and some say they would like more visits from staff.

7.10   The third and final additional question asked tenants to what extent they agreed the Council is easy to deal with. 65% of respondents stated they agreed with this.

8.   Conclusion - Key Drivers of Tenant Satisfaction

8.1   Overall, levels of satisfaction for services provided by the City of Lincoln remain moderate, with satisfaction rates performing in line with the Regulator median for councils with under 10,000 properties.

8.2   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 safe home. This has changed slightly from last year with "well maintained home being the main driver last year. This, and the other key drivers, are set out in Figure 4 below:
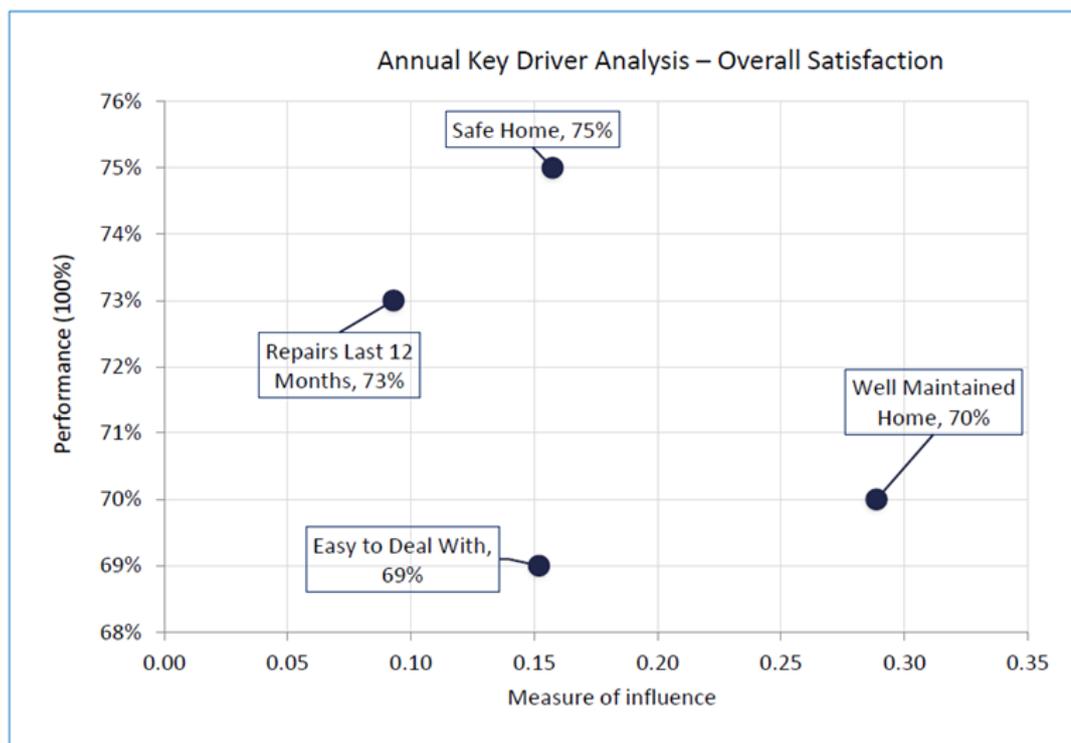
Figure 4: Acuity analysis of key driver of Lincoln tenants' overall satisfaction

8.3   Two measures outperformed the upper quartile score; satisfaction with complaint handling (44%) and satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained (72%) which are quite often lower-scoring metrics of surveys of this type.

As seen above a well-maintained home and a safe home are key drivers of satisfaction for the tenants of the Council.

In last year's report, presented to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee in August 2024, one of the recommended areas of focus for the coming year was "Improving how the Council responds to complaints". As previously mentioned in this report, Measure TP09 has increased to 43.9% satisfaction from 37% in 2023/24 and the Council's performance is benchmarked in the top quartile. When analysing the Council's complaints data, the conversion rate from Level 1 complaints to Level 2 complaints in the Directorate for Housing and Investment is relatively low at 14% also suggesting that complaints are resolved largely at the first review.

Also in last year's report, a focus on perceptions around ASB was suggested. Despite Measure TP12 being benchmarked in the third quartile, satisfaction did increase from 53% to 55% and whilst progress is being made, it is acknowledged that further work would be beneficial.

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

8.4 **Repairs Service – Communication**

While satisfaction with recent repairs is one of the highest rated measures in the survey at 73% and in line with the Regulator median, the time taken to complete repairs is lower at 66%. Timescales to complete repairs combined with outstanding repairs were the most commonly cited reasons for dissatisfaction in the survey and also cited against the open question around customer service and communication. These issues are also cited in complaints.

Day-to-day repairs are a key service, and for most tenants, one of the main reasons they would be in contact with their Council.

It is important, therefore, to investigate causes of dissatisfaction and to look at ways to improve the service. From a review of complaints in 2024/25 and the commentary in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, miscommunication, poor communication and follow up on progress with repairs is identified as an area for focus along with time take for repairs to be undertaken. Reviewing the efficiency of existing systems and procedures for communicating repairs would be a beneficial development area.

8.5 **Customer Care and Communication**

While the provision of good quality, well-maintained, and safe homes are the key drivers of satisfaction with the Council, effective communication and a high standard of customer care are also shown to be very important to tenants.

Frustration from not being able to contact the Council easily is likely to hurt satisfaction with a range of service areas, as will a lack of empathy from staff. Resources may limit what is possible around increasing the capacity for answering

calls, however, work is currently underway to investigate opportunities to reduce call wait times through a deep dive into customer services demand and processes.

Through a review of annual complaints last year alongside the detail in the Tenant Satisfaction Measure commentary, customer care across services has been identified as an area of focus. Options for refresher customer care guidance and training available to officers across services are being investigated for delivery in 2025/26.

8.6   **Complaints Handling**

Complaint handling can be one of the lower-performing measures in these surveys for most social housing landlords. There is an opportunity to explore complaint handling at the Council, with a 6p.p lead on the upper quartile figure and a 7p.p increase in satisfaction from 2023/24. The Council could benefit from investigating tenants' reasons for dissatisfaction by following up with tenants from this survey.

It has been nearly a year since the updated Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code and many providers are still facing challenges. Compliance is not enough and as the Council is demonstrating strength in this area there would be benefit from the investment in customer care and communication to drive satisfaction.

A further piece of work is currently underway reviewing the data on all complaints received during 2024/25 to understand issues in more detail with a view to identifying the areas that need further support and improvement. The detail in the complaints correlate with the comments and feedback in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

8.7   **Tenant Participation**

In last year's report a focus on improving approaches to tenant participation and keeping tenants informed was suggested. In 2024/25, measure TP07, "Proportion of respondents who report that their landlord keeps them informed about the things that matter to them" is 70.6% and increase from 68% in 2023/24. Measure TP06, "Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to them" is 55.8% which has decreased from 60% in 2023/24. Both of these measures rank in Quartile 2 in the benchmarking data.

Continuing to improve approaches to tenant participation and keeping tenants informed should be continued through digital magazine and encourage tenants to participate in future service delivery. The Council is updating both it's Communication Strategy and Consultation and Engagement Strategy during 2025/26 and further feedback from tenants will be sought and considered as these are developed.

9.   Strategic Priorities

9.1   The City of Lincoln Council's Vision 2030 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 Repairs 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 Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee reviews and comments on the content of this report and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures data contained therein;

12.2   That Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee supports the priorities listed in section 8 of this report; and

12.3   That Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee notes the TSM data contained within '**Appendix A**'.

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:	Lara Wells, Business Manager – Corporate Policy and Service Improvement lara.wells@lincoln.gov.uk

Appendix A

City of Lincoln Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) 2024/25

This document contains City of Lincoln Council's Tenant Satisfaction Measures performance data. So that tenants and members can review how City of Lincoln Council's performance compares with other social housing landlords, the 2024/25 year-end benchmarking information is provided below.

This benchmarking information is provided by Housemark, and compares the Council's performance to 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%)

Please note, the Housemark quartiles (1-4) for the below measures were all 100% BS02, BS03, BS04, BS05

Part 1: Tenant Perception Measures Performance Data

Q5e. Tenant perception measures		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2024/25)
TP01	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from their landlord.	68.2%	
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.	72.8%	
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	66.3%	
TP04	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained.	70.1%	
TP05	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe.	74.8%	
TP06	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.	55.8%	
TP07	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them.	70.6%	
TP08	Proportion of respondents who report that they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect.	78.3%	
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.	43.9%	
TP10	Proportion of respondents with communal areas who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.	71.8%	
TP11	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.	65.3%	
TP12	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.	54.8%	

Part 2: Management Information Measures Performance Data

Building safety		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2024/25)	Social housing providers who are fully compliant
BS01	Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out (%)	99.87%		41%
BS02	Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out (%)	100.00%		83%
BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or inspections have been carried out (%)	100.00%		89%
BS04	Proportion of homes for which all legionella risk assessments have been carried out (%)	100.00%		84%
BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out (%)	100.00%		76%
RP01	Proportion of homes that do not meet the DHS (%)	0.26%		7%
ASB		**Outturn**	**Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2024/25)**	
NM01 (1)	Number of ASB cases opened, per 1000 homes	106.0		
NM01 (2)	Number of ASB cases that involve hate incidents, per 1000 homes	0.4		
Repairs		**Outturn**	**Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2024/25)**	
RP02 (1)	Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	89.12%		
RP02 (2)	Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	99.96%		

Complaints		Outturn	Benchmarking (Housemark TSM year-end, 2024/25)
CH01 (1)	Number of stage 1 complaints received per 1000 homes	52.79	
CH01 (2)	Number of stage 2 complaints received per 1000 homes	7.71	
CH02 (1)	Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code timescales (%)	94.5%	
CH02 (2)	Proportion of stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code timescales (%)	79.7%	

TSM Scores – City of Lincoln

Ref	Question	2024/25	Previous year (2023/24)	Difference (+ / -)
TP01	Overall satisfaction	68.2%	71.0%	-2.8%
TP02	Repairs service overall	72.8%	74.9%	-2.1%
TP03	Speed of repairs	66.3%	68.0%	-1.7%
TP04	Home is well-maintained	70.1%	72.7%	-2.6%
TP05	Home is safe	74.8%	75.1%	-0.3%
TP06	Listens to views and acts	55.8%	59.8%	-4.0%
TP07	Keeps tenants informed	70.6%	67.8%	+2.8%
TP08	Treats tenants fairly and with respect	78.3%	76.5%	+1.8%
TP09	Complaint handling	43.9%	37.3%	+6.6%
TP10	Communal areas are clean and well-maintained	71.8%	74.6%	-2.8%
TP11	Contribution to neighbourhood	65.3%	69.0%	-3.7%
TP12	ASB handling	54.8%	53.5%	+1.3%

Benchmarking Regulator of Social Housing 2023/24

At the end of last year, The Regulator issued the results from all landlords completing their TSM returns, and these results can be used to compare against the results from the Council's survey. Although there is a lag in this full data set and is comparing 2023/24 data instead of the more recent 2024/25 data it is worth noting the Council's result in the wider context and presenting this information for comparison next year to examine direction of travel.

Low Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA)

This chart compares the Council's results against all social landlords that submitted data based on LCRA.

	TP01 - Overall Sat	TP02 - Repairs Service	TP03 - Time Taken	TP04 - Well Maintained	TP05 - Safe	TP06 - Listens	TP07 - Informed	TP08 - Fairly	TP09 - Complaints	TP10 - Communal	TP11 - Neighbourhood	TP12 - ASB
City of Lincoln Council	68.2%	72.8%	66.3%	70.1%	74.8%	55.8%	70.6%	78.3%	43.9%	71.8%	65.3%	54.8%
Upper Quartile	79.5%	78.9%	75.8%	78.7%	84.6%	69.9%	79.1%	84.7%	43.4%	72.3%	73.2%	67.8%
Regulator Median	73.2%	73.3%	69.4%	72.7%	79.0%	63.3%	72.8%	79.4%	37.0%	66.8%	64.7%	61.0%
Lower Quartile	66.9%	67.7%	61.9%	66.6%	73.3%	56.2%	66.2%	74.1%	31.9%	60.4%	57.1%	54.6%
Quartile position	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	2	2	3

Satisfaction with complaint handling at the Council sits above the upper quartile figure, 0.5p.p above the upper quartile.

The chart shows that the Council compares well with two other measures falling between the regulator median and the upper quartile. These are for communal areas and neighbourhood contribution.

The remaining measures fall into the third quartile, including overall satisfaction which is only 5p.p away from the Regulator median. The listens and acts metric is the only satisfaction measure for Council that is below the lower quartile by 0.4p.p.

Local Authorities

The Council's results can also be benchmarked against other local authorities. The chart below shows the differences between the quartile positions of measures in 2024/25.

	TP01 - Overall Sat	TP02 - Repairs Service	TP03 - Time Taken - Repairs	TP04 - Well Maintained	TP05 - Safe Home	TP06 - Listens & Acts	TP07 - Keeps you informed	TP08 - Fairly & with respect	TP09 - Complaints Handling	TP10 - Communal Areas	TP11 - Neighbourhood	TP12 - ASB Handling
■ City of Lincoln Council	68.2%	72.8%	66.3%	70.1%	74.8%	55.8%	70.6%	78.3%	43.9%	71.8%	65.3%	54.8%
■ Upper Quartile	75.9%	77.7%	74.2%	75.0%	79.9%	63.7%	72.6%	78.6%	36.2%	69.9%	68.1%	60.5%
■ Regulator Median	68.2%	70.5%	66.1%	66.9%	73.5%	55.8%	67.0%	73.5%	29.1%	63.1%	59.5%	54.0%
■ Lower Quartile	61.6%	63.3%	59.0%	61.1%	68.1%	49.2%	60.2%	67.2%	24.7%	55.3%	51.9%	47.6%
Quartile position	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2

The Council compares very well against this group, with all measures above the Regulator median. Two measures, the handling of complaints (43.9%) and the upkeep of the communal areas (71.8%), are in the top quartile, with the remaining ten measures, including overall satisfaction, in the second quartile

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE   **11 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – OUTTURN 2024/25 **REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK** **LEAD OFFICER: LAURA SHIPLEY, FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER**

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1.   To present to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee (HSSC) the provisional 2024/25 financial outturn position on the Council's revenue and capital budgets, including:

- Housing Revenue Account
- Housing Repairs Service
- Capital Programmes

and to provide details of changes to the capital programmes.

1.2.   Financial Procedure Rules require members to receive, on a quarterly basis, a report prepared jointly by the Chief Finance Officer and Corporate Management Team commenting on financial performance to date. This report is designed to meet this requirement.

1.3.   It should be noted 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 Investment Programmes for the current financial year and sets out the provisional financial outturn position.

3.2.   During the last quarter of 2024/25, the position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing Repairs Service (HRS) has remained positive with budget surpluses/additional contributions to reserves achieved across the HRA at the end of the financial year.

3.3.   Despite this positive outturn position the Council continues to face cost pressures in future years, above those already factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The positive outturn in 2024/25 has been largely driven by reduced borrowing costs and investment income with interest rates continuing above the levels assumed within the MTFS. This will not be the case in 2025/26 with budgets adjusted to reflect the base rate forecast, and new

demand/activity/rent levels, as such strong financial discipline and delivery of the 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 Housing Revenue Account and Housing Repairs Service for the financial year 2024/25, based on the provisional outturn:

| Revenue Accounts | 2024/25 | | |
	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Housing Revenue Account – Contribution (to)/from balances	101	(52)	(153)
Housing Repairs Service – (surplus)/deficit	0	(113)	(113)*

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

| Capital Programmes | 2024/25 | | |
	Budget following Q3 Report £'000	Revised Outturn Budget £'000	Movement £'000
Housing Investment Programme	17,411	16,308	(1,104)

| Balances | 2024/25 | | |
	Budgeted Balance @ 31/03/25 £'000	Actual Balance @ 31/03/25 £'000	Movement £'000
Housing Revenue Account Balances	(1,030)	(1,183)	(153)

| Reserves | 2024/25 | | |
	Opening Balance @ 01/04/24 £'000	Actual Balance @ 31/03/25 £'000	Movement £'000
HRA Earmarked Reserves	(4,507)	(5,588)	(1,081)

3.5. The detailed financial position is shown in sections 4-7 and accompanying appendices.

4. Housing Revenue Account

4.1. For 2024/25 the Council's HRA net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution from balances of £101,220, resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the yearend of £1,030,024 (after allowing for the 2023/24 outturn position).

4.2.   The financial performance quarterly monitoring report for the 3rd quarter predicted an underspend of £714,390 (before additional transfers to earmarked reserves and carry forward requests). The provisional outturn for 2024/25 now indicates an overall budget underspend of £1,557,873 (before additional transfers to earmarked reserves and carry forward requests). Based on this position, additional transfers to earmarked reserves and carry forward requests totalling £1,404,580 have been proposed resulting in an overall budget underspend of £153,293. This would result in HRA balances as at 31st March 2025 of £1,183,317. A summary if the HRA can be found at Appendix A.

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
Increased Investment Interest & Reduced Borrowing Costs	(334)
Additional Rental Income	(228)
Staff Vacancy Savings	(218)
Increase Admin Overhead Recharges to Capital on External Contracts	(162)
Reduced Repairs Programme Costs	(112)
Less:	
Net additional contributions to Earmarked Reserves	600
Increased contribution to Bad Debt Provision	238
Additional contribution to the Major Repairs Reserve	386
National Pay Award Settlement	119
HRS Recharges:	
Housing Repairs Service Overall Surplus Repatriation	(113)
HRS Repairs – Increased Responsive jobs	498
HRS Repairs – Reduced level of Voids, Aids & Adaptations and Cleansing jobs	(846)
Net Other Variances	19
Overall deficit/(surplus)	**(153)**

4.4.   Some of the key variances have arisen as a result of external variables, e.g. economic factors, service demands etc, which differ from the budgeted assumptions. However, in addition, the HRA and HRS continue to experience a number of other variances due to demand pressures and continued recruitment and retention challenges. These main variances, both positive and negative, cover:

- Pay settlement inflation pressure - the impact of the nationally agreed pay award is in excess of the assumptions included within the MTFS. The 2024/25 pay award, agreed by the National Employers for Local Government Services, provided either a flat rate increase of £1,290 (prorate) or a 2.5% increase to all staff dependant on pay spinal point, equivalent to a 5.7% increase for the lowest paid members of staff.

- Borrowing costs – as a result of a delay in the anticipated reduction of the Bank of England Base Rate, which has only dropped marginally from 4.75% to 4.5% at quarter four, the Council have benefitted from reduced borrowing costs due to the continued strategy to review the reprofiling of loans and maintain adequate resource to reduce the level of budgeted borrowing while interest rates are still high.

- Investment income – in addition to savings on interest payable, the ongoing high base rate has increased the level of interest earnt on the Council's cash balances over and above the levels anticipated within the MTFS.

- Rental income – income levels are higher than anticipated due to a higher than budgeted opening Housing stock at the start of the financial year.

- Bad Debt Provision – an increase in tenant arrears in year, as a result of resource issues within the recovery team, has increased the level of provision required for doubtful debts.

- Repairs Programme costs – a change in the nature of works on the Council's housing stock in year has resulted in an increase in works eligible to be funded through the capital investment programme. In addition, an increase in the eligible admin recharge to capital has arisen from the increase in the investment programme contracts.

- HRS Repairs – while there has been a net reduction in repairs recharges from the HRS to the HRA, there has been a switch in the nature of HRS rechargeable works anticipated this year with a significant increase in demand for responsive repairs, wholly offset by a reduction in the level of voids repairs, aids and adapts and cleansing works.

4.5. Included within these variances is the HRS outturn position which was a surplus of £113k. This surplus is consequentially repatriated to the HRA, as a result of the information set out in Section 5 below.

4.6. The potential impact beyond 2024/25 of these changes in key variables has been assessed and has in some cases has required future years budgets to be reset as part of the refreshed MTFS 2025-2030. The additional staff costs arising as a result of the pay award are unavoidable and have required an ongoing increase in future pay budgets. In relation to housing repairs, the Housing Directorate Management Team continue work on the individual repairs service areas, i.e. Aids & Adaptations, Voids, Responsive Repairs etc, in order to review and manage demand and cost drivers. Work also continues within the HRA and 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.

4.7. **HRA Earmarked Reserves**

4.8. **Carry Forward Requests**

Financial Procedure Rules state that Assistant Directors are able to carry forward any budget provision not utilised during the financial year, to be used for the same purpose, in future years subject to the HRA as a whole not being overspent. The provisional outturn of a £199,090 budget underspend includes a number of carry forward requests, in addition to those transfers to/from earmarked reserves already approved and budgeted for, as follows totalling £418,310:

Reason for Carry Forward Request	Amount £
HRA Electrical Testing – in year underspend contributed to reserves to manage the cyclical nature of works in future years.	202,230
Smoke Alarm/CO2 Detector Testing – in year underspend contributed to reserves to manage the cyclical nature of works in future years.	132,810
HRA Training – in year underspend contributed to reserves to fund compulsory competence framework training next financial year	17,960
Tenant Satisfaction Survey – retain unspent grant income to fund ongoing costs in relation to tenant satisfaction measures.	18,290
HRS Social Value – transfer of contractor SV contributions to support future initiatives.	47,020
Total Carry Forward Requests:	**418,310**

These carry forward requests are included in the forecast outturn position.

4.9. **Transfers to Reserves**

In addition to the above carry forward requests, a number of requests for additional transfers to reserves have been made, whereby the HRA have requested a transfer to a new, or existing, reserve from underspent budgets, to be used for alternative purposes or to mitigate risks in future years, subject to the HRA as a whole not being overspent. Based on the provisional outturn position for 2024/25, all of request(s) are shown below totalling £986,270:

Reason for Reserve Transfer	Amount £
Housing Business Plan – as part of the HRA 30 year BP a commitment was made to review the high rise provision and, where necessary, fund remediation requirements.	200,000
Regulator of Social Housing – service improvement acceleration in line with Core Service Improvements (specifically Tenancy Services) as required by 30 Year BP.	200,000

Invest to Save – to provide further resources for future invest to save opportunities.	100,000
HRA Training – to support future compulsory competence framework training requirements.	100,000
Major Repairs Reserve – to provide direct revenue financing of costs associated with the Council's Radon response.	200,000
Major Repairs Reserve – to provide direct revenue financing of additional HITREP project costs.	186,270
Total Transfer to Reserves Requests:	**986,270**

These additional reserve contributions are included in the forecast outturn position.

4.10. Following contributions to earmarked reserves the underspend of £153,293 would result in HRA general balance of £1,118,317 as at 31st March 2025, remaining within prudent levels.

4.11. The level of each of the current earmarked reserves, as at 31st March 2025 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. 4.8 and 4.9 above.

5. Housing Repairs Service

5.1. For 2024/25 the Council's HRS net revenue budget was set at zero, reflecting its full cost recovery nature.

5.2. The outturn for 2024/25 shows the HRS had a surplus of £112,647 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	840
Income shortfall as a result of a lower level of voids, aids & adapts and cleansing jobs	307
Increased skip hire costs	137
National Pay Award settlement	47
Less:	
Income surplus as a result of increase in responsive repairs, quoted jobs & other works	(666)
Staff vacancies due to recruitment and retention challenges	(409)
Decrease in material costs	(217)
Decrease in central support charges from the General Fund and HRA	(134)

Net other variances	(18)
Overall deficit/(surplus)	**(113)**

5.3.   While overall the HRS has achieved a positive year-end position, with an overall budget underspend, there are still a number of significant income and expenditure variances. These main variances, both positive and negative, cover:

- Whilst the position is improving, the HRS is still being impacted by recruitment challenges, with continued difficulties in attracting and retaining staff resulting 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.

- Additionally, the HRS are seeing increased levels of work in relation to regulatory compliance, such as damp and mould remediation and installation of fire doors, this is increasingly affecting the capacity to carry out routine works, further compounding the reliance on sub-contractors.

- As the increased subcontractor costs are not reflected in the service hourly rate an overhead recovery is not recouped on sub-contractors this results in an under recovery of full costs from the HRA. However, due to the change in nature of works this year and the increase in responsive repairs, which are predominantly performed by our own labour force, the HRS has seen an increase in income which does attract the overhead recovery rate.

- The outturn position also includes the impact of the national pay award settlement, which is in excess of the assumptions included within the MTFS as outlined in the HRA variances.

5.4.   While the outturn position for the HRS is a budget underspend this year, ongoing there still remains uncertainty in terms of service demands, due to increasing workloads linked to regulatory compliance works. The HRS are currently reviewing options to deliver these increased demands whilst avoiding the need to engage in premium sub-contractors, as such it is essential that the tight controls are maintained, whilst this exercise is ongoing, to mitigate against a deterioration in financial performance in 2025/26.

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 Housing Repairs, HRA Strategic Priorities, HRA Invest to Save, HRA IT 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 2025 are attached in Appendix E, with further details in the MTFS 2025-2030. In summary:

Earmarked Reserves	Opening Balance 01/04/24 £'000	Increase £'000	Decrease £'000	Closing Balance 31/03/25 £'000
Housing Revenue Account	4,507	1,436	(355)	5,588

7. Capital Programme

7.1. Housing Investment Programme

7.2. The revised Housing Investment Programme for 2024/25 amounted to £17.615m following the Quarter 3 position. At quarter 4 the programme has been decreased by £1.308m to £16.308m, as shown below:

Housing Investment Programme	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
Revised Budget at Q3	17,411	19,600	15,216	13,736	12,095
Budget changes for approval – Quarter 4	(1,104)	1,928	90	110	0
Revised Budget	**16,308**	**21,528**	**15,306**	**13,847**	**12,095**

7.3. New schemes, over an approved limit, are subject to Executive approval, during quarter 4 the following schemes were subject to separate Executive approval:

Changes requiring Executive approval	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
Jasmin Green (Executive 24/03/25)	0	550	0	0	0
Total changes requiring Executive Approval	**0**	**550**	**0**	**0**	**0**

7.4. New schemes, over an approved limit, are subject to Executive approval, the following new schemes require Executive approval:

Changes requiring Executive approval	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
Radon Remediation – set aside of surplus revenue funds for future requirements (funded from DRF)	0	200	0	0	0
Total new schemes requiring Executive Approval	**0**	**200**	**0**	**0**	**0**

7.5. Changes to current schemes, over an approved limit, are subject to Executive approval. There have been the following changes to current schemes in quarter 4 requiring Executive approval are as follows:

Changes requiring Executive approval:	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
Budget Under/Overspends returned to available resources (major repairs reserves)					
Kitchen Improvements	(154)	0	0	0	0
Replacement Door Entry Systems	(208)	0	0	0	0
Increased budget allocations					
DH Central Heating Upgrades (funded from major repairs reserve)	65	212	0	0	0
Property Acquisitions	204	0	0	0	0
Lincoln Standard Windows Replacement (funded from major repairs reserve)	476	0	0	0	0
Housing Support Services Computer Fund (funded from DRF)	0	96	90	0	0
Total changes requiring Executive Approval	**383**	**309**	**90**	**0**	0

7.6.   The Chief Finance Officer has delegated authority to approve financial changes up to an approved limit, or to reprofile the budget, as set out under Financial Procedure Rules. The following changes and reprofiles were approved during Quarter 4:

Changes approved by the Chief Finance Officer:	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
Reprofiled Budgets to other years					
Environmental Works	(110)	0	0	110	0
Victory Hotel Site	250	(250)	0	0	0
Jasmin Green	(50)	50	0	0	0
Housing Support Services Computer Fund	(17)	17	0	0	0
Charterholme	(486)	486	0	0	0
Property Acquisitions	(567)	567	0	0	0
Budget Under/Overspends returned to available resources (major repairs reserve and DRF)					
Bathrooms & WC's	13	0	0	0	0
Thermal Comfort Works	(8)	0	0	0	0
Rewiring	(11)	0	0	0	0
Re-roofing	29	0	0	0	0
Structural Defects	(62)	0	0	0	0
New Services	(20)	0	0	0	0
Door replacement	(12)	0	0	0	0
Aids & Adaptions	(3)	0	0	0	0

Over bath showers	(36)	0	0	0	0
Communal TV Aerials	(2)	0	0	0	0
Fire Doors	(47)	0	0	0	0
Fire Alarms	1	0	0	0	0
Landscaping & Boundaries	1	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Removals	(23)	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Surveys	(46)	0	0	0	0
Communal Electrics	(13)	0	0	0	0
Garages	(8)	0	0	0	0
Void Capitalised Works	(88)	0	0	0	0
Fire Compartment Works	(47)	0	0	0	0
Thurby Crescent	(7)	0	0	0	0
Budget Under/Overspends returned to available resources (Capital Receipts)					
Charterholme	(79)	0	0	0	0
New Build Capital Salaries	(31)	0	0	0	0
Property Acquisitions	(11)	0	0	0	0
Total Changes Approved by the CFO	**(1,486)**	**870**	**0**	**110**	**0**

Total HIP Delegated Approvals and Approvals by/for Executive	**(1,104)**	**1,728**	**90**	**110**	**0**

7.7.   The table below provides a summary of the projected outturn position for the Housing Investment Programme:

Housing Investment Programme – Outturn	2024/25			
	Budget **Q3** **£'000**	**Revised Budget Q4** **£'000**	**Outturn** **£'000**	**Variance to Q3 Budget** **£'000**
Decent Homes / Lincoln Standard	9,153	9,247	9,247	93
Health and Safety	580	304	304	(276)
Contingent Major Repairs / Works	0	0	0	0
New Build Programme	6,515	5,751	5,751	(764)
Other Schemes	856	715	715	(140)
Computer Fund / IT Schemes	306	290	290	(17)
Total Capital Programme	**17,411**	**16,308**	**16,308**	**(1,104)**

7.8. The overall expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme for the final quarter of 2024/25 was £16.508m, which is 93.66% 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 2030 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 maintain a balanced budget position in 2024/25 in order that it can continue to deliver services in support of Vision 2030.

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. Based on the provisional outturn position on income and expenditure, the HRA has maintained a balanced budget position in the current financial year.

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 is £1m-£1.5m on the HRA. Based on the provisional outturn the level of balances as at 31st March 2025 will be maintained within, or in excess of, these ranges.

Although this report sets out positive outturn positions for the HRA, this does not mean that the financial issues for the Council are resolved. Beyond 2024/25 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. 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 2025-2030.

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 2025-30.

11.   Recommendations

HSSC are recommended to:

11.1.   Note the provisional 2024/25 financial outturn for the Housing Revenue Account, Housing Repairs Service and Capital Programmes as set out in sections 3 – 7.

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 2024-2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-2030
Lead Officer:	Laura Shipley, Financial Services Manager Laura.shipley@lincoln.gov.uk

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FUND SUMMARY – OUTTURN 2024/25

	Ref	Revised Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Gross Rental Income	A	(35,220)	(35,425)	(205)
Charges for Services & Facilities	B	(658)	(699)	(41)
Contribution towards Expenditure	C	(50)	(9)	41
Repairs Account – Income	D1	(68)	(166)	(98)
Supervision & Management – General	D2	(808)	(946)	(138)
Supervision & Management – Special	D3	(75)	(149)	(74)
Repairs & Maintenance	E	11,712	11,157	(555)
Supervision & Management – General	F1	7,627	7,779	173
Supervision & Management – Special	F2	1,897	2,008	111
Rents, Rates and Other Premises	G	861	826	(35)
Increase in Bad Debt Provisions	H	251	488	237
Insurance Claims Contingency	I	439	412	(27)
Contingencies	J	348	0	(348)
Depreciation	K	8,198	8,307	109
Impairments	L	0	0	0
Debt Management Expenses	M	16	9	(7)
HRS Trading (Surplus) / Deficit	N	0	(113)	(113)
Net Cost of Service	O	**(5,530)**	**(6,499)**	**(970)**
Loan Charges Interest	P	2,331	2,244	(87)
Investment/Mortgage Interest	Q	(427)	(674)	(247)
Net Operating Inc/Exp	R	**(3,626)**	**(4,930)**	**(1,304)**
Major Repairs Reserve Adjustment	T	3,423	3,809	386
Transfers to/from reserves	U	304	1,069	765
(Surplus)/Deficit in Year	V	**101**	**(52)**	**(153)**

Housing Revenue Account Variances – Outturn 2024/25

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
	Increased Expenditure		
U	Transfers To/(From) Reserves	600,000	Net transfer to reserves (as outlined in paragraph 4.9 and Appendix G).
E	Repairs & Maintenance - HRS	498,080	Increased HRS expenditure on Responsive Repairs (£498k), offset by underspend above (net underspend £348k)
T	Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	386,270	Increased revenue contribution to Major Repairs Reserve to provide direct revenue financing of additional HITREP project costs & Radon remediation works.
H	Bad Debt Provision	237,520	Increase in tenant arrears as a result of reduced resources within the Recovery Team.
F1	Pay Award Impact	119,390	Impact of National Employers pay award settlement in excess of budgeted assumptions.
K	Depreciation	108,660	Increase in depreciation costs following revaluation of housing stock, offset by Major Repairs Reserve.
F1	Membership Fees	57,540	Membership Fee increases on Housing Ombudsman and additional Regulator of Social Housing annual subscription costs.
E	HRS Skips	49,200	Increased skip charge from HRS.
F1	Fly Tipping	46,160	Caretakers fly tipping cost increase.
F1	Grounds Maintenance	43,730	Net increase of Grounds Maintenance expenditure.
E	Asbestos Surveys & Removal	40,090	Reactive asbestos removal & survey costs
F1	Agency	39,170	Cost of agency staff to cover staff vacancies within Supervision & Management, offset by Vacancy savings above.
E	Gas Servicing of Central Heating	37,640	Gas Servicing of Central Heating increase in market prices and addition of relet costs.
F1	Tenancy Services	37,520	Increase in Postage and IT costs.

Ref		£	Reason for variance
F1	Supervision & Management	36,910	Increased expenditure primarily due to additional Housing IT costs.

Reduced Income

C	Court Costs	40,910	Reduction in recovered income from court costs as less cases in year than anticipated.

Reduced Expenditure

E	Repairs & Maintenance – HRS	(846,060)	Reduced HRS expenditure on Voids (£768k), Aids and Adapts (£77k) and Cleansing (£1k), wholly offsetting the increase on Responsive Repairs costs below (net underspend £348k).
F	Employee Costs	(376,404)	Reduced expenditure on employee costs due to staff vacancies, offset by agency costs below (excl. Pay Award below).
T	Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	(108,660)	Reduced contribution to Major Repairs Reserve to offset the increase in depreciation costs following revaluations of properties in year.
P	Loan Charges Interest	(86,870)	Reprofiling of loans and adequate resources resulting in reduction in planned borrowing costs.
E	Gas Maintenance	(68,530)	Reduced expenditure due to a change in nature between capital and revenue costs with more costs being eligible to be capitalised.
E	Fire Risk Surveys	(43,810)	New contractor to be engaged – unable to procure in 24/25 due to timing delays

Increased Income

Q	Investment Interest	(247,360)	Increased investment income as a result of higher interest rates.
D2	Supervision & Management: General	(162,110)	Increase in admin overhead recharges to capital on external contracts.
A	Gross Rental Income	(176,780)	Additional rental income as a result of higher than budgeted opening housing stock levels.
N	HRS Surplus/Deficit	(112,650)	HRS surplus position (refer to further detail in Section 5 and Appendix F).
B	Non Dwelling Rents	(50,880)	Reduction in void loss garage rental income

HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE SUMMARY – OUTTURN 2024/25

	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Employees	4,107	3,745	(362)
Premises	193	161	(32)
Transport	440	231	(208)
Materials	1,561	1,344	(217)
Sub-Contractors	2,635	3,475	840
Supplies & Services	323	496	173
Central Support Charges	707	573	(134)
Capital Charges	0	185	185
Total Expenditure	**9,965**	**10,211**	**246**
Income	(9,965)	(10,324)	(359)
(Surplus)/Deficit	**0**	**(113)**	**(113)**

Housing Repairs Service Variances – Outturn 2024/25

Figures in brackets indicate an underspend of expenditure or additional income.

	£	Reason for Variance
Increased Expenditure		
Sub-Contractors	840,426	Increased use of sub-contractors to meet void turnaround targets, new work streams and impact of Hermit Street properties becoming available.
Skip Hire	136,955	Increased usage of skips.
Employee Costs	46,570	Impact of the National Employers pay settlement, in excess of budget assumptions.
Reduced Income		
Voids, Aids & Adapts and Cleansing Works Income	306,826	Reduced income as a result of sub-contractor costs on overhead recovery and old SOR rates used for billing (pending update). Voids works at £201k, Aids & Adapts £87k and Cleansing works at £18k.
Reduced Expenditure		
Employee Costs	(408,412)	Vacancies within the Operative staff.
Premises	(31,603)	Reduction in utility forecasts due to delay in depot being in use.
Central Support Costs	(133,868)	Reduction in Corporate Support Service charges to the HRS due to savings within the General Fund and HRA.
Direct Materials	(217,408)	Reduction in material spend due to vacancies within the operatives.
Increased Income		
Response Repairs, Quoted Jobs & Other Income	(666,507)	Higher level of responsive work carried out by HRS Operatives, as a result of a switch in the nature of HRS works between voids and responsive repairs, generating increased income through the internal over-head recovery rate.

EARMARKED RESERVES – OUTTURN 2024/25

	Revised Opening Balance	In Year Increase	In Year Decrease	Closing Balance
	01/04/2024 £'000	£'000	£'000	31/03/2025 £'000
HRA				
Capital Fees Equalisation	110	-	-	110
Cyclical Smoke Alarm/CO2 Detector Testing	0	133	-	133
De Wint Court	73	-	-	73
De Wint Court Sinking Fund	113	74	-	187
Disrepairs Management	287	-	(31)	256
Housing Business Plan	842	200	(153)	889
Housing Repairs Service	76	-	(69)	7
HRA Electrical Testing	0	202	-	202
HRA IT	170	335	-	505
HRA Repairs Account	1,352	-	(55)	1,297
HRA Training	0	118	-	118
Housing Strategic Priority	764	-	-	764
HRS Social Value	111	47	-	158
Invest to Save (HRA)	375	100	(21)	454
NSAP/RSAP Sinking Fund	18	9	-	27
Regulator of Social Housing	180	200	(15)	365
Strategic Growth Reserve	5	-	-	5
Tenant Satisfaction Survey	31	18	(11)	38
Total Earmarked Reserves	**4,507**	**1,436**	**(355)**	**5,588**

<u>CAPITAL RESOURCES – OUTTURN 2024/25</u>

	Opening balance 01/04/24	Contributions	Used in financing	Closing balance 31/03/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Grants/Contributions HRA	275	1,155	(1,155)	275
Capital receipts HRA	2,560	968	(294)	3,234
Capital receipts 1-4-1	3,780	1,666	(510)	4,935
Major Repairs Reserve	14,180	8,457	(9,240)	13,397
HRA DRF	9,555	3,809	(3,802)	9,562
Total Capital Resources	**30,350**	**16,055**	**(15,002)**	**31,403**

Currently the HIP has schemes planned to facilitate use of all 1:4:1 receipts with no repayment required in 24/25.

Housing Investment Programme – Summary of Expenditure as at 31st March 2025

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	Budget 2024/25 - Reported at Q3	Q4 Budget Increase / Decrease	Q4 Budget Reprofile	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 Total Spend	Variance to Q3 Approved Budget	2024/25 % Spend to Q3 Revised Budget
Contingency Schemes							
Contingency Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Contingency Schemes Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.00%**
Decent Homes							
Bathrooms & WC's	500,000	12,784	0	512,784	512,784	12,784	102.56%
DH Central Heating Upgrades	2,016,960	64,626	0	2,081,586	2,081,586	64,626	103.20%
Door Replacement	834,000	(12,114)	0	821,886	821,886	(12,114)	98.55%
Fire Compartment works	50,000	(47,191)	0	2,809	2,809	(47,191)	5.62%
Fire Doors	200,000	(47,319)	0	152,681	152,681	(47,319)	76.34%
Kitchen Improvements	1,680,000	(154,003)	0	1,525,997	1,525,997	(154,003)	90.83%
Lincoln Standard Windows Replacement	1,183,000	475,824	0	1,658,824	1,658,824	475,824	140.22%
New services	75,000	(19,570)	0	55,430	55,430	(19,570)	73.91%
Re-roofing	100,000	28,976	0	128,976	128,976	28,976	128.98%
Rewiring	20,000	(10,919)	0	9,081	9,081	(10,919)	45.41%
Structural Defects	100,000	(61,596)	0	38,404	38,404	(61,596)	38.40%
Thermal Comfort Works	8,000	(8,000)	0	0	0	(8,000)	0.00%
Aids & Adaptations	50,000	(3,121)	0	46,879	46,879	(3,121)	93.76%
Void Capitalised Works	2,300,000	(88,444)	0	2,211,556	2,211,556	(88,444)	96.15%
Decent Homes Total	**9,116,959**	**129,933**	**0**	**9,246,892**	**9,246,892**	**129,933**	**101.43%**
Health and Safety							
Asbestos Removal	198,702	(22,588)	0	176,114	176,114	(22,588)	88.63%
Asbestos Surveys	133,763	(45,707)	0	88,057	88,057	(45,707)	65.83%

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	Budget 2024/25 - Reported at Q3	Q4 Budget Increase / Decrease	Q4 Budget Reprofile	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 Total Spend	Variance to Q3 Approved Budget	2024/25 % Spend to Q3 Revised Budget
Fire Alarms	9,062	453	0	9,515	9,515	453	105.00%
Renew stair structure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Replacement Door Entry Systems	238,846	(208,287)	0	30,560	30,560	(208,287)	12.79%
Health and Safety Total	**580,373**	**(276,128)**	**0**	**304,245**	**304,245**	**(276,128)**	**52.42%**
IT/Infrastructure							
Housing Support Services Computer Fund	306,441	0	(16,625)	289,816	289,816	(16,625)	94.57%
IT/Infrastructure Total	**306,441**	**0**	**(16,625)**	**289,816**	**289,816**	**(16,625)**	**94.57%**
Lincoln Standard							
Over bath showers (10 year programme)	36,450	(36,450)	0	0	0	(36,450)	0.00%
Lincoln Standard Total	**36,450**	**(36,450)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(36,450)**	**0.00%**
Other Current Developments							
Communal Electrics	152,000	(13,423)	0	138,577	138,577	(13,423)	91.17%
Communal TV Aerials	13,000	(2,086)	0	10,914	10,914	(2,086)	83.95%
Environmental works	300,000	0	(110,494)	189,506	189,506	(110,494)	63.17%
Garages	60,000	(8,160)	0	51,840	51,840	(8,160)	86.40%
Hiab and Mule	130,689	0	0	130,689	130,689	0	100.00%
HRA Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Landscaping & Boundaries	200,000	518	0	200,518	200,518	518	100.26%
Thurlby Crescent	0	(6,615)	0	(6,615)	(6,615)	(6,615)	0.00%
Other Current Developments Total	**855,689**	**(29,766)**	**(110,494)**	**715,429**	**715,429**	**(140,260)**	**83.61%**
HOUSING INVESTMENT TOTAL	**10,895,912**	**(212,411)**	**(110,494)**	**10,556,382**	**10,556,382**	**(322,905)**	**96.88%**

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	Budget 2024/25 - Reported at Q3	Q4 Budget Increase / Decrease	Q4 Budget Reprofile	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 Total Spend	Variance to Q3 Approved Budget	2024/25 % Spend to Q3 Revised Budget
HOUSING STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT							
New Build Programme							
Property Acquisitions	2,731,717	202,450	(566,629)	2,367,539	2,367,539	(364,179)	86.67%
Ermine Church Land	349,893	(9,736)	0	340,157	340,157	(9,736)	97.22%
New Build Capital Salaries	46,953	(30,683)	0	16,270	16,270	(30,683)	34.65%
Jasmin Green	50,000	0	(50,000)	0	0	(50,000)	0.00%
Victory Hotel Site Boultham Park Road	0	0	250,169	250,169	250,169	250,169	0.00%
Hermit Street	1,995,857	5,802	0	2,001,659	2,001,659	5,802	100.29%
Charterholme	1,340,941	(79,000)	(486,484)	775,457	775,457	(565,484)	57.83%
New Build Programme Total	**6,515,361**	**88,834**	**(852,945)**	**5,751,250**	**5,751,250**	**(764,111)**	**88.27%**
HOUSING STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT TOTAL	**6,515,361**	**88,834**	**(852,945)**	**5,751,250**	**5,751,250**	**(764,111)**	**88.27%**
TOTAL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	**17,411,273**	**(123,577)**	**(980,063)**	**16,307,632**	**16,307,632**	**(1,103,641)**	**93.66%**

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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE   **11 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 4 – 2024/25**
DIRECTORATE:	**HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**BUSINESS MANAGER - POLICY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT**

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 2024/25 (January – March).

2.   **Lincoln Tenants' Panel Consultation**

2.1   LTP have been consulted about this report and comments noted.

3.   **Summary**

3.1   At the end of quarter 4 2024/25 of the 47 quarterly performance measures reported during the quarter (48 are reported which includes the customer services measure CS3 - Average time taken to answer a call to Customer Services)

- 3 measures were Red (below lower target boundary)
- 2 measures were amber (within target but perf has reduced)
- 19 measures were Green (meeting or exceeding the higher target)
- 23 measures were recorded as volumetric
- 0 measures were recorded as data not being available for this quarter

3.2   From the measures detailed above, 5 of those,3 red measures deteriorating (HV1/2/3) and 1 amber deteriorating (HM1b)

Out of the performance measures monitored, 19 were within or exceeding the targets set.

Background

3.3   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.

3.4   This report provides an overview of the Council's performance against indicators monitored by the Directorate of Housing and Investment (DHI), and covers those measures related to the Council's responsibility as a landlord.

3.5   An overview and direction of travel of performance is attached as '**Appendix A**' to this report.

4. **Performance Measure Outturns – Quarter 4 (with yearly outturn)**

4.1 **Housing Repairs Service**

HM1B - Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time (urgent 3-day repairs only). There has been a slight reduction in performance for this measure with of 93.22% of repairs competed on time against a target of 97.5%, it is understood that staffing pressures within the team is likely to have had an impact through a combination of long term sickness and some operatives working on restricted duties.

The number of repairs completed this year is 5,980 with an overall performance outturn of 95.85%.

The average time taken complete urgent Repairs (3 days) remains within target for quarter 4 at 2.19 days with overall outturn of 2.06 days.

4.2 34 (HM2) Percentage of repairs fixed first time (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS) has seen further improvements in Q4 delivering above both the high target for the quarter, 98.29% and the year to date at 97.79%

Operatives have received their new impress stocks this quarter and the service area have implemented the stock management system to ensure this is kept up to date to further aid the team's abilities to complete repairs first time.

4.3 37 (HM2) Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only. In Q4 this measure has overachieved at 97.73%, the yearly outturn is 98.78%. To give some context the number of appointments this year is 10,581.

The service area has proactively re-allocated appointments due to operative availability, which has been impacted particularly within the repairs team, due to the staffing pressures outlined in section 4.1.

Recent recruitment is expected to support this area to continue to reduce failed appointments.

4.4 34 (HM2) Percentage of all priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day) (Aaron Services) remains at 100%.

4.5 HSSC7 Average time taken to complete damp and mould repairs (days), against a target of 20 days, this measure is overachieving with quarter 4 being at 4.77 days with overall outturn of 4,87. The teams are experiencing a slight increase due to stock condition surveys which highlighted previously unreported damp and mould. However, the team is now in place with new processes and is working well.

5. **Investment, and Building and Fire Safety Assurance**

5.1 50 (HI1) The percentage of council properties that are not at the 'Decent Homes' standard (excluding refusals). This measure has overachieved at 0.26% against a target of 1%. The number equates to 20 (excluding refusals)

Overall levels have fallen despite additional failure being identified from stock condition surveys undertaken in the final quarter of 2024-25. Progress has also been made gaining access for electrical testing.

There are now a total of 20 failures (including 2 properties failing 2 criteria) due to

- 9 electrics
- 9 doors
- 1 windows
- 2 Chimneys
- 1 roof

5.2 As a volumetric figure the percentage of properties at SAP rating C or above (HSSC4) is 94.87% . This is a slight increase in the number of properties reaching band c or above, following the delivery of planned improvement works during the course of the year.

5.3 The fire safety suite of measures are all exceeding their targets.

6.   Voids

6.1 69 (HV1) – Percentage of rent lost through dwelling being vacant - Rent lost through vacant dwellings has increased on the previous quarter, due in part to some of the service challenges experienced in the re-letting process, 120 voids were held in the process during this quarter, all impacting rent loss. The number of properties entering the void process does not show any signs of slowing down with an estimated 47 sets of keys expected in by the end of April. It is worth noting that properties awaiting decisions on disposal orders remain within this outturn figure which are out of control of the void team.

6.2 The team have been working hard and have successfully relet 116 properties during this quarter with a low refusal rate. This demonstrates that the standard of properties is good and that combined with the housing allocations teams focus on matching properties with suitable tenants, a positive outcome in terms of relet is being seen.

6.3 61 (HV3) The average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (including major works) for quarter 4 is 58.78 with overall outturn at 52.53 days. It is worth noting that February and March 2025 have seen the highest number of void properties in the system since July 2022 and this is impacting capacity within the repair team. A significant number of void properties are still requiring cleansing prior to repairs being undertaken further which does have an impact on the overall timeframes.

There were a number of longer-term voids over 100 days signed up over this period that impact this average, whilst the Housing Repair Service try to limit the amount of properties going to subcontractors due to contractual cost increases, inevitably this is going to further increase void timeframes. In addition, the amount of time taken to relet properties between tenants is complex and strongly influenced by external factors.

6.4   The Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (minor works) at quarter 4 was at 48.88 days with an overall outturn of 45.71 days. This is against a target of 36 days. The number of relets completed this year is 274.

Whilst this is under achieving it is worth noting that those that are logged as minor works, on when investigated by the team, can on occasion flag up unexpected major works which does impact on performance. It is worth noting that these are only general needs voids and that there are a further 50 non-general needs which also need addressing that all serviced by the same team.

6.5   The housing repair service are seeing an increase in repair timeframes. However, the service is trying to limit the amount of properties going to subcontractors due to contractual cost increases and the impact this has on budgets. Inevitably this is going to further increase void timeframes as these properties move through the system and more being undertaken by the inhouse team.

7.   Rents

7.1   125B (RC1) Rent collected as a proportion of rent owed has exceeded its target for quarter 4 and yearly outturn 99.07% and (98.74%) respectively.

The amount of rent collected amounting to £35,794,800.23. The team have adapted well to the pilot structure of having specialist teams and have performed above target & in line with upper quartile benchmarking. The specialist team proactively contact tenants having difficulty paying their rent & supporting them with appropriate referrals to services to help with maximising income & dealing with debt.

7.2   126 (RC2) Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit is within target of 4% with a figure of 3.38%, with rent arrears of £1,208,448.74.

The team have kept areas below the target for three quarters this year. The rise in the percentage of arrears against the debit in Q2 coincided with the initial creation of the specialist teams and was only temporary while they adjusted to new ways of working which has now taken affect following those changes.

8.   Antisocial Behaviour

8.1   89 - Percentage of ASB cases closed that were resolved for quarter 4 were 97.70% with an overall outturn of 98.68% against a target of 94%. The team closed 682 ASB cases this year.

90 - Average days to resolve ASB cases for quarter 4 has risen to 71.15 days however the overall outturn is 58.01 days. The team have adapted well to the pilot structure of having specialist teams however there are several external factors which have impacted on the increase in cases:

-    Associated legal action with any of the cases leaves us at the behest of the courts timetables and decisions and can add delays to resolution. All housing providers will face the same challenges around court availability.

- Legal cases are now included within the statistics e.g. drug dealing which has also impacted the length of time to resolve ASB cases.

8.2 A breakdown of those ASB measures HSSC3 (A – Q) are detailed in Appendix A and are all volumetric measures.

10. Allocations

10.1 85A - The percentage of offers accepted first time – this is a volumetric measure but against a target of 85% and quarter 4 figure of 93.97% and overall outturn figure of 89.87%, the continued work the team are doing to ensure the property being offered is suitable is working.

10.2 HS1 - Number of people currently on the housing list is a volumetric measure and is currently at 2,227.

11. Strategy

11.1 HSSC8 – Number of new properties delivered. In quarter 4 a further 4 properties were delivered bringing the yearly outturn figure to 24. This included 11 newbuild homes and 13 homes acquired as part of the established purchase and repair scheme. A further 9 newbuild homes at Boultham Park Road are expected to be delivered to the stock in May 2025.

11.2 HSSC9 -The Number of 'Right to Buy' transactions is a volumetric measure and at quarter 4 the number of transactions is 10, giving an outturn figure of 34. For context is should be noted that in October 2024 Government introduced a series of measures intended to reduce the rate at which social housing units are lost through Right to Buy (RTB). These included reductions in the maximum cash discounts available, resulting in a temporary surge in RTB applications prior to the changes taking effect. The overall number of homes lost through RTB in 2024/25 remained the same as the previous year and is expected to fall over the next 1 – 2 years as pending RTB transactions under the old regime complete and applications stabilise.

11.3 The Number of council properties currently stands at 7,785.

The net effect of acquisitions, newbuilds and RTB transactions has resulted in a small net loss in stock to the end of Q4. It is expected that the medium to long term impact of Government's RTB changes will reduce the number of council homes being lost in future years, allowing for acquisitions and newbuild schemes to begin to deliver an overall increase in stock numbers.

12. Complaints

12.1 In April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (The Code), became statutory for all social housing providers. The Council's policy was updated to ensure compliance with the Code and, as it represents best practice in dealing with customer complaints, the principles of the Code were adopted as a corporate policy across all directorates.

12.2   There are a number of elements in The Code which are designed to ensure that our complaint handling performance is both effective and transparent. The HOS has a statutory duty to monitor compliance with the Code and they have powers to issue Complaint Handling Failure Orders where they find that performance is not conforming with The Code.

12.3   The Code requires an annual self-assessment where each of the 78 elements of the Code is considered and certified as either "Complied with" or "Not Complied".

12.4   The self-assessment shows that there is a high level of compliance with The Code. The 2024/25 self-assessment has been published on the council's website.

13.   Lessons Learned

13.1   When an individual complaint is investigated and responded to, the responding manager or team-leader is required to complete a Complaint Outcome Report. The Complaint Outcome Report asks for details about the response and the decision to uphold the complaint or otherwise. Where there is learning as a result of the complaint this is outlined on the report and details of changes to policies, processes, or information is described and recorded. As part of the complaint process, as set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy a random sample of complaints are scrutinised to check the quality of the response and the outcome. Outcomes outlined in the response letters are examined to ensure that they were carried out and any promises complied with. Learning points are also recorded, and a sample are checked to ensure that lessons learned are acted upon to improve future performance.

13.2   The Directorate of Housing and Investments received 433 complaints in total, which reflects the nature of the services provided, and the awareness of residents on how to make complaints. In terms of upheld complaints, last year there were 254 DHI complaints where the complainant's case was upheld and in many of these there were lessons that led to corrective action on our part.

13.3   A random sample of 10% (26) of the upheld complaints were reviewed for details of the learning points and action plans. As part of the review, where remedial action or redress was offered to the complainant, this sample check followed the process through to the end to confirm that this action was completed.

The review found no instances where the promised solution, action or redress had not been carried out. In all cases reviewed, where the issue was an incomplete repair, a missed appointment, or a recurring issue the customer has now confirmed that they are satisfied with the completion of the works.

13.4   Where learning points identified a training need or a refresher briefing session for the tradesmen, checks have shown that this has taken place. One complaint referred to a data breach which was reported, and actions were taken to prevent a recurrence. Another example of remedial action taken included providing and reinforcing code of conduct information and details on standards of behaviour when visiting tenants' homes to a new contractor.

13.5   Complaints about the Housing Solutions team are generally about the length of time that applicants wait, or the difficulty that they have getting responses to emails

or phone calls once individuals are on the waiting list. This has been identified as an issue, and the team are reviewing how they work to seek a resolution to the backlog of applications.

14. Housing Ombudsman Complaints

14.1 The Housing Ombudsman publishes its decisions and a summary of landlord performance on its website. They create individual reports for landlords with 5 or more findings in the year. These findings are counted individually and there may be multiple findings from a single complaint.

14.2 In 2024-2025 The Housing Ombudsman upheld 4 complaints made to it by council tenants.

15. Complaints Trends

15.1 There has been a marked increase in the overall number of complaints received compared to the previous year. This increase has occurred across all sections of DHI; Repairs, Tenancy, Investment and Housing Solutions have all seen a rise in the number of complaints compared to 2023-2024. This increase was anticipated due to changes made following the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code and is seen by the Ombudsman as a good thing.

15.2 The council made changes to our complaint policy and, significantly, trained front-line staff to recognise and record expressions of dissatisfaction as formal complaints in line with the best practice outlined in the Code. Where the council might have previously received an "informal complaint" and dealt with it to the customers satisfaction without recording it as such, this is no longer how these issues are dealt with.

16. Service Improvement Activity (Relating to Performance)

There is currently a review taking place within customer services looking at customer call wait times. This measure is reviewed by Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HSSC) due to the service taking a considerable amount of housing calls and gives members oversight of performance within that area. HSSC members were notified of the review at the last meeting. This review directly links with housing and investment (as well as other directorates such as Directorate of Communities and Environment (DCE)

The review is currently reviewing calls, data collected, and emails received internally from service areas and externally from customers and residents, with a focus on understanding underlying factors, identifying root causes, and assessing the impact of the issues the service is facing. There is a specific focus on data and customer satisfaction not as well as fulfilling Housing Ombudsman/Regulator expectations.

By way of information, the review commenced in March and is being led by the Policy and Service Improvement Team, consisting initially of business intelligence officer, a business analyst and customer services. It is understood this may widen to other officers, as necessary. The phasing of the review is detailed below:

- Phase 1: Discovery and data collection
- Phase 2: Data analysis and issue diagnosis, root causes including feedback sessions
- Phase 3: Report and recommendations to service area for agreement to move forward
- Phase 4: Changes to be trialled for specific time periods, with specific data collection and comparison. Multiple rounds where necessary to fine tune changes to processes required resolving the issue, with area agreement.
- Final review and presentation, provide an executive summary of the key issues risks and opportunities, a detailed report outlining the findings from data analysis and service review, changes and successes or challenges of each, actionable recommendations for maintaining any improvements and improving service performance ongoing.

HSSC will be updated accordingly once the review has been completed.

17. Strategic Priorities

17.1 The City of Lincoln Council's Vision 2030 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.

18. Organisational Impacts

18.1 **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 Repairs Service (HRS) are continually monitored and reported quarterly to this Sub-Committee.

18.2 **Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

18.3 **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.

19. Risk Implications

19.1 (i)   Options Explored

Not applicable to this report.

19.2 (ii)   Key RIsks Associated with the Preferred Approach

Not applicable for this report.

20. Recommendation

20.1   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:	Lara Wells, Business Manager Corporate Policy and Service Improvement Lara.wells@lincoln.gov.uk

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Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee – Landlord Services Performance 2024/25　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**APPENDIX A**

(Figures in brackets are individual quarterly performance outturns)

PI	Measure Description	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Status (RAG) *Blue = volumetric		Additional information
Rents										
125B (RC1)	Rent collected as a proportion of rent owed	99.69%	97.50%	96.48%	96.42% (96.37%)	100.25% (109.60%)	99.07% (98.74%)	🙂	🔻	Rent collected - £35,794,800.23 The team have adapted well to the pilot structure of having specialist teams and have performed above target & in line with upper quartile benchmarking
126 (RC2)	Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit	2.88%	4.00%	3.50%	4.47%	3.33%	3.38%	🙂	🔻	Rent arrears - £1,208,448.74 The team have kept areas below the target for ¾ quarters this year. The rise in the percentage of arrears against the debit in Q2 coincided with the inital creation of the specialist teams and was only temporary while they adjusted to new ways of working
HSSC1	Garage rent collected as a percentage of rent due	New for 24/25	Volumetric	99.28%	97.69% (96.25%)	101.57% (110.89%)	99.93% (95.25%)	Volumetric		
HSSC2	Percentage of garage rent lost due to vacancy	New for 24/25	Volumetric	25.61%	25.12% (24.67%)	24.71% (23.70%)	24.38% (23.41%)	Volumetric		
ASB										
89	Percentage of ASB cases closed that were resolved	98.88%	94.00%	100.00%	99.26% (98.92%)	99.14% (98.97%)	98.68% (97.70%)	🙂	🔻	Number of ASB cases closed YTD – 682 The team have adapted well to the pilot structure of having specialist teams and have continued to performed above target
90	Average days to resolve ASB cases	46.5 days	60 days	58.16 days	56.07 (55.10)	51.97 (46.22)	58.01 (71.15)	🙂	🔻	For quarter 4 this was below target, however overall outturn is within target. The has been an increase in cases and associated legal action leaving us at the behest of the Courts timetables and decision. Previously any case that was taken to court was changed from its original category e.g. drug dealing and amended to "Legal cases" which excluded the case from the calculation. Legal cases is not a Housemark category and we should not have been excluding these cases. All Housing providers will face the same challenges around court availability and delays.
HSSC3	Number of ASB cases by type	New for 24/25	Volumetric	106	347 (241)	587 (240)	825 (238)	Volumetric		
(a)	ASB by type – Noise	New for 24/25	Volumetric	44	109 (65)	194 (85)	272 (78)	Volumetric		
(b)	ASB by type – Verbal abuse/ harassment/ intimidation/ threatening behaviour	New for 24/25	Volumetric	13	75 (62)	123 (48)	164 (41)	Volumetric		
(c)	ASB by type – Drugs/ substance misuse/ drug dealing	New for 24/25	Volumetric	8	42 (34)	79 (37)	104 (25)	Volumetric		
(d)	ASB by type – Pets and animal nuisance	New for 24/25	Volumetric	8	19 (11)	29 (10)	40 (11)	Volumetric		
(e)	ASB by type – Noxious odour	New for 24/25	Volumetric	3	16 (13)	27 (11)	40 (13)	Volumetric		
(f)	ASB by type – Physical violence	New for 24/25	Volumetric	3	13 (10)	20 (7)	27 (7)	Volumetric		
(g)	ASB by type – Garden nuisance	New for 24/25	Volumetric	2	12 (10)	21 (9)	33 (12)	Volumetric		
(h)	ASB by type – Vandalism and damage to property	New for 24/25	Volumetric	2	8 (6)	18 (10)	23 (5)	Volumetric		
(i)	ASB by type – Nuisance from vehicles	New for 24/25	Volumetric	2	4 (2)	7 (3)	9 (2)	Volumetric		
(j)	ASB by type – Misuse of communal areas/ public space or loitering	New for 24/25	Volumetric	1	15 (14)	22 (7)	40 (18)	Volumetric		
(k)	ASB by type – Domestic abuse	New for 24/25	Volumetric	1	3 (2)	4 (1)	5 (1)	Volumetric		
(l)	ASB by type – Hate-related incidents	New for 24/25	Volumetric	1	2 (1)	3 (1)	3 (0)	Volumetric		
(m)	ASB by type – Property condition	New for 24/25	Volumetric	0	2 (2)	6 (4)	15 (9)	Volumetric		

(n)	ASB by type – Cuckooing	New for 24/25	Volumetric	0	1 (1)	1 (0)	3 (2)	Volumetric		
(o)	ASB by type – Prostitution/sexual acts/kerb crawling	New for 24/25	Volumetric	0	1 (1)	1 (0)	2 (1)	Volumetric		
(p)	ASB by type – Litter/rubbish/fly-tipping	New for 24/25	Volumetric	0	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3)	Volumetric		
(q)	ASB by type – Other	New for 24/25	Volumetric	18	25 (7)	27 (2)	37 (10)	Volumetric		
Allocations										
85A	Percentage of offers accepted first time	88.16%	85.00%	87.93%	87.45% (86.99%)	88.55% (90.76%)	89.87% (93.97%)	🙂	▲	The Team continues to liaise with successful applicants to ensure the property offered is suitable.
HS1	Number of people currently on the housing list	2,036 (PSC)	Volumetric	2,029	2,076	2,057	2,227	Volumetric		Continue to receive high numbers of applications each week.
Voids										
69 (HV1)	Percentage of rent lost through dwelling being vacant	1.18%	1.00%	1.26%	1.31% (1.36%)	1.36% (1.46%)	1.40% (1.53%)	☹	▼	Year to date – 1.40% This target has been impacted by the large number of voids held in the process during this quarter, for the end of March there were 120 voids in the process all impacting the rent loss . The number of properties entering the void process does not show any signs of slowing down and it is anticipated that this will continue into Q1 2025/26. 116 properties have been relet during this period with a low refusal rate showing that the standard of properties and allocations teams focus on matching the properties successfully is having a positive outcome
58 (HV2)	Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (excluding major works)	39.87 days	36 days	40.76 days	43.66 days (46.94)	44.78 days (47.29)	45.71 days (48.33)	☹	▼	Number of re-lets YTD – 274 As mentioned above/below, there are a number of voids within the system currently. Those that are logged as minor works, once investigated can flag as major works on occassion which does impact on performance. It is worth noting that these are only general needs voids and that there are a further 50 non general needs that also need addressing which are all serviced by the same team.
61 (HV3)	Average re-let time calendar days for all dwellings (including major works)	46.59 days	42 days	48.79 days	50.28 days (51.59)	50.50 days (50.94)	52.53 days (58.78)	☹	▼	Number of re-lets YTD – 474 Year to date – 52.53 days There is a significant number of voids within the system currently and during this period. February and March have seen the highest number of void properties in the system since July 2022 and this is impacting the repair team's capacity. A significant number of void properties are still requiring cleansing prior to repairs being undertaken further increasing the overall timeframes. There were a number of longer-term voids over 100 days signed up over this period that impact this average – one of which required substantial structural repairs The housing repair service are seeing an increase in repair timeframes whilst they are trying to limit the amount of properties going to subcontractors due to contractual cost increases and the impact this has on budgets. Inevitably this is going to further increase void timeframes as these properties move through the system and more being undertaken by the inhouse team.
Investment										
50 (HI1)	Percentage of council properties that are not at the 'Decent Homes' standard (excluding refusals)	0.24%	1.00%	0.36%	0.64%	0.45%	0.26%	🙂	▲	Number of non-decent homes (excluding refusals) - 20 Overall levels have fallen despite additional failures being identified from stock condition surveys undertaken in the final quarter of 2024/25. Notable progress was also made gaining access for Electrical tests.

									Commentary
									There are now a total of 20 failures (including 2 properties failing 2 criteria) due to 9 Electrics, 9 Doors, 1 Windows, 2 Chimneys and 1 Roof.
HSSC4	Percentage of properties at SAP rating C or above	New for 2024/25	Volumetric	93.25%	93.71%	93.90%	94.87%	Volumetric		A slight increase in the no. of properties reaching band C or above, following the delivery of planned improvement works during the course of the year.
Building and Fire Safety Assurance									
48 (HI3) (BS01)	Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	98.38%	99.00%	98.68%	99.03% (99.27%)	99.00% (9v8.96%)	99.01% (99.01%)	☺	▲	There has been a slight improvement in performance this quarter. The annual gas servicing programme continually runs twelve months a year. The number of failed access cases has been 17 properties this quarter. With the support of housing management and legal services we have obtained a small number of injunctions to address some of the outstanding failed access cases.
BS02	Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	100.00% (TSM)	99.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	☺	▬	
BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	90.92% (TSM)	99.00%	90.92%	90.92%	90.92%	100.00%	☺	▲	
BS04	Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100.00% (TSM)	99.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	☺	▬	
BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	100.00% (TSM)	100%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	☺	▬	
HSSC5	Percentage of homes with an in-date and satisfactory electrical installation condition report	New for 24/25	95%	95.76%	95.37%	95.93%	97.30%	☺	▲	
HSSC6	Percentage of communal areas with an in-date and satisfactory electrical installation condition report	New for 24/25	99.3%	98.43%	98.59%	98.90%	99.37%	☺	▲	
HSSC7	Average time taken to complete damp and mould repairs (days)	New for 24/25	20 days	5.31	5.47 (5.71)	4.91 (4.01)	4,87 (4.77)	☺	▼	Slight increase due to stock condition surveys highlighted previously unreportd damp and mould however the team is now in place to support with new processes and is working well.
Repairs (Housing Repairs Service)									
29A (HM1a)	Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time (priority 1 day only)	99.55%	99.50%	99.89%	99.83% (99.78%)	99.88% (100%)	99.92% (100%)	☺	▬	Number of repairs completed YTD – 3,642 The outturn for this measure has achieved above its high target and at the highest possible performance level for the measure, 100%. Processes are in place to manage the priority workload throughout the day, these are prioritised against other repairs to ensure attendance and actions are completed within timescales
32 (HM1b)	Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time (urgent 3 day repairs only)	89.29%	97.50%	99.32%	98.23% (97.20%)	96.85% (94.52%)	95.85% (93.22%)	😐	▼	Number of repairs completed YTD – 5,980 Q4 has seen a slight decrease in performance when compared to the previous quarter, and remains slightly below our low target, The service area reports a number of long-term sicknesses within the area team, additional to some operatives currently working on restricted duties within one of the trades, which has a large number of priority and urgent repairs. The service area is pleased to have recently recruited to a vacant position that will help to support this team in the coming months.
33	Average time taken to complete urgent Repairs (3 days)	2.17 days	3 days	1.88	1.97 (2.07)	2.01 (2.08)	2.06 (2.19)	☺	▼	No concerns
34 (HM2)	Percentage of repairs fixed first time (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	93.08%	92.00%	98.00%	98.35% (98.68%)	97.62% (96.39%)	97.79% (98.29%)	☺	▲	Q4 has seen further improvements in the performance of this outturn, delivering above both the high target for the quarter and the year to date. Operatives have received their new impress stocks this quarter and the service area have implemented the stock management system to ensure this is kept up to date to further aid the teams abilities to complete repairs first time

37 (HM4)	Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made (priority and urgent repairs) - HRS only	96.95%	98.00%	98.76%	99.02% (99.27%)	99.17% (99.42%)	98.78% (97.73%)	🙂	🔻	Number of appointments made YTD – 10,581 The outturn for quarter 4 continues to perform above it's low target, whilst slightly reduced from last quarter. Additionally, the measure has achieved above its high target for the year to date. The service area have proactively re-allocated appointments due to operative availability, which has been impacted particularly within the repairs team, due to a number of long-term sicknesses during the quarter as well as operatives working under restricted duties. Recent recruitment is expected to support this area to continue to reduce failed appointments.
29B	Percentage of all priority repairs carried out within time limits (1 day) (Aaron Services)	99.98%	99.50%	100.00%	100% (100%)	100% (100%)	100% (100%)	🙂	▬	
Strategy										
HSSC8	Number of new properties delivered	New for 24/25	Volumetric	3	4 (1)	20 (16)	24 (4)	Volumetric		The council delivered 11 newbuild homes and acquired 13 further homes as part of its established purchase and repair scheme during 2024/25. Work continues into 2025/26, and 9 additional newbuild homes at Boultham Park Road will be also added to the stock in May. The council's next newbuild project is Jasmin Green, expected to deliver around 50 new homes in the south of city. Construction is expected to commence at Jasmin Green in Spring 2026.
HSSC9	Number of 'Right to Buy' transactions	New for 24/25	Volumetric	10	12 (2)	24 (12)	34 (10)	Volumetric		In October 2024 Government introduced a series of measures intended to reduce the rate at which social housing units are lost through Right to Buy (RTB). These included reductions in the maximum cash discounts available, resulting in a temporary surge in RTB applications prior to the changes taking effect. The overall number of homes lost through RTB in 2024/25 remained the same as the previous year, and is expected to fall over the next 1 – 2 years as pending RTB transactions under the old regime complete and applications stabilise.
HSSC10	Number of council properties	New for 24/25	Volumetric	7,789	7,788	7,791	7,785	Volumetric		The net effect of acquisitions, newbuilds and RTB transactions has resulted in a small net loss in stock to the end of Q4. It is expected that the medium to long term impact of Government's RTB changes will reduce the number of council homes being lost in future years, allowing for acquisitions and newbuild schemes to begin to deliver an overall increase in stock numbers.
Complaints and Customer Service										
22	% of complaints replied to within target time	35.18%	95.00%	96.30%	93.09% (90.00%)	92.72% (91.67%)	92.65% (92.38%)	😐	🔺	Number of complaints responded to YTD – 476 Whilst the target has not been met, there has been significant improvements made in ensuring complaints are responded to wtihin target time.
	The following is a corporate performance measure overseen by the Customer Services Team, and relates to all calls received by the Customer Contact Centre. This measure therefore includes data not related to the Housing service.									
CS3	Average time taken to answer a call to Customer Services	607 seconds (PSC)	300 seconds	(817 seconds)	(795 seconds)	(698 seconds)	(998 seconds)	☹️	🔻	The average wait for a call into the contact centre has increased this quarter, the team handled 5,448 more calls in Q4 compared with Q3 and were also carrying 3 vacancies in Q4. One of these was filled at the end of March and the other 2 are out to advert. Customer Services contacted 6,238 customers following a call back request. The call wait times include the time taken for call backs to take place. Although the customer is not waiting in the queue, the length of time is still included in the figure currently. The system is currently being reviewed to determine the impact of call backs on overall call wait times. If switchboard were included the average wait would be 579.31 seconds.

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE   **11 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**SCRUTINY SELF EVALUATION REVIEW**
DIRECTORATE:	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**CHERYL EVANS, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS MANAGER**

1.   **Purpose of Report**

1.1   To provide the Committee with an opportunity to self-evaluate and review its scrutiny effectiveness.

2.   **Background**

2.1   An Internal Audit was carried out on Governance Health Check in July 2024. The audit had given substantial assurance, as there are good governance arrangements in place at the City of Lincoln Council, with only a few improvements identified. One of the recommendations was to carry out a review of the Council's scrutiny effectiveness which this report aims to address.

2.2   The audit recognised that scrutiny is an important part of the Governance structure, and it was therefore essential that the Council's scrutiny committees are effective, and that this is demonstrated. To evidence this good practice, a self-assessment should be used with the results feeding into the Scrutiny Annual Report.

3.   **Scrutiny Evaluation Process**

3.1   The Centre for Public Scrutiny has produced a guidance document (attached at Appendix A) which provides advice on self-assessment as well as recommendations on good practice.

3.2   A review of scrutiny effectiveness should be led by scrutiny councillors, and the outcomes of those reviews be driven by what scrutiny members have concluded for their individual committee.

3.3   The first stage in the process will be to hold an informal roundtable discussion with a working group of up to five Scrutiny Committee members. The group should consist of the Chair of the Committee, and preferably at least one member from a non-controlling group. For Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, one member from the Lincoln Tenants Panel can be appointed.

3.4   At this meeting, the group will discuss, consider and complete a self-assessment matrix (attached at Appendix B) with support from Democratic Services which will consider the current scrutiny process, and highlight strengths and weaknesses.

3.5   The second stage is for the working group to share and discuss the findings with the full scrutiny committee, inviting members to comment and reflect on the results and any recommendations identified during the process.

3.6   Any recommendations highlighted which affect the wider scrutiny function will be considered separately once all committees have completed their own self-assessment.

4.   Strategic Priorities

Ensuring that the Council has effective scrutiny arrangements in place to support decision making is a key part of the Council's overall governance framework.

5.   Organisational Impacts

5.1   **Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report.

5.2   **Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

The review of effectiveness ensures best practice is met.

5.3   **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

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

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

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

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

6.   Recommendation

6.1   That Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee select a group of up to five councillors to attend a roundtable discussion (date to be confirmed) to complete the document for presentation at the 21 August 2025 meeting of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Scrutiny Committee. The group should contain the Chair of the Committee and preferably at least one member from a non-controlling group.

Is this a key decision?   No

Do the exempt information categories apply?   No

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

How many appendices does the report   Two
contain?

List of Background Papers: None

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The scrutiny evaluation framework

A mechanism for reviewing, evaluating and improving local government scrutiny and governance arrangements

Centre for Public Scrutiny

APRIL 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Local government is changing. Major changes to the way that services are planned and delivered (including devolution), the financial challenge and increased demand on issues like social care mean that elected councillors are making increasingly important decisions which will have a profound impact on local people's lives for many years. Effective decision-making demands good governance. Good governance demands good scrutiny.

How can scrutiny arrangements be reviewed and improved to meet these challenges? In short, how can scrutiny be engineered to add value, make a difference to local people's lives and central to streamlined and responsive local decision-making?

This framework provides a mechanism for local authorities to address and answer these questions.

Our thanks are due to the scrutiny practitioners who provided comments on a draft of this document.

Background: where does this come from?

This framework is based on a number of earlier documents:

- Our "Accountability Works for You" framework (2011) and our scrutiny self-evaluation framework (2006), both earlier iterations of this new model;

- The fifteen "characteristics of effective scrutiny" developed following comprehensive research alongside the Wales Audit Office;

- Measures and principles relating to the impact and influence of Parliamentary select committees, based on research carried out by the Constitution Unit and the Institute for Government;

- Recent CfPS publications, in particular:

  Tipping the scales (2012)

  Our "Practice Guide" series (2014 / 2016)

  The change game (2015)

  Social return on investment (2016)

- Other models chosen and designed by local authorities for the evaluation of scrutiny.

In recent years, the amount of resource available for carrying out scrutiny in local government has lessened. Posts have been made redundant, and responsibility moved to officers, and parts of councils, who may not have had a background in working with members to support them in such a unique council function. While our early framework was designed with the "professional scrutiny officer" in mind, this framework has deliberately been drafted for officers and members who may not have a detailed understanding of scrutiny theory and practice. As such, it is more directive in its approach than previous versions. Despite this, it remains the case that councils must reflect and review their scrutiny arrangements on their own terms.

Setting up a group to take responsibility for this work

Reviews of scrutiny must be led by scrutiny councillors, and the outcomes of those reviews must also be driven by what scrutiny members have concluded. Cabinet and senior officers are important stakeholders, but the process and its conclusions are not theirs to define. For a meaningful, scrutiny member-led process to work, members need to agree principles within which they are prepared to work, and need to commit to recommending pragmatic solutions to problems which might even challenge the accepted wisdom in the authority about what scrutiny does, and what it is for.

A project group, chaired by a scrutiny councillor, may carry out the bulk of the research and analysis we describe below, but this is likely to put a substantial onus on councillors.

In practice we think it more likely that officers – or a single officer - will provide support to the group, reporting back periodically. If this is the case, we would recommend that this officer maintains regular, informal contact with members, to ensure that their expectations are being met. Additionally, we have suggested "checkpoints" at the end of every stage – points at which we think information and evidence would be considered in detail by the project group, and possibly shared with the wider member corps and other interested parties.

Importantly, this works to ensure buy-in to the eventual recommendations. In our experience, reviews which are conducted largely in private, and which then report back their findings to a wider member group which has not been part of that review process, can find it very difficult to secure buy-in and agreement to those recommendations from that wider group of members – especially if those recommendations are contentious.

Agreeing some basic design principles

For some time we have suggested that areas conducting reviews like this agree a set of "design principles" to help them to build consensus about what their governance systems will look like.

Design principles are important. They keep you focused on the way you will work under new arrangements, and help you to avoid fixating exclusively on governance structures (like the number and terms of reference of committees).

We think that local areas embarking on this work are likely to be able to come up with their own design principles, but we present some below to provide some ideas.

Principle	Some prompts
Members leading and owning	1. How should members direct the work programme? 2. Which members should be involved in leading the scrutiny process, and how? 3. What should the relationship between members and their support officers look like? What about the relationship between members and officers in service departments? 4. How does the member role influence how scrutiny and its work is presented to the wider authority, and to the area?
Flexibility	1. How will the work programme be flexible to account for unexpected issues emerging during the year? 2. What resource exists to support scrutiny's work, and how can it be best used? 3. How effective do members need to be in working together, and working with others, to achieve their objectives?
A focus on adding value, outcomes and prioritisation	1. How should members build an understanding of the impact of their work? 2. What are the most significant priorities affecting the local area, and how should this affect scrutiny's work? 3. How does scrutiny evaluate, review and improve the way it works?

Step 1: taking stock

How do we do things now?

They are two aspects to this. The first is to look in - at scrutiny's current processes and systems. The second is to look out - at the context for the council, the area, and the area's inhabitants.

Looking in

This part focuses on key characteristics of effective scrutiny, and invites you to reflect on how you measure up. This isn't a tickbox exercise – it's an invitation to think about your current ways of working, to make it easier for you to consider improvements at later stages. As such, the characteristics and prompts we have listed below should be seen as the framework for a conversation and a way to make sure you don't miss anything, rather than a list, requiring answers to every issue and question.

This stage is important for two reasons – firstly, it helps you to build up an accurate picture of how scrutiny works at the moment, and secondly it ensures that you have a common understanding of those characteristics, and why they are important.

You might wish to consider these characteristics in some of the following ways – depending on the resource you have at your disposal.

- A quick desktop exercise carried out by members and/or officers;

- A single meeting of scrutiny councillors (say, an evening session to work through the characteristics and the prompts);

- A more wide-ranging, but informal, set of discussions – for example, informal meetings with cabinet members, senior officers, partners and other key stakeholders;

- Conversations with members of the public who have engaged with scrutiny (as well as those who haven't);

- More formal evidence taken at committee meetings.

This should be a challenging and reflective process. It may identify shortcomings with scrutiny; it may lead to despondency that those shortcomings are significant and cannot be overcome. It could also be seen as organisationally risky for scrutiny to take a look at its strengths and weaknesses in this way. However, it is the only way that improvement can happen.

The characteristics themselves

See Good scrutiny? Good question! (WAO, 2014) - https://www.wao.gov.uk/publication/good-scrutiny-good-question-auditor-general-wales-improvement-study-scrutiny-local

Accountability works! (2010) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/accountability-works/

Characteristic
Overview and scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement and governance arrangements.
Overview and scrutiny has the dedicated officer support it needs from officers who are able to undertake independent research effectively, and provide councillors with high-quality analysis, advice and training.
Overview and scrutiny inquiries are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives.
Overview and scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.
Overview and scrutiny councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively.
The process receives effective support from the council's corporate management team who ensures that information provided to overview and scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner.
Overview and scrutiny is councillor-led, takes into account the views of the public, partners and other stakeholders, and balances the prioritisation of community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.
Overview and scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it.
Decision-makers give public account for themselves at overview and scrutiny committees for their portfolio responsibilities.
Overview and scrutiny is recognised by the executive and corporate management team as an important council mechanism for community engagement, and facilitates greater citizen involvement in governance.
Overview and scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability.
Overview and scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict.
Overview and scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.
Overview and scrutiny enables the "voice" of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes.

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We think that scrutiny can be evaluated against these characteristics by posing a number of questions. Below, we provide a list of possible questions, and an indication of where the answers you give to each question may be evidence of good practice, or a cause for concern.

How are scrutiny councillors involved in influencing major decisions, and in considering and evaluating performance, finance and risk information?

Good practice: *Evidence of decisions being altered consensually as a result of scrutiny's involvement.*

Average practice: *Evidence of scrutiny making recommendations on major decisions, but with limited impact, and sometimes not at the right time.*

Poor practice: *Evidence of scrutiny not looking at these issues at all, or doing so in a way that adds little value / duplicates the work of others.*

Do different people with a role in holding decision-makers to account (like scrutiny, the Police and Crime Panel, a combined authority scrutiny committee, local Healthwatch) work together?

Good practice: *Evidence of tangible impact resulting from this sort of joint working, such as aligned work programmes and an elimination of duplication, and improvements in substantive joint working between the council and its partners, directly facilitated by scrutiny.*

Average practice: *Some limited joint working – usually reactive, in response to an external pressure like a substantive variation in service delivery in the NHS. Some duplication and overlap in work and little awareness of mutual responsibilities. An awareness that some issues are falling between the gaps.*

Poor practice: *No joint working, even when clear opportunities present themselves. "Council scrutiny" is siloed, and internally focused. Significant opportunities for local scrutiny are missed without anyone realising that those opportunities existed in the first place.*

How does scrutiny gather evidence?

Good practice: *Evidence gathering is tied to the objectives of the work, with the result that scrutiny's time is used more effectively. Information will probably be shared with members informally on a continual basis, to actively assist them in refining the work programme in-year. In respect of task and finish groups, evidence will be gathered from a wide range of sources, and members will have the confidence to analyse and evaluate that evidence themselves (usually with the assistance of officers).*

Average practice: *Evidence on key council performance and other issues will usually be shared with members on a quarterly basis, often when the data is quite out of date. Task and finish groups will benefit from evidence from a range of sources but analysis will be quite officer-led. Members will lack confidence in understanding what information is available within and outside the council and how to access and use it.*

Poor practice: *Committee meetings will be used as the primary mechanism for information sharing, with a large number of reports on agendas "to note", with almost all evidence and information coming in the form of officer reports.*

How does scrutiny weigh the evidence that it has collected?

Good practice: *Councillors understand the respective value of different kinds of evidence, and use their political and personal judgment to consider which should be relied on to support scrutiny's work. Councillors are confident in developing their own lines of questioning to test the robustness of evidence they receive. Detailed evaluation of evidence is carried out offline, in preparation for the use of that evaluation to conduct more probing and forensic questions in committee, or in other meetings. Successful weighing of evidence could be proven to have led to more robust findings, and better recommendations.*

Average practice: *Analysis of evidence is carried out by officers, with most evaluation of evidence happening in committee, often supported by officer-drafted questioning plans. Members know that certain evidence is more likely to be accurate and reliable than others, but sometimes this can result in pejorative judgments being made, particularly about "anecdotal" evidence from local people.*

Poor practice: *There is no support available from officers to help members to weigh and evaluate evidence, and the need to evaluate and triangulate information from different sources is largely alien to members and the scrutiny function. Members deal with shortcomings in evidence and information by simply asking for "more information" from officers.*

How is performance, finance and risk information considered as a part of the evidence-gathering process?

Good practice: *Information is considered informally as it is created, alongside other evidence created and used by the council and others. Performance, finance and risks information is triangulated with this wider evidence base. Members are able to reach a judgment about escalating issues to committee "by exception".*

Average practice: *Information is available to members as it is produced but may not be presented consistently (so, performance information may be regularly shared but risk information may not be). Triangulation may be ad hoc, because the council does not have systems for ensuring that members gain access to information in a timely manner.*

Poor practice: *Committees consider information quarterly in committee meetings, usually many weeks after the data itself has been finalised. Information is presented in the form of scorecards. Members ask questions about why performance under certain targets is "red" but have no way of following up on those questions or the answers received. There is little consideration of financial information and little to no consideration of risk information.*

What is the tangible impact that scrutiny activity has on the ground?

Good practice: *Members and officers have a shared understanding of scrutiny's impact. This impact is significant and sustained, and can be expressed in terms of outcomes for local people. This understanding includes a recognition that scrutiny's impact is difficult to quantify and that judgments on impact can be subjective.*

Average practice: *Members and officers have an understanding of scrutiny's impact which may not be shared or universally agreed. Where impact is assessed it may be focused on improving outputs (eg improving an internal council business process) rather than anything else.*

Poor practice: *There is no evidence that scrutiny has any impact and no systems exist to measure it.*

What happens when decision-makers disagree with scrutiny?

Good practice: *Rules of engagement between scrutiny and the executive have been discussed and agreed by councillors.*

Average practice: *There is a scrutiny / executive protocol in the Constitution, although it is quite process-based. Disagreements, when they occur, are usually resolved through negotiation between politicians, pragmatically.*

Poor practice: *Decision-makers' decisions always trump scrutiny's views. There is no scrutiny / executive protocol in the Constitution or any other formal/informal mechanism for resolving disagreements.*

When scrutiny makes formal recommendations, how are they responded to?

Good practice: *Recommendations are always SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timed) and are limited in number. Usually, information about likely recommendations will be shared and discussed with the executive prior to being made. The executive will always submit a substantive response to recommendations, with reasons being given if recommendations are rejected.*

Average practice: *Recommendations are usually at least partially SMART. A lot of recommendations might be made, making it difficult to monitor them all. Some recommendations may not be addressed to the right people. The executive's response to recommendations is variable – sometimes recommendations are ignored or "noted" rather than being formally responded to.*

Poor practice: *Scrutiny makes few formal recommendations, and when it does they are usually just "noted" by the executive. Recommendations will often be vague and poorly drafted.*

Good practice: *Safety valves (such as informal meetings for discussion, and lines of communication between political groups) exist within the scrutiny process to eliminate risks before they present themselves. The political and organisational culture of the council is such that potential difficulties, flashpoints and mistakes are highlighted and dealt with frankly and candidly. When problems do present themselves, people work together on all sides to resolve them without recourse to rules and procedures.*

Average practice: *There are regular, somewhat formal, meetings between the executive and scrutiny to allow issues of concern to be raised, but no real mechanisms to pre-empt problems. When problems do occur, the focus can be on what rules and procedures say about the issue, rather than identifying an equitable solution.*

Poor practice: *Problems and shortcomings in scrutiny's impact are either ignored or seen as evidence of scrutiny's ineffectiveness. Blame is a common feature. Problems are seen as an opportunity for political posturing, rather than as an issue requiring collective resolution. The need for executive-side commitment to making things work is poorly understood. Scrutiny is a "process" to be "managed".*

Looking out

Scrutiny has to be relevant. It must do work which has an impact on local people. It has to engage with decision-makers' priorities and the priorities of other partners – the NHS, the combined authority (if there is one), and so on.

Here are some of the key "external" issues which are likely to impact on how scrutiny is carried out, and how governance is likely to need to change in the area. Part of the evaluation process is about considering these changes, and reflecting on what they mean for the future of scrutiny.

- Financial challenges for local government. The nature of funding for local authorities will change significantly between now and 2020. The amount of money available for the transaction of core business will continue to dwindle;

- Demographic changes will result in pressure and demand in some areas – for example, adult social care;

- Both of the above are likely to result in a pressure for local authorities to "transform", as we set out in our 2015 publication "The change game". Transformation might see the creation of some, or all of the following – which raises questions for scrutiny and local accountability:

  - Strategic commissioning arrangements, with councils moving away from traditional contracting-out;

  - The establishment of novel structures for service delivery, like open-book partnerships and Teckal companies;

  - Confederations and council "clustering", which is an ancillary element of some devolution deals;

- Major transformation programmes being carried out by other public agencies – for example, the agreement and implementation of Sustainability and Transformation Plans/Partnerships (STPs) in the NHS – are likely to have a big impact;

- Devolution deals, and the establishment of combined authorities, raise substantial questions about democracy and local scrutiny;

- The potential for local government reorganisation or reviews by the Boundary Commission;

- The development of digital technology means that the public expect a different relationship with elected representatives and those making decisions on their behalf.

What is scrutiny's response to these challenges?

Is scrutiny in a position to make such a response and how does it need to change in order to do so? This should be a difficult question to answer. Tackling it will involve an acceptance from those involved in the scrutiny process and the way they work may need to change, and change significantly, in order for scrutiny to remain relevant. If you sail through this part of the exercise quickly and easily, it may be that those involved have not fully engaged in this challenge, and its implications.

CHECKPOINT: Share products of the "taking stock" exercise with wider membership. Invite members to reflect on its conclusions and decide whether they agree. Have initial discussions between members and officers about scrutiny's role – see below.

Step 2: identifying what scrutiny's role is

At this point you will have the following evidence:

- A sense of scrutiny's current areas of strength and weakness (identified through the "looking in" exercise);

- A sense of where opportunities exist to make improvements, in the context of what's going on in the wider area (identified through the "looking out" exercise);

- A sense of the principles that you will use to underpin those improvements (in the form of your design principles).

This will help you to look at the accountability and governance roles carried out by others in the local area, and decide what scrutiny's own role should be in that context,.

Step 2.1 Understand the roles of others

See Practice Guides 9, 11 and 13 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

Accountability works! (2010) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/accountability-works/

Scrutiny does not happen in a vacuum. Within the local area, there will be individuals, groups, agencies and other organisations who will have some role in holding to account and/or overseeing the kinds of important local issues in which the scrutiny function has a stake.

You need to understand who these people are. You also need to understand what their roles are. The better you understand those roles the better the chance that scrutiny's function can be clearly demarcated, with members and others having the confidence that scrutiny is doing something unique and valuable.

One of the most valuable roles that scrutiny can perform is to look at the internal systems and processes that comprise much council governance (some of the kinds of things that we introduce below) and open them out to public input, insight and scrutiny. The public are likely to have a profoundly different perspective on local services to those held by the council. Scrutiny should consider that perspective when looking at the role of these other organisations.

This exercise will make it easier to identify where the local "gaps" in good governance are. This will then help to define how scrutiny might design its role to fit into that gap.

Some of the people involved are – and their roles in governance – include:

Person	Role
In-house council managers	Holding to account their own staff for the delivery of council services, and other business. This will usually be carried out through usual line management methods, through performance management and budget and risk control.
Executive councillors	Executive councillors / cabinet members holding senior managers to account for their delivery of the council's political priorities, using similar techniques to those described above.
Clientside council managers	Council officers who manage contracts, or handle the commissioning of services from other organisations, use management information to hold the delivery of those services to account. This is usually done by reference to a contract, and robust systems will usually be in place to assure value for money. Particular areas of concern will be "escalated" to senior managers and elected members.
Partner organisations	While the council holds its partners to account, its partners also hold it to account. For example, the integration of health and social care require that councils work together closely with NHS bodies. Those NHS bodies will have expectations of the contribution that the council will make to such arrangements. Partners may also be commissioned providers, or new bodies (such as Teckal companies) in which the council has a stake, which are responsible for the planning and delivery of local services along with other agencies. The accountability relationships between these bodies are important to understand.
Regulators	In England, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are the key external regulators, whose work focuses on the care services provided by councils to children and adults.

The public	The public are the primary source of accountability for elected politicians; they hold politicians, and officers, to account through elections and also through community activism between elections. This activism can take many forms. Sometimes it will be traditional, and manifested through mechanisms such as formally-constituted residents' associations and community groups. On other occasions, it can be more disruptive.
Others involved in local scrutiny and accountability	Organisations such as Local Healthwatch have an important scrutiny role, alongside the Police and Crime Panel, the local fire authority and other bodies. The scrutiny functions of neighbouring authorities will also need to develop close working relationships. Increasingly, the creation and development of combined authorities will make those bodies' own overview and scrutiny committees important partners.

Step 2.2 Sketch out a role and focus areas

See The Change Game (2015) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/the-change-game/

Cards on the table (2016) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/cards-on-the-table-devolution/

Tipping the scales (2012) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/tipping-the-scales/

Increasingly, it's becoming clear that traditional, broad-brush scrutiny work – the kind that takes a general view of a topic in the round – is an imperfect way to conduct scrutiny. There are two ways to design work differently:

- Focusing in on a narrow area of policy – for example, a review into social housing could focus on the time taken to carry out regular maintenance and repairs or council communication on the "right to buy" post the passage of the Housing and Planning Act;

- Use a "focus" through which to look at a topic. So, again in relation to social housing, you could look at corporate risks associated with social housing (capacity and demand, for example) or at tenants' expectations about the way that the council should communicate with them.

In "The change game" we introduced this idea of focus as a way of channelling scrutiny's input into large and complex issues. There are a number of possible areas of focus that we mentioned:

- Focus on value. CfPS's publications on social return on investment will help to understand this role more effectively;

- Focus on risk. CfPS has recently publish a paper on risk and resilience, which explains how risk can be used by scrutineers to weigh up complex policy options;

- Focus on residents' experiences. CfPS's paper "Hiding in plain sight" emphasises the importance of engaging with the concerns of local people – focusing on this as the driver of scrutiny work is a powerful way to bring a different perspective to bear on local policymaking;

- Focus on the system, and on organisational development. Councils are going through substantial transformations which will require big cultural changes – scrutiny can lead on understanding these changes, making sure they are informed by wider community need, and championing these moves within the organisation;

- Focus on performance and quality. Adopting a "by exception" report to performance monitoring, with scrutiny playing a defined and well-understood role in intervening when service quality falls and other improvement mechanisms fail.

The selection of a clear and unambiguous focus for scrutiny is a critical part of improving its impact. The resource, and organisational commitment, simply no longer exist for us to talk about scrutiny as a function which "holds the executive to account" in the broadest sense of the term, without a sense of a need to prioritise its work. Discussion and agreement on scrutiny's role will be difficult, and will cause contention.

CHECKPOINT: Share with members and officers in the council – and with other stakeholders – first thoughts about scrutiny's future role, and how it differs from what is in place now. Take the opportunity to reflect on how that new role might significantly change expectations about scrutiny in the future, and how scrutiny needs to be supported and resourced. Use this opportunity to further discuss, and subsequently agree, what scrutiny's overall role will be.

Step 3: ways of working and accessing information

Now comes the time to agree how scrutiny will work – how it will use its agreed role to embed the design principles we mentioned above.

There are a number of different methods for conducting scrutiny work. Below, we set out some of them, explain what they are, and suggest the kinds of issues you might address.

It's important to remember that you need to review and evaluate these ways of working against the role you have agreed, and against the work you did at the start, when you reviewed the context in which you are working. The lessons you learned from those exercises will help you to understand which of these methods will work best.

These ways of working will need to be informed by the more general approach you take to the way that scrutiny carries out its work, such as:

- Work programming. How will this process work? Who will be involved in it?

- Practically, how will scrutiny seek to engage with the executive, with the council's partners and with the public?

- Overall, how will scrutiny seek to evaluate and improve its performance on an ongoing basis?

The answers to these questions will relate closely to scrutiny's agreed role. Once discussed and agreed, it will be easier to think about scrutiny's practical ways of working inside and outside meetings.

Critically, all activities must be designed in such a way that they maximise the positive outcome from scrutiny's work. Activity must, in this way, be relentlessly and continually tied to a sense of scrutiny's value – what it brings to the council and to the wider community.

Possible ways of working

See Practice Guides 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

Activity	Description
In committee	Limiting the number of substantive items on each agenda to one or two.
	Thinking about "themed agendas" where a few connected subjects are discussed.
	Briefing officers on scrutiny's objectives in looking at particular items to ensure that their reports are targeted and focused, rather than generic.
	Requiring as a matter of course that cabinet members attend to answer questions on key items, rather than chief officers alone.
	Not always permitting officers or cabinet councillors to make presentations before questioning begins, relying on scrutiny members reading their papers and requiring that relevant information be shared in paper form rather than making the assumption that oral presentations will always be necessary.
	Planning meetings/evidence-gathering in such a way that the chair is empowered to make substantive recommendations on an item then and there.
In a task and finish group meeting	Recognising where task and finish working is really necessary, and where it is just an extension of committee work by another means.
	Ensuring that the scope of reviews translates into each meeting having a clear and defined objective, with meetings taking a project-focused approach.
	Thinking about which background papers, and from whom, are prepared and circulated in advance (something on which we expand in the section below on information).
	Thinking about the interplay between witnesses, and how witnesses will be managed before, during and after the meeting.

In a meeting designed for public input	Thinking about the circumstances in which such public meetings might be appropriate.
	Thinking about how such meetings might be planned, designed and communicated – who is involved and when, and how are the public involved in that process? For example, it might make sense to talk to the council's communications team about the basic principles that underpin public scrutiny meetings and how they can be planned and organised to integrate with the council's wider approach to engagement.
	Ensuring that opportunities for public input are significant are meaningful – in the way that the meeting is planned and organised.
	Ensuring that the role of councillors in such meetings is clear.
	Putting in place measures to keep those who attend (and those who don't, in the wider community) informed about the meeting and its outcomes.
In the community	Planning ways to ensure that information from councillors' ward work is fed into the scrutiny process.
	Thinking of innovative and interesting ways that scrutiny can take its work out in the community.
Informally with officers	Regular information sharing meetings between chairs, councillors and senior officers.
	Regular informal briefing sessions for larger groups of councillors, replacing "for information" items at committee meetings and organised by the department involved.

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Less productive ways of working

There are ways of working, common in scrutiny, which are broadly unproductive. This process provides a useful opportunity to review those approaches and to consider how they might be improved.

Activity	Why it tends not to be productive, and what can be done about it
Meetings with multiple (more than two) substantive items on the agenda	Does not allow enough opportunity for members to dig into and reflect on an issue. Encourages "glossing" of information and an overreliance on officer reports. Work programmes can be made sharper. Members can challenge themselves, and each other, to justify the placing of certain items on the committee agenda. The use of selection criteria for agenda items or similar systems to prioritise work.
Items submitted to committee "to note" or to provide an update	Uses up time at committee meetings without a clear sense of an outcome, or scrutiny adding any value. Work, whether at committee or in a different forum, should be carried out with a defined outcome in mind – usually, the making of recommendations. Papers circulated to members for information should be provided to them in their postbag, online and/or by means of member briefings organised by service departments.
Provision, at committee, of full scorecards / full technical reports as a separate substantive item	Members can often get bogged down in the minutiae of technical data. This can lead to ineffective scrutiny. Such data will often be out of date by the time members come to see it, and won't be presented in a way that enables members to add much value to the way it is used and analysed. Such data should be used as part of the research base for an approach which sees particular performance issues brought to committee by exception. This would allow specific performance challenges to be highlighted, reflected upon and actioned by members.

Establishment of open-ended "standing panels" or other working groups which do not have the status of formal committees	It is common for scrutiny activity to be delegated to "standing panels" with open terms of reference. This raises resource challenges, and means that such scrutiny work risks not being especially task-oriented. Better prioritisation of work to ensure that there is always a defined scope with an end point / outcome.
Work that adopts a council-focused perspective of the local community	For example a "review of the council's youth service" is different from, and inferior to, a "review of the needs of local young people". Framing issues in a different way will make it easier to break out of council silos and address things from the point of view of local people. This links to the points made above about scrutiny's overall focus.

Accessing information

See "Your right to know" (2012) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/your-right-to-know-the-future-for-transparency-in-england/

"Pulling it together, 3rd edition" (2017) - forthcoming

Once different ways of working have been explored and agreed, members will need to consider the range of information they will requireto work properly.

In brief, there are a number of steps through which councillors need to go in order to assure themselves that they are accessing the right information in the right way at the right time, and using it to maximise the effect of their scrutiny work.

- Learning the basics of how to find and use information. This will involve talking to officers about scrutiny's role, their expectations and what information might be required;

- Understanding how to analyse and reflect on research evidence. Members will need to discuss how much they need to develop these skills themselves, and the extent to which they will need officer assistance;

- Developing scrutiny's approach to gathering and using evidence so that findings and recommendations are clearly evidence-informed, and that the evidence used tracks back to scrutiny's overall role.

It is worth remembering that councillors sitting on scrutiny committees have enhanced information access rights under legislation. It is also important to remember that this does not mean that councillors should be looking at everything available, all the time. Part of the benefit of taking a more forensic and targeted approach to evidence is about understanding where to stop. Members need to decide themselves how information will be presented to them and how much they need.

One way that some councils have sought to manage the weight of information that members could look at is to divide the task up. Individual councillors on a committee could be given the responsibility to lead on oversight of a particular element of that committee's terms of reference. This is particularly useful for councils with only one, or two committees, and where councillors might be worried that they cannot otherwise keep track of a wide range of strategic issues.

CHECKPOINT: This checkpoint involves members agreeing to sign off what has been discussed and agreed – this is the most important part of the work so far.

Some useful principles to bear in mind are:

■ These new ways of working should be presented as being temporary in nature, pending final evaluation (see step 5). Making wholesale changes to ways of working – and particularly to structures – can seem risky, particularly when those changes are seen as permanent. By providing a year for new arrangements to "bed in", space is provided to evaluate the new approach with a view either to changing it, reverting back to previous arrangements or keeping with what you have;

■ These ways of working will involve cultural change – changes to the mindset, attitudes and values of both members and officers. Structural change does not need to be discussed at this stage, and is indeed likely to distract from the need to sign off what has been agreed so far;

■ As well as member agreement, a wider range of stakeholders also need to be consulted and informed about scrutiny's new direction, role, focus and ways of working. This checkpoint will therefore require that members think about how this will be communicated to a wider audience.

Step 4: agreeing a new structural model

The final stage in the process is the agreement of a new structural model for the scrutiny function. Essentially, this is the number of committees you will have, what their terms of reference will be, who will sit on them and who will chair.

It is important not to skip ahead to this stage, or to focus too much time and energy on structures. The way that scrutiny is structurally carried out will closely derive from its role. If its role is not clear, not widely understood and not agreed, the greater the chance that disagreements will occur. It is a waste of time and energy to spend meetings arguing about whether there should be three committees, or four, or five, based purely on a sense of a need to "fit" existing work, or more work, into a new structure.

The number of committees and their size

See Practice Guide 6 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

There is no optimum number of scrutiny committees. CfPS research shows no real connection between the size and number of scrutiny committees and their effectiveness, although some research we have carried out suggests a loose correlation between more effective scrutiny and fewer committees. On balance, for logistical reasons, we would suggest that a good size for a committee lies somewhere between 7 and 10.

But every council is different, and each scrutiny function is different, with a different role. Little is therefore likely to be learned by looking at the committee structure of neighbouring, or similar, authorities as part of an evaluation of scrutiny.

The most common committee structures are set out below.

■ Single committee – a single committee that undertakes all work (without any task and finish groups);

■ Single committee with task and finish – a single committee which commissions further work from task and finish groups;

- Two committees –

  - "Internal" and "external" – some councils set up one committee to look at matters for which the council is responsible, and one looking at issues which are the responsibility of partners. This is, in our view, not an effective way to divide up work, because it is increasingly difficult to identify obvious divisions between these different strands of work;

  - "People" and "places", or similar – dividing issues into those which involve services being delivered directly to individuals (such as social care) and those provided to communities more generally (parks, libraries);

  - "Overview" and "scrutiny" – dividing policy development from performance management and call-in.

- Three or more committees – where terms of reference may be divided in a variety of ways, reflecting the nature of the council. Setting terms of reference to reflect the council's corporate priorities is a popular approach, but this assumes that the council's corporate priorities are sufficiently robust.

The terms of reference

Concern is often expressed by members or officers at the prospect of committee terms of reference being too broad. This is often seen as a justification for expanding the number of committees.

This links back to the issue we raised earlier about prioritisation. Effective prioritisation makes it possible to have effective scrutiny with fewer meetings and fewer committees. Ineffective scrutiny can flourish where plenty of time and space is available for more activity to be carried out. The fear may exist that resource-stretched scrutiny will suffer as things will "fall between the cracks". This risk is most likely to be realised when councillors expect to receive frequent updates on a very wide range of issues, and drown under the weight of paper. Prioritisation – which will derive directly from scrutiny's agreed role – is the only way to prevent this risk from being a significant one.

The chairing arrangements

See Practice Guide 6 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

Skills Briefing 2 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=skills+briefing

Full Council will usually vote on the chairship of overview and scrutiny committees. The committee will then formally elect a chair at the beginning of meetings. Usually this means that chairs will be of the same political party as the executive.

Although there is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate that scrutiny is more effective when chaired by members of the opposition, in our view to do so makes it easier for scrutiny to demonstrate its independence from the leadership. It also brings a wider range of differing perspectives to bear on the scrutiny process.

Step 5: ongoing review and evaluation

An important part of evaluating scrutiny is the need to keep that evaluation going. It should be a continuous process – not necessarily in a formal sense, but in the sense of how you think about work as you are doing it.

This toolkit is something which can be returned to, and used to formulate quicker and more targeted evaluation processes. Future evaluations, for example, may involve only step 1 – "taking stock" – with subsequent steps being undertaken only where it is felt that there is a clear business need to do so.

More information

A range of resources exists on the CfPS website which will help practitioners to understand and improve their scrutiny function.

CfPS also provides a helpdesk function to local authorities, funded by the LGA, to assist on matters relating to scrutiny, as well as corporate governance more generally. To access this support please call 020 3866 5100.

CfPS is the leading provider of training and consultancy to local government overview and scrutiny. If you think you need help to review the effectiveness of your scrutiny and governance arrangements or additional training for members or officers please get in touch to discuss further.

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Self-assessment of Overview and Scrutiny Good Practice – 2025

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 1: Scrutiny Purpose and Governance

1	Does a facility exist for Scrutiny to regularly report to full Council regarding its work?										
2	Do the terms of reference for the Council's Scrutiny Committees clearly set out the purpose of the committees?										
3	Is the role and purpose of scrutiny understood and accepted across the authority?										
4	Does scrutiny provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?										
5	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance satisfactory?										
6	Does a protocol for the relationship between Scrutiny Members and the Executive exist?										
7	If "Yes", is it understood?										
8	Does Scrutiny at the Council act as a "Critical Friend" in scrutinising Council functions?										

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Section 1: Summary & Recommendations

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 2: The work of Scrutiny Committees

9	Is Scrutiny a member led process?										
10	Do members lead in the identification of topics for the committee work programmes? Are members proactive in the identification of topics?										
11	Are the Chairs of the Council Scrutiny Committees involved in the identification of items for work programmes?										
12	Are members involved in how information is presented to Committees?										
13	Are Scrutiny work programmes flexible documents? Are they able to react to challenges that may arise?										
14	Is the process for selecting items for the work programme satisfactory?										
15	Is there a process for prioritising topics included on the work programmes?										
16	Do Scrutiny work programmes satisfactorily cover all service areas within committee remits?										
17	Is the Council's Policy Framework used to identify items for Scrutiny?										

Section 2: Summary & Recommendations

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 3: Membership and Support

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18	Has an effective committee structure and composition of the committees been selected to effectively scrutinise the Council and its functions? This should include: • Number of Committees • Separation from the Executive • An appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership • A size of committee that is not unwieldly • Where independent members are used, that they have been appointed using an appropriate process.										
19	Are Scrutiny Committee meetings held regularly enough?										
20	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?										
21	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?										
22	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found it to be satisfactory?										

23	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including the Executive and Corporate Management Team?										
24	Are Officer and Cabinet Members proactive in highlighting issues and topic for additional scrutiny?										
25	Do Scrutiny Committees identify key lines of enquiry and questioning in advance of their meetings?										
26	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?										

Section 3: Summary & Recommendations

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 4: Effectiveness of the Committee

27	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?										
28	Are Committee meetings well chaired and led?										
29	Are Committee Members sufficiently knowledgeable to undertake?										
30	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?										

31	Does the Scrutiny function effectively communicate its work to the rest of the Council and the wider public?											
32	Does Scrutiny Committee activity contribute to the decision making process and the development of new policy?											
33	Are examples of best practice captured and used by Scrutiny Committees?											
34	Is the "Voice" of the local community heard? Does Scrutiny have process for the involvement of the public?											

Section 4: Summary & Recommendations

Additional Comments

As a member of a Scrutiny Committee what training would you benefit from? What do you think the key strengths of Scrutiny are? What improvements could be made to further develop Scrutiny at the Council?	

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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE　　　　　　　　　**11 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**WORK PROGRAMME - 2025/26**
DIRECTORATE:	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**
LEAD OFFICER:	**ALI HEWSON, SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER**

1.　Purpose of Report

1.1　To present an outline work programme for 2025/26 (Appendix A).

2.　Background

2.1　The work programme for 2025/26 is attached for consideration by Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

2.2　This work programme will be further populated in accordance with any requests made by the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committees for topics of discussion and areas of preferred scrutiny. The work programme will be used as a working document and can be added to or amended at the Sub-Committee's discretion at any time during the 2025/26 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 the content of the work programme for 2025/26, to be further populated by Committee as required from the beginning of the 2025/26 Municipal Year, be noted.

Access to Information: Does the report contain exempt information, which would prejudice the public interest requirement if it was publicised?	No
Key Decision	No
Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply	No
Call In and Urgency: Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?	No
Does the report contain Appendices?	Yes
If yes, how many Appendices?	1
Lead Officer:	Ali Hewson, Senior Democratic Services Officer Alison.hewson@lincoln.gov.uk

Updated March 2025

Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2025/26

11 June 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair LTP	Regular report by MB
Discretionary Housing Payments Update – Follow Up Cases Awarded 30+months	Martin Walmsley, Laura Brown	Requested HSSC 6 Feb 2025
Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25 (Year-End Results)	Lara Wells/Emily Holmes	Regular Report
Housemark Presentation – Lincoln Compared to Similar Landlords	Jonathan Cox – Housemark	Requested by MH
Quarter 4 (2023/24) – Performance Report	Lara Wells	Regular Report
Quarter 4 (2023/24) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Janine Mills	Regular Report
Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Review	Ali Hewson	Request following Scrutiny Audit
Work Programme 2025/26	Ali Hewson	Regular Report

21 August 2025 – Core Landlord Services

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025/26 (Q1)	Lara Wells/Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report
Quarter 1 (2025/26) – Performance Report	Lara Wells	Regular Report
Quarter 1 (2025/26) – Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Janine Mills	Regular Report
Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Review Results	Ali Hewson	Request following Scrutiny Audit
Tenancy Agreement Review	Marianne Upton	Review
Allocations Policy Review	Joanne Smith	Review
Allocations Policy	Keeley Johnson	Requested by Housing
Building Compliance 6 monthly Update (3 of 6 areas)?	Martin Kerrigan	
Work Programme 2025/26	Paula Burton	Regular Report

16 October 2025 – Core Landlord Services/Additional Housing

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Six Monthly Update – Housing ASB Cases Resolved	Paula Burton, Marianne Upton	Requested HSSC 17 March 2025
Policy Updates TBC		
Work Programme 2025/26	Paula Burton	Regular Report

Updated March 2025

27 November 2025 – Core Landlord Services/Estate Regeneration

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Update	Mick Barber, Chair of LTP	Reserved time for LTP topics
Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025/26 (Q2)	Lara Wells/Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report
Quarter 2 (2025/26) Performance Update inc ASB update	Lara Wells	Regular Report ASB at request of LTP/Members
Quarter 2 (2025/26) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Janine Mills	Regular Report
Policy Updates TBC		Regular Report
Work Programme 2025/26	Paula Burton	Regular Report

February 2026 – 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
Policy Updates TBC		
Building Compliance 6 monthly Update (3 of 6 areas)?	Martin Kerrigan	
Work Programme 2025/26	Paula Burton	Regular Report

Updated March 2025

March 2026

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Origin of Request
Lincoln Tenants Panel Matters	Mick Barber, LTP	Regular Update
Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025/26 (Q3)	Lara Wells/Michelle Hoyles	Regular Report
Quarter 3 (2025/26) – Performance Report-Inc ASB	Lara Wells	Regular Report Quarterly ASB at request of LTP/Members
Quarter 3 (2025/26) Housing Finance Report	Laura Shipley/Janine Mills	New Regular Quarterly Report
Setting of Performance Targets 2026/27	Lara Wells	Annual Review
Six Monthly Update – Housing ASB Cases Resolved	Paula Burton, Marianne Upton	Requested HSSC 17 March 2025
Policy Updates (TBC)	TBC	Reports as Required
Report from PH Cllr Nannestad to Performance Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Nannestad	Annual Report
Work Programme 2026/27	Paula Burton	Regular Report

Updated March 2025

<u>Other Agenda Topics to be Scheduled into 2025/26/27 as Appropriate.</u>

- Complaints
- Lincoln Standard

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SUBJECT: **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**
DIRECTORATE: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK**
REPORT AUTHOR: **CAROLYN WHEATER, MONITORING OFFICER**

1. **Purpose of Report**

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

2. **Recommendation**

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

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Document is Restricted

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