

Title: The Housing Strategy update

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1. Background

- 1.1. The Leeds Housing Strategy 2022-2027 was published in July 2022. An update on the previous Strategy, which ran from 2016 to 2021, the Housing Strategy sets out the city's housing priorities and how the housing sector in the city plays a role in helping the city to meet its wider objectives, as encapsulated in the Best City Ambition and its Three Pillars of Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon.
- 1.2. The city's housing sector has a key role to play in helping to deliver better outcomes for people across the city, in all communities, of all ages and across all tenures.
- 1.3. The city's housing sector continues to face a number of challenges. The demand for affordable housing continues remains high. The continued squeeze on household finances and high interest rates are hitting families hard, particularly those households on lower incomes and changes across the housing sectors are impacting on the availability of affordable housing options.
- 1.4. The Council, along with other social housing providers, continues to invest significant sums in the city's social housing stock, improving energy efficiency and helping to lower domestic bills. Tackling damp and mould continues to be a priority, with new government regulations coming which will see mandatory timescales introduced to tackle not only damp and mould complaints but a range of other repairs when raised by tenants.
- 1.5. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act was enacted in 2023 and the Council along with other social housing providers based in Leeds will be subject to strengthened regulation from April 2024 – being required to report performance against national Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and evidence compliance with updated Consumer Standards.

2. Main Points

- 2.1. The Housing Strategy is built around six key themes:
 - **Meeting Affordable Housing Need** – the intention of this theme is to maximise the number of affordable homes available to rent or buy, effectively meeting demand for affordable housing in the social and private rented sectors and reducing the number of empty homes in the city.
 - **Improving Housing Quality** – this theme is concerned with improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes in Leeds and improving housing quality in the private rented sector.

- **Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping** – this theme focuses on improving our service offer for those affected by repeat or hidden homelessness, further developing our collaborative ways of working, ensuring availability of the right housing types, and ensuring that the health needs of people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping are met as part of a wider approach.
 - **Thriving and Inclusive Communities** – this theme outlines the role the housing sector has to play in helping to maintain community safety and create confident, inclusive communities in pleasant neighbourhoods.
 - **Improving Health through Housing** – the housing sector has an important role to play in helping to reducing health inequalities and supporting people to meet their health needs. This theme is concerned with how the housing sector can work more effectively as part of the health and social care system to meet health and housing needs.
 - **Child and Age Friendly Housing** – this theme seeks to ensure that the housing needs of the youngest and oldest are effectively met through support for care leavers, sustainable tenancies for families, and making sure the right housing options are available to allow older people to remain active and independent.
- 2.2. This report updates the Board on the progress that has been made delivering the target outcomes for each of the themes since the Housing Strategy was published in July 2022 and the last update to Board in September last year.

3. Meeting Affordable Housing Need

3.1. Deliver 750 new affordable homes per year 2022-25

- 3.2. The Leeds Affordable Housing Growth Partnership Action Plan (LAHGPPAP) was finalised at the end of 2022, setting out the affordable housing ambition of all partners, with a pipeline of c750 new affordable homes per annum projected over the three years of the plan 2022-25.
- 3.3. In 2022/23, Leeds recorded delivery of 633 new affordable homes. This is the highest delivery for Leeds since 2010/11. This is significantly higher than previous delivery over the last 10 years, which averaged 484 per annum, against affordable housing need of 1,230 per annum as set out in the Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA; 2017).
- 3.4. As previously reported, the SHMA is currently being refreshed and is likely to show an increased need for affordable housing, with details to be published by Spring 2024. The SHMA will also detail specialist housing needs, including Extra Care Housing, Working Age Adults, homelessness provision, and Children & Families service requirements.
- 3.5. In 2018 the Council set an ambition to deliver 1,500 new affordable homes by 2025 (equivalent to an average 300 homes per annum). Despite the recent inflationary and cost challenges and the challenging build climate during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council Housing Growth

Programme is on track to deliver or be on site with 1,175 of these homes, which is good progress given the standing start of the programme in 2018/19 and the challenges that have been highlighted.

- 3.6. It was recognised early in the programme that to meet the ambitious target, maintain pace and spread the delivery risk, a multi-partner approach should also be progressed. With RP and third sector partners able to secure additional external grant funding and with access to their own financing, the Council has utilised its land assets to unlock the delivery of an additional 540 affordable homes through ringfenced disposals into the affordable housing sector. A positive example is the Railway Street site where the Council has disposed of land to 54 North Homes and work is now progressing well on site to deliver 58 new affordable homes. Scheme design and progression towards securing planning permission is taking place at St Cecilia Street and Copperfields to deliver around another c. 228 additional new affordable homes.
- 3.7. The overall projections for combined delivery are summarised as follows:

Year	Projection
2023/24	732
2024/25	879
2025/26*	1004
2026/27 *	497

*Less accurate future projections

- 3.8. It is usual for delivery to vary from year to year, as affordable housing development is a product of variances in the development programmes of multiple delivering partners, market dynamics that will particularly affect the availability of s106 homes becoming available for acquisition from market-led schemes, and variance in grant and finance availability. The current Homes England Affordable Homes Programme is due to end in 2025. While it is anticipated that this will be replaced with a future programme, Homes England is unable to offer any funding certainty at this time until policy and funding decisions are made by government. In past years this has resulted in a dip in delivery as one programme completes and there is gap in certainty for the next one that allows delivering partners to actively plan for future developments. While Homes England Strategic Partnerships with RPs (agreements that provides longer term funding to partners) may limit the fluctuations this time round, this funding is only in place until 2026 at present. It is therefore important to highlight that the principle affordable housing funding to RP's is available cyclically rather than as a constant stream.
- 3.9. In addition, the, s106 affordable housing delivery may not be fully represented in the projections above as these are only captured when an RP partner has agreed to acquire the s106 properties from a developer. Affordable Homes provided through s106 agreements at Discounted Market Rent (DMR) on Build to Rent schemes (largely in the city centre)

are also being monitored for delivery, but this is challenging as there is no RP involvement.

- 3.10. In an effort to promote LCC land disposals to RPs where appropriate, early notification of sites progressing to auction is being circulated to RPs, with the proviso that they must pay market value, there must be a clear rationale for any 1-1 disposal and the terms of any disposal will be auction timescales i.e., within 28 days. Generally, 1:1's are only justifiable where there is an adjoining ownership interest or wider development scheme being promoted. RPs are now being alerted to reports going to Executive Board on the capital receipt programme rather than at the point properties go onto the market. In this way, they can be proactive and make their case early.
- 3.11. The Investment & Regeneration workstream of West Yorkshire Housing Partnership is working to maximise the delivery of affordable housing across the region, identifying opportunities for joint working and unblocking barriers to delivery. Utilising tools such as Brownfield Housing Funding (BHF) and working with Homes England to maximise the effectiveness of grant funding is supporting this work alongside reviewing land supply and statutory tools available to Councils, LPAs and WYCA. The West Yorkshire Strategic Place Partnership has also identified affordable housing growth as a key theme within its business case. Work is ongoing through the West Yorkshire Strategic Place Partnership (SPP).
- 3.12. BHF is supporting a current programme of site unlocking, with 16 sites in the pipeline for support in Leeds, which could support the delivery of over 4,100 homes (of which over 1,570 are likely to be affordable) through c£48.5m of grant funding. Schemes supported through this funding are already starting to deliver affordable housing, such as The Guinness Partnership's scheme at Points Cross with 311 affordable homes being developed as part of Phase 1.
- 3.13. Maximise the number of high priority customers rehoused through the Leeds Homes register**
- 3.14. Leeds continues to open the third highest number of homelessness assessments in England. In quarter 3 of 2023/24 we completed 1403 homelessness assessments and 59% were owed a prevention duty, meaning they were assessed during the prevention stage (compared to a national average of 39%). 78% of all cases assessed had a positive prevention during quarter 3 meaning that we were able to prevent the homelessness from occurring (compared to a national average of 53%).
- 3.15. There is continued pressure on the Leeds Homes Register. The overall number of applicants on the register has remained steady for the last 3-4 years with 26976 on the register at the end of quarter 3 and over 5300 applicants with a priority A or A+ band. In Q3 there were an average of 388 bids per property.

- 3.16. This has contributed towards average wait times for someone with band A status increasing to 146 weeks, creating significant pressures to the system, with increasing numbers of households in temporary accommodation or supported accommodation who no longer require support and are urgently awaiting move on.
- 3.17. The Council's Executive Board made a decision in December 2023 to begin consultation on proposed changes to the Council's Lettings Policy. Possible changes for consideration include:
- Allocating the majority of properties to applicants in housing need on a permanent basis.
 - Reviewing the criteria for joining the housing register.
 - Restrict adult household members who can be included on an application as a household member to be rehoused.
 - Increase the length of time that a priority is awarded for.
 - Create a new direct let category for rooflessness.
 - The proposed approach to a review of Local Lettings Policies, New Build Lettings Policies and Children at Height.
- 3.18. Consultation began in early January and will conclude in early March, with an online survey available on Your Voice Leeds and attendance at multi-agency forums to seek the views of partners. A workshop was held with Scrutiny Board Members on 31 January. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of working up the proposed Lettings Policy changes.
- 3.19. Housing Associations with housing stock have an important role in supporting pressures on demand for social housing. In late 2023 we met with senior officers of Leeds Housing Associations to seek their support to maximising the number of nominations to Housing Association homes from the Leeds Homes Registers. We are currently reviewing nomination agreements with Housing Association partners and seeking to maximise nominations from those in the highest housing need, including supporting urgent pressures, e.g., customers living in temporary accommodation, living in high cost placements or affected by rough sleeping.
- 3.20. Maximise the number of customers on the Leeds Homes register rehoused into the private rented sector**
- 3.21. Over 15% of our customers have approached LHO due to their private rented tenancies being ended. Last year we saw a spike in section 21s being served and believed it was linked to increased mortgage interest rates for landlords, an increase of market rent (9% increase over 12 months reported in Leeds) and at the time, the Government's progression of the Renters Reform Bill.
- 3.22. As a consequence of these pressures, we have seen an increase in the number of households, particularly families, who are living in temporary accommodation. At the end of December there were 195 households in temporary accommodation (including 100 families and 95 single

households). We continue to work proactively with households to support them to quickly access a permanent housing solution.

3.23. Reduce the number of long term empty homes to 3,776 in the city

- 3.24. At the end of December 2023, the percentage of empty homes across Housing Leeds was 1.35% (700 homes). This represented a net reduction in empty homes of 240 over the period December 2022 – December 2023.
- 3.25. Further reducing the number of empty homes remains a key strategic priority, with additional operational delivery capacity operating to support principal service delivery partners.
- 3.26. Strong cross service collaboration continues to ensure opportunities to maximise outputs is maximised.

4. Improving Housing Quality

4.1. Maximise the percentage of social housing that meets the decent homes standard

- 4.2. The core programmes of work to improve housing quality have continued and 96.21% of Council homes currently meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. This represents a slight increase since the last reporting period.
- 4.3. Works scheduled in the 2024/25 capital programme (subject to approval) include:
- £5m in kitchen and bathroom replacements
 - £500k in window and door replacements
 - £3.5m in roofing replacements
 - £4.5m in domestic heating upgrades
- 4.4. In addition to this work, a number of large scale decarbonisation projects continue in line with the service's commitment to deliver £100m of decarbonisation work between 2020 and 2025.
- 4.5. The service continues to engage fully with the proposals for the review of the Decent Homes Standard and its implications for Leeds.

4.6. Deliver improvements in low carbon housing across all the city's housing sectors

- 4.7. To date, 60 Council high-rise blocks have now had renewable heating installed as part of the Leeds Pipes, District Heating Clusters, and Ground Source Heat Pumps projects, and a further 25 blocks are on site or at design and procurement stage. Our Energy Efficiency Roadmap is in development which includes plans for the remaining 23 blocks (including PFI managed blocks and those heated by gas).
- 4.8. The Fitting the Future and Holtdale projects completed earlier this year were extremely successful with the overwhelming majority of residents providing positive feedback. The projects improved just under 500 homes and utilised over £7.5m of external grant funding.
- 4.9. We are working with colleagues across various council and external organisations to identify future funding opportunities to allow more homes

to benefit from works of this nature. However, with funding opportunities increasingly difficult to secure, work is also underway to look at alternative, innovative ways in which to ensure Housing decarbonisation projects continue in future years.

- 4.10. The city as a whole is making progress towards its goal of achieving Zero Carbon, with (at December 2021) citywide emissions down 38% against the 2005 baseline. As at April 2023, the Council's operational emissions have dropped 62.9% against the 2005 baseline.
- 4.11. The Climate, Energy and Green Spaces team produce the Climate Emergency Annual Report to update on the progress towards the net zero ambition. The next report will go to Executive Board in September 2024, and every 12 months thereafter.
- 4.12. The Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) was introduced following the declaration of the Climate Emergency in March 2019, and has a role to check, challenge, and support the relevant work of different council departments as appropriate to help ensure that the council is leading by example and making progress as fast as practical towards its net zero ambition, with reasonable community and stakeholder engagement and support.
- 4.13. The Council has recently accepted a £100k grant from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to develop a detailed service blueprint and test a prototype in support of the development and launch of an operational one stop shop (OSS) to support owner-occupiers in the city to install energy efficiency improvements to decarbonise their homes.
- 4.14. If the research is successful and leads to and leads to new products which help to create a working able-to-pay market for energy efficiency improvements the project would:
 - Make homes warmer and cheaper to heat, cut fuel poverty and reduce cold related illness.
 - Create good quality jobs in the construction sector to carry out works to homes. These will be new green jobs in a sector with some of the highest potential for low carbon employment and where the switch to a green economy is most crucial and training needs are highest.
 - Reduce the energy consumption of able to pay homes, which are often high carbon emitters, making a substantial contribution to our net zero ambitions.
- 4.15. The Council has also secured a £15m HUG2 grant which aims to install both insulation and low carbon heating in 750 non-gas heated homes, to improve the SAP rating from below C to C or above. This is now underway and will be completed by March 2025.
- 4.16. Ensure compliance with the 2022 Building Safety Act**
- 4.17. All Council buildings within the scope of the Building Safety Act (BSA) were required to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) by end of October 2023, including the provision of Key Building Information. This deadline was met for all 119 LCC buildings in scope.

4.18. From April 2024, these buildings require completion and submission of a Building Safety Case to be submitted to the BSR. Following investment and growth in the Building Safety Team and Fire Safety Team, progress to achieve this is on track.

4.19. Additional requirements under BSA include improvements in resident access to building information, known as the Golden Thread and the development of a building specific communications strategy for in-scope blocks. In all cases, progress remains on track with strong assurance of compliance when the requirements go live.

4.20. Improve SAP ratings to an average of C as soon as possible

4.21. The average SAP rating of the properties managed by Housing Leeds, BITMO, and the PFIs is currently 70.25 which is SAP Band C. Of the total 52,998 homes, 38,704 (73.03%) are at or above SAP Band C, and the remaining 14,294 (26.97%) are SAP Band D or lower.

4.22. The Council's capital investment programme set out a plan to deliver over £100m of renewable heating and energy efficiency projects, targeting the worst performing Council homes first over the five-year period 2020-2025

4.23. A plan is currently in development for the remaining homes which will establish the most appropriate technology for each property type. Energy modelling software recently procured (March 2024 will help plan investment scenarios for the most cost effective energy efficiency measures these recommendations will then form part of the capital investment plan for 2026-2030.

4.24. Maximise positive outcomes through the Selective Licencing Scheme

4.25. Up to December 2023, the Council had received 7551 applications for licences for 6570 properties resulting in the issuing of 6016 licences across both designated areas of Beeston and Harehills. A number of applications have not progressed due to non-payment of fees, refusal, incomplete applications or that they were not requiring one in the first place.

4.26. Up to December 2023, the Council had conducted 3923 inspections and revisits across both areas, not just by the selective licensing teams but the service as a whole, and which addressed issues relating to licence compliance and wider issues, such as the existence of any hazards under Part 1 Housing Act 2004. This has resulted in just over 1300 homes being improved and 4000 people benefiting from safer, better-quality homes.

4.27. Unfortunately, compliance with the required standards in both Beeston and Harehills has been an issue, with around 80% of properties inspected found to be non-compliant with the legal requirements. Whilst most have been addressed informally, there have been a significant number of landlords where formal action has been appropriate. This has meant the Council has had to serve over 300 civil penalties for various housing-related offences. Formal action has been taken in circumstances where:

- Properties have been let without a licence, which is a strict liability offence.
 - Poor quality homes have been let to tenants, leading to the service of improvement notices which the landlord has failed to comply with.
 - Inspections have identified significant breaches of licence conditions which have required immediate action, or licence holders have failed to remedy breaches after they have been brought to their attention.
- 4.28. To support the partnership approach there have been action and community days to support partners in addressing wider issues such as crime, antisocial behaviour and environmental issues. Officers have held regular community surgeries in the area such as at the Hamara Centre in Beeston on a Thursday lunchtime to allow the us to better engage with the community. In Harehills there have been engagement days with partners such as the to engage with residents about selective licensing when it was launched in the Ashton's.
- 4.29. In addition to addressing housing quality, selective licensing has allowed the Council to address wider issues affecting the lives of those living in the designated areas. By proactively crossing the threshold into people's homes, this has allowed officers working with partners to address issues in relation to health and wellbeing and the financial challenges faced by people. This has led to 1419 referrals to other agencies for support and assistance so far. Examples of such interventions include:
- An elderly gentleman living in poor conditions, with wastewater in the property, a blocked toilet and a kitchen which was not fit to use amongst wider issues came to the attention of the team. He also had no food or heating and was unable to pay his bills. There were real concerns about his wellbeing, the suitability of the accommodation, and his vulnerability with the potential issue of cuckooing as well. Working in partnership with LASBT and Adults we were able to address his immediate issues by supplying a food parcel, we worked with the landlord to bring the home up to standard and ultimately worked with others to get him re-housed into more suitable accommodation. The property itself was then fully renovated and re-let.
 - A young mother was discovered by the team who was struggling. Officers contacted Leeds Baby Bank and items were obtained for an expectant mother including a bath, a pushchair, a bed and nappies, etc. Working with Housing Support we were able to get her moved to a more suitable home with a support network around her.
 - A family had been moved from another authority with no furniture. Working with Leeds and Moortown Furniture Store and Zarach new beds, bedding, and nightwear together with bedroom furniture were obtained for a family who literally had mattresses in a bedroom that were shared.
 - A quote from a resident following a proactive visit to their home - 'I've lived here for 3 years, and nothing had ever been done to the house. The bathroom and kitchen have always been in a poor state. I've never had

any smoke alarms or fire doors. I've not even had handrails on the stairs which I find difficult to get up and down safely. Since the council have been involved, through Selective Licensing, they have made the landlord put all these things right and I am really happy with the result. I now love living in this house.'

- Another tenant who received support because of officers visiting their property 'I moved from Luton, Bedfordshire and I moved through the council due to me having issues with my husband. I got told that my house in Leeds was going to be a 4-bedroom but to my surprise it was a 3-bedroom, and the landlords turned the living room into a bedroom. They had put on the contract that it was a 4-bedroom and had charged me for 4-bedroom house. The house was in very poor condition, and I had told the landlord many times to try and do something and every time they would use the same excuse that the home was deep cleaned when it was clearly not. My daughter had slipped down the stairs once due to water coming through the roof when it had rained. We had told them, but they decided not to do anything about it. My landlords were absolutely awful to me. When you and your team told me you could help me, it meant so much I was so happy! You did so much for me and I can't Thank You enough for everything you've have done for me. I will always remember you for everything you have done.'
- We have also worked with landlords to help them improve their businesses and accommodation. Feedback from a landlord shows positive outcomes by supporting the sector, not just undertaking enforcement, are being achieved as well: 'Thanks for today and the way you conducted the re-inspection. It was fair and professional and encourages an effective working relationship between landlords and LCC. I am really proud of how the bathroom has turned out in Flat 1. I have already moved to get those two jobs completed asap. I have also spoke to the fire alarm company to address the issue of the orange light to stop the continuous 'control enabled' signal being on. Following your previous visit in October, I have been making steps towards improvements across another property and I think I can have my other property (3 self-contained flats) available for inspection soon. Thanks again.'
- The work in the areas has allowed the service not just the selective licensing officers to address the rogue landlords in the area. Working in partnership with agencies has allowed a greater impact in addressing those landlords who use the sector to support criminal activity. As an example, by being part of Operation Barrowberry, the Clear Hold Build strategy for Harehills, working together with the Police and others we have attended over 40 warrants and taken follow up action, helped to remove millions of pounds worth of cannabis, and had considerable success in addressing criminality in the sector. This success has been as a direct result of the introduction of the schemes in the two areas.

5. Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

5.1. Prevent or relieve homelessness in at least 80% of completed housing options cases

- 5.2. Leeds has a very successful approach to preventing homelessness - often cited as national best practice. The 'positive prevention' rate measures the percentage of cases where the customer approaches as 'threatened with homelessness' (i.e., they are at risk of losing their home), but either the existing or alternative accommodation is secured for at least six months. In the most recently published homelessness data, the average positive prevention rate nationally is 53%. The percentage in Leeds for October – December 2023 (the most recent reported figure) is 78% which is significantly above the national average and also above other comparable cities.
- 5.3. Where customers approach us as already homeless, our successful 'relief' rate (i.e., finding them a new home) is 40%, against a national average of 32%.
- 5.4. Leeds continually adapts its prevention model against the challenging backdrop of homelessness trends both locally and nationally. We continue to strengthen our relationships with registered social providers to maximise outcomes from the responsive re-housing scheme and work has been taking place to expand our Landlord Letting Scheme – this scheme offers incentives for landlords in the city to make their properties available to the service for customers who are homeless to be matched and receive an offer of housing to resolve their situation.
- 5.5. A new rent guarantee scheme has been launched which is hoped to attract more landlords and therefore, create more prevention opportunities for the service. Approaches from people being asked to leave accommodation arrangements with friends and family accounts for over one third of homelessness applications taken in Leeds. Many report that the cost of living crisis is impacting on feasibility of continuing these arrangements, so the service has been supporting households through the Household Support Fund to enable to them to stay at home for longer.

5.6. Reduce the number of homeless 16/17 year olds to national average levels

- 5.7. We accepted approximately 5,090 prevention/relief duties in the 2023 calendar year to households in Leeds.
- 5.8. Of these, we accepted a prevention/relief duty to 71 young people aged 16-17.
- 5.9. This is 1.4% of duties owed to 16-17 year olds in 2023.
- 5.10. In 2019/20, 3.3% of prevention/relief duties were owed to young people aged 16-17 - this initially highlighted an over-representation in Leeds given the national average is 1% and the regional average is 2%.

- 5.11. The percentage of prevention/relief duties owed to 16-17 year olds has halved when comparing the calendar year 2023 to 2019/20 financial year.
- 5.12. There has been positive joint working with Children Social Work Services and in 2023 a series of joint training sessions took place to embed a better understanding of each other's operational processes and application of relevant law. This has been put into practice for better outcomes for young people. The youth hub continues to operate on a weekly basis at Merrion House with earlier preventative outcomes being achieved for young people prior to a case relying upon statutory homelessness assistance.

5.13. Reduce the number of people rough sleeping

- 5.14. Monthly multi-agency partnership meetings are taking place to identify rough sleepers and agree supportive actions.
- 5.15. A commissioned outreach team are working six days a week in Leeds identifying and engaging with those who are rough sleeping.
- 5.16. The partnership completes several multi-agency outreach sweeps each day to provide wraparound support for those on the street. Effective pathways are in place to ensure that those found rough sleeping can access quick homelessness assessments.
- 5.17. For those who are in an off-street accommodation provision, move on plans are being created that meets the needs of the individual. This could be into properties through our Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, through supported accommodation providers, or street to tenancy options. Those taking street to tenancy options are supported by navigators to help the transition and sustain the tenancy.
- 5.18. Bevan Healthcare are working with outreach teams so that people who require health care but struggle to engage in mainstream health services can be supported.
- 5.19. A hospital in-reach team is in place so that people at risk of rough sleeping have the right support at the point they are discharged, rather than returning to rough sleeping.
- 5.20. Work is being done with Forward Leeds to deliver on-street prescribing so that people can access OST and it is not a barrier to accommodation.
- 5.21. A new housing first pilot has started which will see Housing Leeds properties become available for street to tenancy options.

5.22. Maximise partnership working to ensure that people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping are supported into sustainable tenancies

- 5.23. The Homelessness Prevention Forum continues to meet quarterly, working on building citywide awareness of emerging homelessness pressures and improving partnerships to address these. The most recent forum focused on increased approaches from refugees newly granted their status following the increased positive decisions being made by the Home Office.
- 5.24. Actively contributing to the Leeds Migration Partnership to improve processes for home office discontinuation cases, providing advice to

partners in a housing context so they can enhance support to refugees and create leaflets in different languages for use by partners.

- 5.25. The service is working well with prisons and probation services to ensure that prison leavers who will experience homelessness have an assessment before they leave, with accommodation plans in place for release.
- 5.26. Work is currently taking place with health partners to help design a form for GP services to refer to the service and offer quick advice to patients when they recognise a housing issue.
- 5.27. A dedicated hospital discharge team is working with hospitals to improve partnership working on cases where in-patients are homeless and bed blocking.
- 5.28. The supported housing improvement programme is improving partnership working with supported providers, the private sector and benefits service to improve the quality of supported provision in the city, but also help people who are ready to live independently to move on, freeing up provision for more people who would benefit from supported accommodation.

6. Thriving and Inclusive Communities

6.1. Maximise the housing sector's effective management of anti-social behaviour/community safety through a multi-agency approach

- 6.2. This report builds on the work noted on the September 2023 review.
- 6.3. Housing Leeds and the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) are reviewing the ASB policy and procedures relating to the effective management of ASB and partnership working. This is to make sure they are all in step with our role as a responsible Landlord.
- 6.4. Housing Leeds are currently preparing information on how housing and partners deal with issues of ASB, community safety and the safety of public spaces to submit to the Regulator of Social Housing.
- 6.5. Housing Leeds will share responsibility on the deployment of Team Leodis from April 2024. This reflects the fact that the Police will also be part funding this team. Leodis is a Police Sergeant-led team of three Police Constables who have specialist knowledge utilising the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 especially surrounding ASB within LCC-tenanted communities. This team works closely with LASBT and Housing.
- 6.6. Housing's Private Rented Sector Team are a lead partner in addressing ASB issues, caused by the irresponsible letting and management of private landlords in the designated parts of Beeston and Harehills.
- 6.7. Changes have been introduced within the ASB crime and Policing act 2014. We have recognised how we can simplify the victim's journey when seeking an ASB review. We have developed an enhanced process to now include Hate incidents within the ASB review process for all residents within Leeds and tenants of both LCC and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

- 6.8. We are forging stronger links with the Registered Social Landlords in Leeds that have not previously engaged within the Safer Leeds CSP. We will be sending a request to all RSLs requesting they opt into the ASB process as well as become more involved in ASB problem solving and have a representative on the ASB Board.
- 6.9. In August 2023 we introduced LASBT Mediation team. This is led by the LASBT Triage manager and consist of three mediation officers. All customers are offered this service to prevent escalation of neighbour disputes. The officer has undergone intensive training and only became active in August 2023. This team also are the designated officers relating to LCC ASB reviews.
- 6.10. We are constantly reviewing our tools and guidance for both Housing and LASBT colleagues as well as our tenants:
- Development of a 'Good Neighbour Guide' is moving forward. This is aimed at empowering all residents within Leeds to try and resolve neighbourhood disputes at the earliest opportunity preventing escalation. This requires further consultation and checks to be made to ensure the information within it is up to date and has a sound legal basis.
- 6.11. Maximise the housing sector's effective management of domestic abuse through a multi-agency approach**
- 6.12. In the 12 months to September 2023, there was a 3% reduction in Domestic Violence incidents reported to WYP from October 2022 to September 2023 and numbers of contacts to the Leeds Domestic Violence Service helpline have decreased by 0.5% to 7,211 contacts.
- 6.13. Despite the drop, there has been an increase in the complexity of cases. In the 12 months to September 2023, 6,000 multi-agency safety plans were developed for high-risk victims of DV.
- 6.14. Key areas of work include:
- Safe Accommodation - funding from central government means that additional support is now available within safe accommodation. This includes more support in refuge settings, including extra workers to support children and young people and domestic abuse support workers based in supported housing projects so that those people can access support. The Sanctuary Support Scheme continues to provide support to those people who can remain in their homes. The scheme is also reaching people from marginalised communities who might otherwise not access support. Age UK has now provided a worker for the scheme allowing for better engagement with older victim-survivors and recognising the specific challenges they face.
 - The Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2023 to 2028 has been launched and has been developed using a co-production approach involving victim-survivors and partners. It is supported by arrangements to have a lead board member for each theme and a board forward plan to ensure all areas of the strategy are reviewed and progress updated throughout the year.

- Supporting Children - strategic work continues with Children's Services and the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) to review how the needs of the child are met both through the Front Door arrangements and through wider partnership structures. Partners successfully bid for Ministry of Justice funding to support a young person's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate at the Front Door, this funding has now been extended to 2025 and additional services for children and young people have been commissioned both in the refuge arrangements and through specialist housing providers who work with young people. At a recent board meeting, the experience of one young person was presented by workers to the board. This enabled board members to consider their support to children viewed through the lens of her experience and it empowered that young woman to know that her experience was helping to shape future practice. This exercise demonstrated our commitment to recognising and responding to their needs at a high level within the partnership arrangements.

6.15. Ensure that a preventative and proactive 'zero tolerance' approach to hate crime is in place across the housing sector through a multi-agency approach

- 6.16. The ASB Crime and Policing Act was revised in March 2023. In this it included Hate incidents to be considered within the new ASB case review meetings, previously known as 'Community Trigger'. This ensures entry level Hate incidents are reviewed as ASB cases are now. The guidance document states that although Case Reviews are designed to deal with ASB, ASB can often be motivated by hate and the relevant bodies may wish to include reports of these incidents as part of their procedures. If a hate related case is reviewed under this process and there are significant blockage or barriers, then it can be referred to a new ASB/Hate Crime MARAC meeting. A process for this in Leeds has been developed to be brought to the Hate Crime Strategic Board in February 2024.

Hate Crime Awareness Week

- 6.17. A series of training sessions, events and engagements were organised by the Safer Stronger Communities team, West Yorkshire Police and partners to mark Hate Crime Awareness Week in October 2023 including:
- A launch event focused on LGBT+ hate with high level speakers including Tracy Brabin.
 - Public engagement events such as a Police lead event at Leeds Bus Station and at Leeds Train Station with the Angels of Freedom charity.
 - In person training sessions such as for the Leeds Migrant Access Project in partnership with the Safer Stronger Communities Team, Stop Hate UK and West Yorkshire Police
 - A powerful session on Trans People Awareness delivered by West Yorkshire Police.
 - Online sessions on topics such as Misogyny and Antisemitism.

- A special viewing of a virtual tour of Auschwitz at Civic Hall.
- A tour of a Third Party Reporting Centre in Leeds with the Lord Mayor.

Third Party Reporting and Signposting

6.18. Third Party Reporting Centres provide people with an alternative way to report a hate crime or incident other than going to the Police. Over the past year, the Safer Stronger Communities team and Stop Hate UK have led on a programme of work to relaunch a few key Reporting Centres in the city as well adopt new Centres. All of the Leeds City Council Community Hubs act as Reporting Centres. Third Party Hate Signposting centres are also being launched in addition to the reporting centres. The role of Third Party Signposting centres will be to signpost members of the public to the third party reporting centres or to West Yorkshire Police should they require it. Stop Hate UK are currently delivering a series of training sessions for existing and new reporting centres.

Anti-Muslim Prejudice and Anti-Semitism Work

- 6.19. An Anti-Muslim Prejudice Community Reference Group has been established in 2023 to further guide the delivery of the recommendations in Coventry's report of the Islamophobia Survey carried out in 2020 and to track the progress of the Anti-Muslim Prejudice Working Group.
- 6.20. There are plans to join the existing infrastructure around Anti-Muslim prejudice for a new model around anti-Semitism.
- 6.21. A conference on Anti-Semitism and Anti-Muslim Prejudice took place in December 2023 focusing on the work on both agendas with a range of speakers and workshop activity.

6.22. Maximise the housing sector's role in minimising poverty, including fuel poverty and maximising digital and financial inclusion in the city

- 6.23. 22% of the Leeds population is living in relative poverty (after housing costs) equal to 178,630 people in Leeds.
- 6.24. 2% of children in Leeds are living in relative poverty (before housing costs), equal to 32,933 children under the age of 16.
- 6.25. November's Autumn Statement increased Local Housing Allowance rates back to the 30th percentile of local rent levels. Whilst this is anticipated to alleviate pressure for benefit claimants living in private rented accommodation, if as anticipated the freeze is reinstated the following year, the pressure on households will be restored.
- 6.26. Between April and December 2023, the Housing Officer (Income) (HOI) team worked with 3675 Council households and has been able to secure £2.3m in additional income for them with an average additional income per family of £629. Of the 3212 total households supported, 961 of those were households with children.
- 6.27. Funding has been secured from 19 sources, the top 5 being:
- Universal Credit

- Housing Benefit
- Disability Benefits
- Pension Age Benefits
- Council Tax Support

6.28. Feedback from the Teams indicates that the Cost-of-Living crisis is still affecting tenants city wide. An increase in referrals from tenants of pension age has been observed and have targeted this group to provide support in applying for Pension Credits. Food and fuel poverty are raised by most tenants as significant pressures. To support tenants to maximise their income and keep warm this winter our gas contractor, PH Jones, has partnered with British Gas as part of social value arrangements to offer £300k of free fuel vouchers, available to Council tenants on prepayment meters who are experiencing financial hardship to access gas and electricity.

6.29. Maximise the housing sector's role in supporting activity to reduce poverty in priority neighbourhoods

6.30. Following the approval of the new Priority Ward model at Executive Board in March 2022 Housing Leeds has been working with Communities Teams and other partners to develop Priority Ward Partnership Plans, outlining partnership priorities for each of the Priority Wards. Housing is also represented on the Neighbourhood Improvement Board to ensure connected into the strategic direction of the Council's work on Priority Wards.

7. Improving Health Through Housing

7.1. Maximise the housing sector's role in minimising health inequalities in the city

7.2. Following the launch of Leeds as a Marmot city in June 2023 Housing Leeds has been working closely with Public Health colleagues to support the Institute of Health Equity to complete its research into housing and health inequalities as one of its two areas of main focus for the first year of the partnership. This research has included discussions with a number of key housing and related services in the city, along with front line housing practitioners. A workshop for key health and housing partners was held in November 2023 to consider the opportunities for systemic change. The Institute of Health Equity is currently working with the Council to finalise its recommendations for the main areas of focus in year 2 of the partnership.

7.3. Maximise the housing sector's role as part of the health and social care system

7.4. The Health and Housing Steering Group, with representation from across the health and housing sectors, continues to oversee work to strengthen the housing sector's role as part of the health and social care system by improving health through housing. A number of projects are currently underway including the following:

- 7.5. **Health and Housing Sector Training** – a pilot area of Inner South Leeds has now been identified to deliver training to health and housing staff working within the area so that health staff gain a better understanding of housing services available to patients and how to access them and share information on common housing issues and sector pressures and housing staff gain a better understanding of how to support tenants to access health services and to respond to health issues, particularly around mental health. The proposed approach has been considered at the Local Care Partnership and planning is underway to deliver the training in June 2024.
- 7.6. **Children and Young People’s Asthma Pathway** – Housing Leeds has worked with the Health Partnership Team, the Integrated Care Board and Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust to develop a red and amber pathway for children and young people being treated by the Tertiary Asthma Clinic where there is a significant and immediate clinical risk of harm linked to a housing issue (red pathway) or there has been a recent presentation in an acute setting and at least three clinical risks identified which include a housing issue (amber pathway). The pathway provides a route for response for cases across all housing sectors, it has now been in place for three months and has resulted in interventions for five patients. We will monitor the number of cases and outcomes over the coming months to determine if further improvements can be made. Work is now underway to consider the green pathway – this is the more difficult pathway as will include a much larger number of cases.
- 7.7. **Hospital Discharge Project** – covered in paragraph 7.15.
- 7.8. Increase the percentage of adaptations that are completed within a target timescale**
- 7.9. In the 2023/24 year to date, 76% of public sector adaptations are being completed within the target timescale. Health and Housing are carrying out 84% of adaptations within timescale, and contractors are carrying out 66% within the timescale.
- 7.10. This an improvement on the 74% of public sector adaptations that were completed within target in 2022/23. Whilst contractors are being used to help tackle backlogs, public sector provision continues to be impacted by labour market shortages and manufacturing delays.
- 7.11. 96% of private sector adaptations were completed within the target timescale in 2023/24, to the end of January. Health and Housing are carrying out 74% in timescale and contractors 90%.
- 7.12. We are looking to complete approximately 1561 major adaptations in the public and private sector for 23/24, spending just under £16m. The service continues to see more complex adaptations being requested, which means higher costs, but in addition to this material and labour costs continue to rise. In the public sector we have seen unprecedented volumes of adaptation requests and therefore customers moving forward will be waiting longer for their adaptation.

7.13. There has been a rise on number of grants from last year to this year being completed and this work helps people to live independently. Many people as the age wish to remain in their home for as long as they can, and this work helps to deliver that and helps to reduce the pressure on the NHS and alternative housing options, such as sheltered housing.

7.14. Strengthen housing and health pathways in place for hospital discharge, people who are rough sleeping and experiencing mental health difficulties

7.15. Pathways for hospital discharge have been greatly improved by the introduction of the two housing caseworkers as part of the hospital discharge project. Between June 2023 to February 2024, 78 patients were assisted to return to their own home either temporarily or permanently, 23 patients were re-housed and 10 patients were moved into care homes or recovery HUBS, either temporarily or permanently.

7.16. Work continues via the Leeds Street Support Team to ensure that the health needs of those who are rough sleeping are being effectively responded to. The Target Priority Group of people have been reviewed with professionals working together to review each person's accommodation, health and substance misuse issues, targeting health and wellbeing support as part of an integrated care package.

7.17. Maximise digital innovation in housing to improve health outcomes

7.18. The Leeds Digital Strategy 2022-2025 recognises how integrated technology can be used to enable proactive self-care and to help deliver health and care services. Housing Leeds is connected into a number of digital innovation projects across the city focused on improving health outcomes including a Public Health project to undertake indoor air quality monitoring in homes to better understand the seasonality of air quality, and an Adult Social Care technology enabled care project to develop a strategic approach to improving the prescribing and take up of technology enabled care including self-care, early help, targeted support and complex care.

7.19. The housing sector minimises safeguarding risks to residents

7.20. Housing Leeds continues to be represented on both the city's adults and children's safeguarding boards and for influencing the housing sectors' role in ensuring that safeguarding risks are effectively managed. Housing Leeds continues to be involved in the delivery of the Adult's Board's Self Neglect Strategy which was launched during 2022 and are part of Board sub-groups to monitor quality/performance, undertake safeguarding reviews and manage exceptional risk. Housing Leeds continues to work closely with Housing Safeguarding Lead Officers to ensure that they are abreast of developments and undertaken ongoing professional development.

7.21. Work also continues with repairs contractors to ensure that they have robust safeguarding arrangements in place within their organisation. Housing Leeds also continues to co-ordinate six monthly meetings with

Housing Association partners to ensure that they are connected into the strategic priorities of the Boards and to review the learning from safeguarding reviews.

8. Child and Age Friendly Housing

8.1. 100% of care leavers move into suitable accommodation

- 8.2. Leeds Housing Options (LHO) continue to work with partners in children's social care around future joint protocol for assessment of 16/17 year old homeless young people. Training has been delivered for senior and operational managers within both services to raise awareness of the Southwark Judgement and best practice for handling homeless cases within this age group. The training was delivered by a national expert and has also delivered 'train the trainer' sessions so this knowledge and expertise remains available and deliverable in future.
- 8.3. A bid is currently being worked on for the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP), which is targeted towards 18–25-year-olds that are not served by existing commissioned providers (usually based on more significant support needs). If successful, it will deliver additional accommodation for vulnerable young people that have struggled to access conventional supported projects such as Our Way Leeds.
- 8.4. Children's services are looking to fund two 'staying close' workers. These staff will be based within LHO with a remit of helping to rehouse care leavers, specifically those that are accommodated (often at great expense) outside of Leeds. Work is ongoing to develop the roles which will be going out to advert and present a real opportunity to help vulnerable care leavers return to their areas of support but also a cost saving based on the expense of the existing accommodation.
- 8.5. Work carried out by the Local Government Authority-funded project to improve the rehousing pathway for young people helped to inform this work through considering available data, relevant policy and strategy documents, semi-structured interviews with internal and external stakeholders, including some young people, dip sampling of 20 recent cases of homeless 16- and 17-year-olds, visits to some services and the author's own knowledge of youth housing options and homelessness.
- 8.6. The dip sampling showed that most teenagers who go on to become homeless at the age of 16 or 17 are already known to Children's Services due to other risks and needs.
- 8.7. Whilst there are universal and more targeted services for children, young people and families in communities, there are gaps for some 16- and 17-year-olds, often those most at risk of homelessness, especially if they are no longer at school or college. They do not have 'touch points' to services and are at risk of being out of sight when they are at highest risk of homelessness.
- 8.8. Young people learn about housing and their options locally from their families and peers, but this can be supplemented by the provision of local

information provided by the local authority or another agency. Realistic information and advice can cover in some detail the realities of living independently and the extent to which some housing options are limited for young people in a local area.

- 8.9. The next step is to progress with the joint assessment protocol and the Young Persons Multi Agency Panel, which relaunched in May 2023.
- 8.10. The panel is attended by Our Way Leeds – who provide housing support and accommodation to people aged 16-25 living in the city - Children’s Services, Corporate Parenting, Youth Justice Team, Housing Options and Housing Management. Meetings cover placements for young people accessing supported accommodation and support for move on when ready to live independently with a new focus on supporting those who are living independently but whose tenancies are at risk of failing.
- 8.11. Collaboration between housing and social care robustly in place to maximise tenancy sustainment of families**
- 8.12. Joint working is ongoing between Housing and Children’s Social Work teams to support families in council tenancies.
- 8.13. Partnership working continues with Children’s Health and Disability (CHAD) through attendance at their Operations Group where inappropriate referrals and learning outcomes are discussed. Draft guidance has been produced and is being considered by relevant teams to help staff identify the correct route for inquiries relating to adaptations to reduce inappropriate referrals and unnecessary waiting times.
- 8.14. Housing staff attended West Yorkshire Trauma Informed Foundation Training promoting understanding of the barriers to engagement and awareness of how to appropriately respond to a person that has suffered trauma, improving confidence, communication, and insight about the approaches for engaging with and supporting families to achieve better outcomes.
- 8.15. A dedicated Damp & Mould team was set up in the wake of the coroner’s report on the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale which saw a ten-fold increase in damp and mould enquiries from tenants and visiting professionals. The team log, triage and take appropriate action on these enquiries, prioritising the most urgent cases and using remote technology to identify/diagnose cases more efficiently. Officers have been sharing updates with colleagues in children’s services, family support networks and schools to ensure all are aware and concerns are being acted upon.
- 8.16. An E-Learning package has been developed and has been rolled out to Housing staff and it is due to be shared with Children’s staff to help them offer advice identify issues when visiting homes.
- 8.17. Deliver 1,000 extra care units by 2028**
- 8.18. Good progress is being made in the development of seven new extra care schemes via Home Group and Housing Leeds, with two Home Group schemes now opened and a further one scheme due early this year, and the Leeds City Council scheme at Gascoigne House in Middleton opened in

November 2023. 43 homes are now occupied or have been allocated and 17 are awaiting first allocation.

- 8.19. The Extra Care Project Board, led by Adult Social Care continues to oversee the effective delivery of the extra care model in Leeds, working to ensure that allocations are made that efficiently and effectively to those most in need and to evaluate the impact of schemes.
- 8.20. Housing Leeds has recently contributed towards an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) enquiry into the future of sheltered housing. The outcomes and recommendations from the enquiry are expected shortly. Alongside this, Housing Leeds has recently started a review of its own sheltered housing offer – considering how it can better meet current and future need, including the use of more digital solutions, so that the staffing support offer is focused on residents who need more intensive support, and to ensure that the model is financially viable.
- 8.21. Meet targets for new accessible homes delivered via the planning system**
- 8.22. Monitoring of approvals for planning permission reveals that Policy H10 targets for both M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’ and M4(3) ‘wheelchair user dwellings’ are currently being met. This relates to recording of liable schemes for the development of new dwellings of two or more dwellings (new build developments only - excludes conversions, change of use, care homes and student accommodation).
- 8.23. Q1 2023/24, the latest figures available, saw the approval of 340 homes meeting the requirements of M4(2) exceeds the target of 30%.
- 8.24. Approvals of M4(3) liable units met the target provision at 2.0%.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. The Leeds Housing Board is recommended to note and comment on the updates contained in this report and discuss any areas of particular interest or concern.