

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 9 JULY 2012

Title of report	AFFORDABLE HOMES GUIDANCE (THE TENANCY STRATEGY)
Contacts	<p>Councillor Trevor Pendleton 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Planning and Engagement 01530 454661 sue.haslett@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To consult Policy Development Group on the proposals at 2.2-2.4 for fixed term tenancies, affordable rent homes and their effective management
Council Priorities	Value for Money Business and Jobs Safer and Healthier District
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	It is not possible at this stage to quantify financial implications or staff implications. This is discussed in more detail in the report at 4.0
Link to relevant CAT	Fairer CAT
Risk Management	Risk assessments will be completed as appropriate
Equalities Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment already undertaken, issues identified
Human Rights	N/A
Transformational Government	The guidance reflects local decisions on the use of social and affordable rent housing, legislated for by the Localism Act 2011
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory

<p>Consultees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Leadership Team • Members of the North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership including NWL Single Homeless Project, the Marlene Reid Centre, David Wilson Homes • Blaby, Melton, Oadby and Wigston, Charnwood, Hinckley and Bosworth and Harborough local authorities • Registered Providers • Leicestershire Probation and YOT • Leicestershire County Council Adults and Communities and Childrens' Services • Leicestershire Police • NWL Homelessness Project • Council tenants (through an online survey) • Tenants and Leaseholders Forum
<p>Background papers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North West Leicestershire Housing Strategy 2011-2015 • North West Leicestershire Homelessness Strategy • North West Leicestershire Allocations Policy • Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing, November 2010 • Localism Act 2011 Part 7 Housing • The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2012 • The Rent Standard • June 2011 - Managing the impact of housing reforms in your area: working towards the tenancy strategy, CIH • January 2012 consultation - Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England, DCLG
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>THAT POLICY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN THE REPORT AND MAKE COMMENT FOR CABINET CONSIDERATION</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Social housing reform, legislated for by the Localism Act 2011, presents local authorities and registered providers with a number of choices in order to more effectively manage social rent and affordable rent homes to better meet housing need with a limited resource. In summary the choices are:

- *To offer fixed term tenancies*
- *To enter into the 'affordable rent' market (homes rented at up to 80% market rents)*
- *To limit who will qualify to join the housing register (waiting list)*
- *To use the private rented sector to discharge the homelessness duty*

Local authorities and providers can also choose to operate in the same way as they do now eg, to continue offering lifetime tenancies.

This Policy Development Group report relates to decisions on the *first two choices only*. These are explained in more detail in Annex 1 of the guidance at Appendix 1.

The review of the council's allocation policy will consider the housing register, whilst the homelessness review will consider the role of the private rented sector in enabling the council to meet its statutory homeless duty. These are pieces of work planned for 2012/13.

- 1.2 The Act also places a statutory duty on local authorities to publish a tenancy strategy which should describe the matters to which all registered providers (including the council landlord) must 'have regard to' in developing their policies on tenure and rent. 'Have regard to' does not require registered providers to do what the council asks, but they must make it clear why their policies differ, if they do.
- 1.3 Although the tenancy strategy is not required to be published until 15 January 2013, social housing regulation requires registered providers to have a tenancy policy in place from April 2012.
- 1.4 In North West Leicestershire the term 'tenancy strategy' was felt to not clearly reflect the purpose of the document; it has been renamed as 'guidance'. Consultation feedback indicates that this approach has been viewed positively by providers.

2.0 PROPOSALS

2.1 The proposals can be summarised under the following headings:

- Preferred tenancy terms
- Preferred rent levels
- Preferred approach to managing fixed term tenancies and affordable rent homes

2.2 Preferred tenancy terms

Preferences for tenancy terms have been expressed as minimum tenancy lengths. The provider can choose for these to be longer, or shorter in exceptional circumstances. The preferences are for:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for most households¹
- For fixed term tenancies to be re-issued at the end of the term unless there is a significant change of circumstance eg, under-occupation in a family home.
- For households with a disabled household member (including those with a long term health condition):
 - For fixed term tenancies only to be used to enable the best use of adapted stock
 - A minimum ten year fixed term tenancy where it is likely that the disabled person will remain living in the property for some time and still require the adaptations
- For over-working age households (older people):
 - A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for people over working age living in general needs accommodation
 - Lifetime tenancies for people over working age living in sheltered and extra-care accommodation
- The council and NWL Strategic Housing Partnership to be given an opportunity to comment if shorter tenancy terms are used

2.3 Preferred rent levels

The guidance asks registered providers to consider that studio accommodation and four bed homes should be maintained at social rents rather than the 'affordable rent' of up to 80% market rent. This is based on a recent assessment of rent levels and affordability.

2.4 Preferred approach to managing fixed term tenancies and affordable rent homes

¹ This is in line with the government's preferred minimum tenancy length

The Council would like a number of things that need to be in place for fixed term tenancies and the affordable rent product to be managed effectively and without negative impact:

- Timely information and advice services to help people understand their housing options which should include, where appropriate, opportunities to move within and outside the social and affordable rent sectors eg, into market rent or home ownership (including low cost).
- Support to improve financial inclusion, beginning at the start of a tenancy. This may include enabling access to education, training and/or employment.
- Clear criteria against which the decision to re-issue the tenancy will be made
- A clear and transparent review process which is understood by the tenant at the time of tenancy sign up
- A clearly communicated appeals process should the tenant disagree with the decision or the way in which it has been made
- Information sharing between registered providers and the council when the decision not to reissue a tenancy has been taken, provided 6 months before the tenancy ends, so as to avoid homelessness

In designing refreshed services, tenancy policy criteria and the review process thought must be given to how the tenant's quality of life can be improved, and the role of agencies that can enable this eg, employment, health, care and support.

3.0 APPROACH TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The guidance has been developed after considerable consultation within the district and with Leicestershire local authorities. The process has been described in section 1.1 and section 3 of the guidance at Appendix 1. Feedback on the guidance itself has been presented here in Appendices 2 - 4.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The government's social housing reforms reflect a radical shift from existing ways of working. They come at a time when reforms to the welfare system are also underway and these are expected to affect household income, which in turn will affect expenditure on housing costs. For these reasons it is not possible at this stage to fully understand the implications of reforms for the councils and partners resources, and for communities.

Annex B of the guidance does provide an assessment of the possible positive and negative impacts of reforms on the council's ambitions. The guidance has sought to manage impacts, for example requesting that registered providers offer information and advice to tenants, and that they advise the council if they are not going to reissue a tenancy. There are other implications that are less easy to predict or manage.

For the Council

- Social and 'affordable rent' homes enable the council to meet its duty to accommodate statutory homeless households, and contribute to the council's wider strategic role in meeting housing needs and aspirations
- If less affordable accommodation is available there is a risk that more households will spend longer in temporary accommodation, with its associated costs
- Fixed term tenancies have the potential to enable affordable housing to become available to let more often, although this does depend on individual household circumstances changing. This is not a certainty.
- With less public funding for new affordable homes the 'affordable rent' model is now the only route to government subsidy.

- As the main access point to social and 'affordable rent' housing, there may be greater demand for housing advice as customers seek to understand a wider range of tenures and rent levels

For registered providers

- For those providers developing new homes under the 'affordable rent' model there are considerable risks to their business plans; the model is reliant on a number of homes becoming available to re-let, for example.
- Fixed term tenancies are used by some providers as an opportunity to rebase rents at a higher level in support of their new development business models (bearing in mind rents can go down as well as up)
- Fixed term tenancies also require greater revenue input to support eg, new ICT and finance systems are required, regular reviews of tenancies are needed etc.
- Registered providers are not taking decisions to use fixed term tenancies lightly

For existing and prospective tenants

- Existing tenants of registered providers and the council will have their security of tenure protected
- New rent levels will only affect people moving into an 'affordable rented' home; they will not affect existing tenants unless they choose to move to an 'affordable rent' home
- Housing benefit will cover the 'affordable rent' but this may act as a disincentive to work
- There will be a wider range of tenures and rent levels on the market. This may be confusing for customers.

4.2 Given the potential implications for the council, registered providers, individuals and the wider community we are in the process of establishing a dashboard of indicators that the North West Strategic Housing Partnership will monitor twice a year.

The future of social and affordable housing

Guidance from North West Leicestershire District Council for Registered Providers (The tenancy strategy)

May 2012

FINAL VERSION

Version control

Version	Date	Status
Final Version V2	9 May 2012	Revised to take account of NWL SHP comments and tenant response
Final Version V1	16 March 2012	For NWL Strategic Housing Partnership 23 March 2012
Draft for consultation	6 February 2012	Consultation closed 21 March 2012

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1. Purpose

This document aims to describe:

- The social rent and affordable rent² housing market in North West Leicestershire, and its role in helping us to achieve our vision for the district
- The choices that are now available to the council as a landlord of social housing, and to registered providers, to enable us to manage social and affordable homes effectively
- The preferred minimum length of fixed term tenancies and other factors we would like registered providers to consider in the process of a) deciding whether they should introduce fixed term tenancies and b) developing their tenancy and affordable rent policies³
- The action the council and the North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership would like to take, working with providers, to manage choices and change so that we are able to meet housing need and demand, and achieve our longer term vision for the district

This document is not the tenancy policy for the council landlord. This is a separate document, developed with regard to this guidance as is expected of other registered providers.

Whilst the primary audience for this document is registered providers, we hope it is of interest to members of the public and other stakeholders in the district with an interest in social and affordable rent housing. We have provided a glossary of terms towards the end of this document.

1.1 Process of development

This guidance has been developed with reference to the council's housing strategy, homelessness strategy and allocations policy, as required by the Localism Act 2011.

The North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership has played the lead role in developing this guidance. The Partnership is a group that brings together a wide range of organisations (public, private and the voluntary and community sector) working across the

² Planning Policy Statement 3 defines affordable rented housing as "rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent." It also states that "The terms 'affordability' and 'affordable housing' have different meanings. 'Affordability' is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. 'Affordable housing' refers to particular products outside the main housing market."

³ This document is also North West Leicestershire's Tenancy Strategy. Registered providers are expected to 'have regard to' the contents of this document in developing and reviewing their tenancy policies. Case law suggests that this means providers should actively inform themselves of the content of this document and any others referred to herein, and maintain a written record of why decisions have been taken to align with the direction provided here or otherwise.

district that are committed to improving housing conditions and housing choice and encouraging pride in local communities. The Partnership has held four discussions on the strategy since July 2011; members have responded to consultation and participated in a workshop. For a full list of partners please see our housing strategy [www.XXXX](#)

In November 2011 North West Leicestershire held a scenario planning workshop in conjunction with Blaby, Melton, Oadby and Wigston, Charnwood, Hinckley and Bosworth and Harborough councils and a wide range of statutory and non-statutory partners. Many of our registered providers work across more than one local authority area and it will be challenging for them to have regard to a number of very different policies.

We published a draft version of this document with consultation questions on 6 February 2012; consultation closed on 21 March 2012. Seven responses were received including three from registered providers, one from NWL Homelessness Project and one from the Police. The North West Strategic Housing Partnership has made subsequent recommendations for change. All responses and recommendations, alongside the action we have taken as a result, can be viewed here [www.XXXXX](#).

We have considered detailed information about our communities, their housing needs and aspirations in developing this document (see Annexes B and C and the equality impact assessment available on our website). A number of our consultation questions sought to ensure that we have properly understood the potential impact of decisions taken by registered providers and the council as a landlord.

We have commissioned a piece of work to establish the need for 'affordable rent' housing in the district, taking into consideration rent levels in the private sector, welfare reform and benefit caps, and household income in the district. We have provided figures in Annex A.

1.2 Review

We have described in section 3.4 how we intend to monitor the impact of choices in relation to tenure length and the affordable rent model in North West Leicestershire with registered providers, in conjunction with other stakeholders. This regular monitoring will inform the direction provided by this guidance; it may be necessary to make amendments. As a minimum we will undertake a robust review of this guidance by March 2015⁴, involving registered providers and other partners in the process.

2. Social and affordable housing in North West Leicestershire

2.1 The role and shape of the social and affordable housing market today

The Council and its partners want North West Leicestershire to be:

“A place where people and businesses feel they belong and are proud to call home”

There are some people who, for various reasons, can't afford to rent from a private landlord or to buy their own home. These include young people leaving home, couples starting out, families and older people. It also includes people who are working but are in a low-paid job.

⁴ The government suggests that tenancy strategies should be reviewed every five years as a minimum.

Social and affordable housing gives the opportunity to low income households in North West Leicestershire to:

- Spend time with their family and friends, socialising, supporting and caring for them
- Access local services and amenities that enable them to live healthy and independent lives
- Contribute to their communities and to volunteering
- Live within a community where they work or have their own business
- Add to local demand for goods and services, improving local economic well-being

Social and affordable rented homes and low-cost home ownership are cheaper than private homes available to rent or buy because public money is used to build them. However, there isn't enough public money to build all the affordable homes we need so we have to make sure that the people who most need these homes are able to access them.

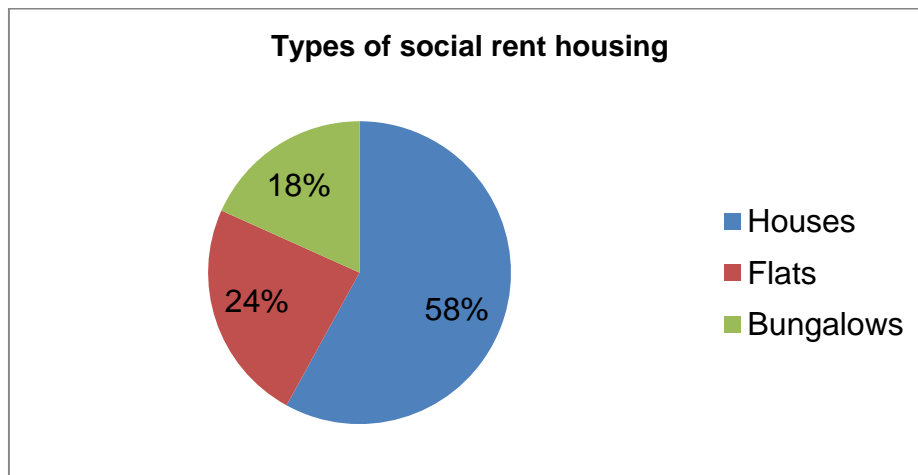
From April 2012 the council and registered providers (also known as social landlords) will be able to manage social and affordable rent housing in different ways⁵. There are new choices to make but these need to be made carefully, bearing in mind what we want to achieve in the district, the housing needs and aspirations of our residents. We do not want to make it more difficult than it already is for people to find a home that is suitable for their needs and income.

2.2 Key facts about affordable homes in North West Leicestershire

The Council's definition of an affordable home is “non-market housing, including social rented and intermediate housing (that which is at prices or rents above those of social rents but below market prices or rents) and which will remain available as affordable housing in the future or include provision for any subsidy to be recycled for the provision of additional affordable housing in the event that it ceases to remain affordable”.

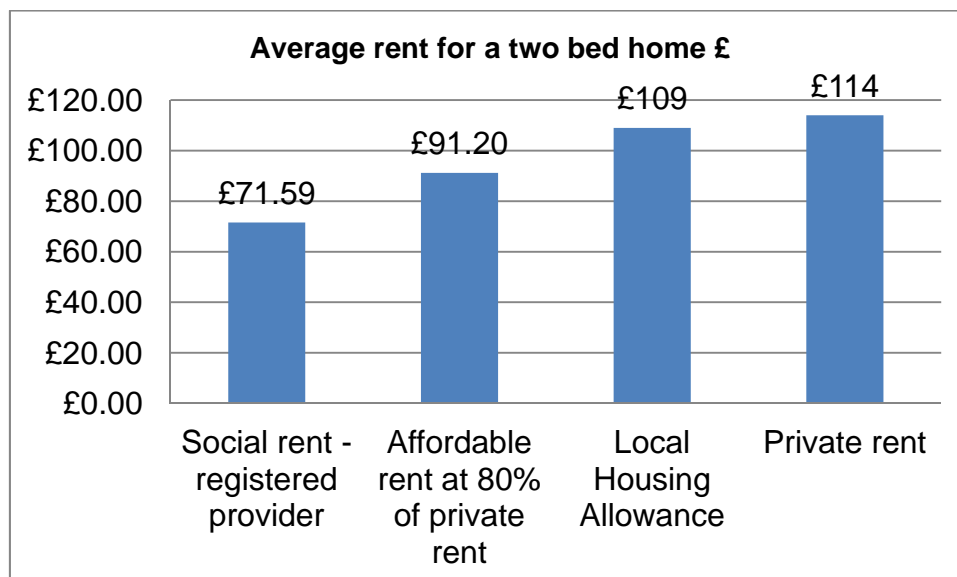
- There are around 6,300 social and affordable rent homes (15.6% of all homes in the district):
 - The Council owns 71% (4,477) of these homes.
 - There are 11 registered providers in NWL managing 29% or 1,803 homes. East Midlands Housing Group owns 1,319 of these and Sanctuary Housing owns 206.
- In 2010/11 fewer homes became available to rent than in 2009/10 (334 general let homes compared to 408).

⁵ The government is providing freedoms and flexibilities to local authorities and social landlords by making some changes to legislation. These changes are described in the Localism Act 2011.



Source: NWLDC HSSA

Affordable rent will be more expensive than social rent, as evidenced by this example for a two-bed home:



Source: Hometrack data November 2011

- The average gross household income in NWL is £24,312 per annum. To buy an average price house a household on an average income would need 6.1 times this compared to 3 times for it to be affordable.
- There are 830 households on the council's register for social and affordable homes, of whom 583 are not currently living in social or affordable housing. This includes:
 - 396 families (48%), 102 couples and 332 single people
 - 122 households are in urgent housing need ie, they will get priority for housing
 - 350 applicants aged 16 - 34, 210 applicants aged 35 to 49, 152 applicants aged 50 to 64 and 118 applicants aged over 65
 - Based on their household income, around 629 applicants are not earning enough to afford another type of home
- We need 355 additional social and affordable homes per year in order to respond to household growth, changing housing needs and demand. On average 57.5 new affordable homes have been built per year since 2008. In more detail we need:

- 280 additional affordable homes (social rent and 'affordable rent') and 75 additional homes at intermediate rent or low cost home ownership, per year.
- Between 35 and 45 homes per year should be provided in rural areas

2.3 Social and affordable housing in the future

The government, through the Localism Act 2011, has enabled the council as a landlord and registered providers to make choices about how they manage social and affordable housing. In summary:

1. Registered providers may choose to introduce different types of tenancy agreement for new tenants that last for fixed periods of time, for example five years (existing tenancies are protected⁶)
2. New 'affordable rent' housing is likely to be more expensive than existing social rent housing. Social rents have historically been approximately 50% of a market rent whereas the new 'affordable rent' can be up to 80% of market rent. For example a new two bed affordable home could cost £91.20 per week, compared to £71.59 per week for an existing two bed social rented home managed by the same registered provider⁷ in the same area (see Annex A for more information about affordable rents in the district). New 'affordable rent' homes must be let through the same mechanism as social rent homes⁸.
3. Registered providers who are developing new affordable rent homes can 'convert' a number of their existing social rented homes to a higher 'affordable rent' when they become available to let to a new tenant. The number of conversions is critical to the financial viability of providing new affordable rent homes. Conversions may take place in local authority areas other than those where the new affordable rent homes will be built.
4. Registered providers operate as not-for-profit organisations. Many of them are charitable organisations. To build new homes and/or so they can focus their resources on managing the rest of their homes to a high standard, providers may now need to sell some of their homes.
5. The council could change who can access social and 'affordable rent' homes – they can decide to limit access to the housing register to those who have a defined housing need⁹, and/or reflect that there are local priorities such as enabling under-occupiers to move home. The council will also be able to use the private rented sector more to meet housing needs.

There are other things that are also likely to affect the supply of affordable housing in North West Leicestershire in the future, and the need and demand for these homes:

6. The council will be able to decide how to spend all the rent from their homes from April 2012. It is developing a business plan to ensure that it brings council homes up to a

⁶ If you are an existing tenant of a housing association or the council your security of tenure is protected

⁷ New rent levels will only affect people moving into an affordable rented home; they will not affect existing tenants unless they choose to move to an 'affordable rent' home

⁸ This is stipulated by the Government in its revised Planning Policy Statement 3 definitions of affordable rent

⁹ The council must enable people who meet the Government's reasonable preference criteria to register.

decent standard (the council has received government funding to do this), and to maintain this standard in the longer term.

7. Registered providers may be planning to offer an alternative to social rent and affordable rent homes. Low cost home ownership may meet some household needs.
8. The government has announced a greater Right-to-Buy discount for people wishing to buy their social rented home. This might reduce the number of social rent homes available to others in housing need.
9. People who have a low or no income and receive benefits may receive less money in the future as a result of changes to the welfare system. People may have less to spend on their housing costs and may need to move to more affordable housing.
10. Welfare reforms will affect existing, working age, tenants in social housing who are under-occupying their home by one bedroom or more; demand for smaller homes may rise, as might rent arrears from those who can't move.

Further detail on what may be different in the future is provided in Annex A and Annex E describes the changes introduced by welfare reform.

The government has introduced changes because it would like affordable rented housing to:

- Be targeted at those in greatest housing need
- Offer value for money and not cost the public purse more than it needs to
- Not be seen as somewhere where only people without work are able to live
- Be used fairly, for those people who need it most, when they need it.

More detail about how things work now, and might be different (depending on the choices organisations make), is provided in Annex A. This includes an assessment of the difference between social rents and affordable rents by property size.

You can see what approach each social landlord is taking by viewing their tenancy policy and affordable rent policy (if they are offering this type of home). As these might be updated on a more regular basis than this document we do not provide a summary of what these say here. You can access them:

- Via the links on the Council's website: www.XXXX (to be added prior to issue of final version)

2.4 Partnership working

With registered providers

The council is keen to work with registered providers in the district and already does so through the North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership and one-to-one relationships.

The council recognises that registered providers want to provide good quality homes and housing services to tenants and other customers, and that this requires sustainable business plans. We also value providers' contributions to improved health and wellbeing, economic stability and growth (for example through training opportunities presented by the construction of new homes), quality environments and safe neighbourhoods. We understand that in the current climate providers are facing a number of risks to their businesses; the council does not want to add to these and we have taken this into consideration in developing our guidance.

We would, however, also like providers to recognise that whilst we have similar goals, the council has a wider responsibility for ensuring a good quality of life for all residents and communities, and not just for those households already living in social and affordable housing. Our ambition is to, as far as possible, enable housing needs and demand to be met. The council also needs a sustainable plan (described in the community strategy, corporate plan, medium term financial plan and the local housing strategy), for which the council is held to account by the public.

We acknowledge that our different roles are likely to result in different perspectives and practice but we hope to understand over time how we can manage differences to achieve the best outcomes for our district, for tenants and prospective tenants. We hope that the guidance we provide in this document is just the beginning of new and refreshed relationships.

With other local authorities

Many of our registered providers work across more than one local authority area and this was one reason why a joint scenario planning workshop in conjunction with other Leicestershire local authorities was held to inform the development of this guidance.

The guidance the council provides may also impact on the strategic priorities of Leicestershire Together, and on the housing ambitions of individual Leicestershire local authorities. For this reason it will be important that we continue to work together to monitor and manage any effects. We will do this through existing officer working groups and through the [Leicestershire Housing Services Partnership](#)¹⁰ which has a particular remit to achieve Leicestershire Together priorities and to ensure that impact on, and from, housing provision on other strategic outcomes is adequately considered.

With other partners

The North West Strategic Housing Partnership will continue to monitor and inform the direction of this guidance, as part of the framework which provides strategic direction to all housing activity in the district.

¹⁰ Leicestershire Housing Services Partnership
http://www.leicestershiretogether.org/index/partnerships/housing_services_partnership.htm

3. The Council's guidance for registered providers

With our Leicestershire local authority partners, the North West Strategic Housing Partnership and other stakeholders eg, Leicestershire County Council, we have given careful consideration to the pros and cons of fixed term tenancies and the new 'affordable rent' product for five different household types and against the North West Strategic Housing Partnership's ambitions for homes and housing services.

Through the scenario planning workshop held in November 2011, we have considered pros and cons from four different perspectives:

- **The customer.** The primary interests of this group are security of tenure, stability and affordability in the long term. The ability to move within and outside the social and affordable housing market may be of interest to some customers.
- **The council in its strategic housing role.** The primary interests of the council are to meet the need and demand for social and affordable housing and to achieve the vision for the district (this includes sustainable neighbourhoods and communities), making the best use of resources in the area.
- **The registered provider and local authority landlord.** The primary interests of providers are to meet the need for social and affordable housing, to enable sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, and to manage sustainable, not-for-profit, businesses.
- **Other interested parties** eg, health and social care, advice agencies etc. Primary interests include improved health and wellbeing, reducing inequalities and disadvantage and economic stability.

We have sought to balance interests, thinking also about different housing types, for example general needs family and non-family housing, accessible¹¹ and adapted, and long term specialist housing eg, sheltered housing and extra care¹².

We have also considered the household characteristics of those we know are in housing need (see Annex C for further information).

3.1 Summary of preferences and aspirations for joint working

We acknowledge that the decision to use fixed term tenancies, and the length of these tenancies, lies with the registered provider. We also accept that a number of homes in the district will be rented at 'affordable rent' levels in the future. However, we would like registered providers to enable us to comment on their tenancy and affordable rent policies and their equality impact assessments of these policies before decisions are taken.

Fixed term tenancies

¹¹ General needs accessible ie, ground floor, lift accessed, non-older person bungalows

¹² Supported accommodation providing Extra Care means that people have their own flat or bungalow, but also have access to high levels of personal care, meals, domestic support, leisure and recreation, nursing and 24-hour security

We have expressed our preferences in terms of minimum tenancy lengths but clearly the provider can choose for these to be longer, or shorter in exceptional circumstances. If registered providers decide to use fixed term tenancies, we would prefer:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for most households¹³. There are some households whom we would prefer a longer tenancy and there are some exceptional¹⁴ circumstances where we are prepared to accept a shorter term (these are described later). Where a term of less than five years is proposed we expect providers to give the Council and NWL Strategic Housing Partnership an opportunity to comment.
- For fixed term tenancies to be re-issued at the end of the term unless there is a significant change of circumstance. We want to work with providers to establish the criteria they use to inform this decision.

We consider the use of fixed term tenancies as a management tool to be inappropriate, particularly in relation to tenants who are perceived to present a greater risk to tenancy sustainment or neighbourhood sustainability. Existing tools are available to social landlords eg, probationary tenancies, to manage risk. We will seek to monitor the use of fixed term tenancies in relation to vulnerable groups (please see 3.2 for definitions).

We consider the following to be critical in managing fixed term tenancies and the affordable rent product, and we would like to work with registered providers and other partners to decide what these look like in the district:

- Timely information and advice services to help people understand their housing options which should include, where appropriate, opportunities to move within and outside the social and affordable rent sectors eg, into market rent or home ownership (including low cost).
- Support to improve financial inclusion, beginning at the start of a tenancy. This may include enabling access to education, training and/or employment.
- Clear criteria against which the decision to re-issue the tenancy will be made
- A clear and transparent review process which is understood by the tenant at the time of tenancy sign up
- A clearly communicated appeals process should the tenant disagree with the decision or the way in which it has been made
- Information sharing between registered providers and the council when the decision not to reissue a tenancy has been taken, provided 6 months before the tenancy ends, so as to avoid homelessness

In designing refreshed services, tenancy policy criteria and the review process thought must be given to how the tenant's quality of life can be improved, and the role of agencies that can enable this eg, employment, health, care and support.

¹³ This is in line with the government's preferred minimum tenancy length

¹⁴ Exceptional is defined as not typical or usual. Therefore issuing a shorter tenancy in order to deliver the provider's asset management strategy, for example, is not considered to be exceptional as asset disposal and management is usual practice.

Affordable rent

We have sought to establish the need for affordable rent homes in the district. This has highlighted particular issues and we would like registered providers to consider the following in developing their affordable rent policies:

- Studio accommodation and four bed homes should be maintained at social rents

We would like to work with registered providers and other partners to develop approaches to financial inclusion, beginning at the start of a tenancy.

Rural Areas

Where homes are in settlements of less than 3,000 (currently identified in Annex D) we expect providers to let homes in accordance with a local lettings policy that gives preference to people with a connection to that settlement. To ensure sustainability of these settlements, we would expect to see allocations made to households who would fall outside the normal property size eligibility criteria¹⁵.

Access to social and affordable rent housing

At this stage no decision has been made to limit access to the housing register as we do not understand enough about the impact this could have on households in need, neighbourhood and estate sustainability. This decision will only be taken when we have a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages, and in consultation with registered providers and other local partners.

We will ensure that the Leicestershire Choice Based Lettings Scheme makes it clear to customers what the differences are between social and affordable rent homes, and the different tenure options.

A review of our allocations policy will also be undertaken in 2012/13.

We provide further detail on our tenancy preferences for the five household types next.

3.2 Tenancy preferences by household group

A note on equality and comprehensive impact assessments

The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2012 reminds providers that it is essential to understand tenants' needs, including those within the equality strands¹⁶. We have provided information about our community and the characteristics of those in housing need (prospective tenants and transfer tenants) in Annex C to support providers' policy making process. Providers may also wish to refer to our housing strategy challenges document at www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/housing_strategy.

¹⁵ We recognise that consideration will need to be given to working-age households in receipt of housing benefits

¹⁶ Regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2012
http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/sites/default/files/our-work/regulatory_framework_2012.pdf

Our housing strategy incorporates action to make access to housing fair and equal, and for vulnerable people to be able to live independently, particularly:

- Older people
- People with a learning disability
- Offenders
- People fleeing domestic abuse
- Young people
- Households at risk of homelessness

The strategy also recognises that the following groups have unmet housing needs:

- Rural communities
- Single households under the age of 35 (a result of welfare reform – see Annex E for more information)

We ask that providers give particular consideration to the above groups in developing their policies.

We also ask that reference is made to our assessment of the possible impacts of tenancy and affordable rent policies on our ambitions for homes and housing services (Annex B).

We will be seeking to work with providers to understand and manage adverse impacts of tenancy and affordable rent policies in the longer term. To inform this we wish to incorporate equality monitoring data in our proposed information sharing between the council and registered providers (Annex D).

We have drawn out the main equality considerations for providers within the next section.

Families with children of school age or younger

Our preferred tenancy terms are:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy

Security and stability during a child's education is critical to educational attainment. Families also rely on nearby friends and relatives to provide care for their children. We expect these factors to be considered by providers in reaching a decision about the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group.

We are particularly interested in working with providers to explore how under-occupation in family homes can be addressed through the use of fixed term tenancies.

Single and couple households of working age

Our preferred tenancy terms are:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy

We recognise that shorter tenancies may be deemed appropriate by providers and their partners, for example for households who are in fixed-term local employment, or households who are in transition to another form of accommodation.

Households on a low income, but not in receipt of housing benefit

Our preferred tenancy terms are:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy

We recognise that shorter tenancies may be deemed appropriate by providers and their partners in certain circumstances. These may relate to the type of property eg, non-family housing and/or the characteristics of the applicants eg, younger working households may simply be seeking a short term solution to enable them to access home ownership.

We are particularly interested in working with providers to develop suitable financial inclusion services.

Households with a disabled household member

Disabled in this instance means anyone in the household with a physical disability or other long term health condition that requires specific adaptations to the home or other design features to enable mobility and greater independence.

Our preferred tenancy terms are:

- For fixed term tenancies only to be used to enable the best use of adapted stock
- A minimum ten year fixed term tenancy where it is likely that the disabled person will remain living in the property for some time and still require the adaptations

We recognise that shorter tenancies may be deemed appropriate by providers and their health and care partners, for example we acknowledge that a two year tenancy in an adapted home may be deemed appropriate where a household member has a recoverable injury/condition and is fully expected to move on into a non-adapted home. It may also be appropriate for shorter tenancies (of not less than five years) to be used where there is an adapted family home and the needs of the disabled child may change, or the child may move out.

Easy access to education and employment, health, care and support, and to informal support networks, may be particularly important to this household group. Access to adaptations is also important. Providers are asked to consider these factors in making decisions about the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group.

People over working age

At this stage our preferred tenancy terms, are:

- A minimum of a five year fixed term tenancy for people over working age living in general needs accommodation

- Lifetime tenancies for people over working age living in sheltered and extra-care accommodation

Consultation concluded that lifetime tenancies are the most appropriate option for tenants in extra care housing¹⁷.

In deciding on the use of fixed term tenancies for this household group, or for accommodation that is specific to people over working age eg, sheltered, we would like providers to consider health and wellbeing (particularly as national policy supports care and support 'closer to home'), the role of friends and relatives in enabling independence, and the possibility that insecurity of tenure may add to someone's worries about their future.

We are particularly interested in working with providers to explore how under-occupation of family homes can be addressed; this is an action in our housing strategy.

3.3 Tenancy preferences – other circumstances

We have also given consideration to the length of tenure in the following circumstances:

In rural areas

North West Leicestershire is a rural district, with a number of larger settlements. There is a very limited supply of social and affordable housing in villages but community sustainability is particularly important here.

Our preference is for a minimum five year fixed term tenancy provided that registered providers work with the council and other stakeholders to enable:

- Strong and sustainable communities
- Households living in rural areas who are dependent on support from families and friends to continue accessing this support, for example as people get older

Action to mitigate negative impacts could include:

- Developing smaller accommodation options
- Local lettings policies

In our priority neighbourhoods (Coalville, Thringstone, Whitwick Greenhill, Ashby (there are large local inequalities in these wards), Measham, Ibstock, Moira and Castle Donington).

Health, housing, unemployment and the environment needs improvement in these areas so that people can have a better quality of life. Life expectancy, for example, is lower in these areas than elsewhere. There is a greater supply of social housing in some of these areas

¹⁷ Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property. Extra Care Housing is also known as very sheltered housing, assisted living, or simply as 'housing with care'. It comes in many built forms, including blocks of flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages. For more on the definition see <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-extra-care-housing.aspx>.

and it is possible that low income and potentially vulnerable households will have no choice but to live here should other areas become unaffordable.

Our preference is for a minimum five year fixed term tenancy provided that registered providers work with the council and other stakeholders to:

- Manage social rent conversions in these areas to enable mixed communities
- Monitor quality of life indicators in these areas to understand the impact of different rent levels

Action to mitigate negative impacts could include:

- Local lettings policies

For households who have experienced crisis such as homelessness, they may benefit from greater stability and security to enable them to move-on.

Our preference is for a minimum five year fixed term tenancy provided that registered providers work with the council and other stakeholders to enable:

- New tenants to set-up their home and to sustain this in the longer term
- Additional support where necessary, for example for young people who have not held a tenancy before, or to enable the household to deal with their recent experiences eg, domestic abuse, relationship breakdown etc,

3.4 How we will monitor the impact of choices in North West Leicestershire

We would like to understand the impact of choices made by registered providers, the Council as a landlord and the Council in its role of directing housing activity. This strategy will be supported by an information sharing and monitoring protocol that describes what information the council, registered providers and others will share to enable this. This can be found here www.xxxx.

In developing the protocol and monitoring we felt it was important not to introduce unnecessary burden for any organisation. We also wanted to use the opportunity of sharing information to ensure the public has the information needed to make informed decisions about their housing options.

As the housing market is always changing, and choices can be made by the council and registered providers at any time, the intention is to keep the content of this document under regular review and revise it where necessary, particularly in light of adverse impact. Where the review results in a significant change in policy we will consult providers and stakeholders on these changes first.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Allocations Policy	All local housing authorities and registered providers are required to state how they will allocate affordable rent housing and to conform to regulations or statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Once the Policy has been agreed, all lettings must be made in accordance with the Policy. It is possible to have different policies (Local Lettings Policies) that differ from the main Policy and are applicable to a small number of homes within any registered provider's stock.
Affordable Rent	A form of affordable rented housing, the Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent
Affordable rented housing	Planning Policy Statement 3 defines affordable rented housing as let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. It may include homes let at an Affordable Rent
Extra care housing	Extra Care Housing is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property. Extra Care Housing is also known as very sheltered housing, assisted living, or simply as 'housing with care'. It comes in many built forms, including blocks of flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages. For more on the definition see http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-extra-care-housing.aspx .
Fixed term tenancy	A tenancy issued by a registered provider for a term certain of not less than 2 years (intended for 'exceptional circumstances' only) and usually for five or more years. At the end of that period, and after a tenancy review, the tenancy may be reissued for a further period. The meaning is the same as 'flexible tenancy', used for local authority tenancies
Flexible Tenancy	Born out of the Localism Act 2011, these local authority tenancies are awarded for terms certain - the minimum tenancy period is 2 years (intended for 'exceptional circumstances' only) but the usual period is five or more years. At the end of that period and following a tenancy review, the tenancy may be reissued for a further period
Homelessness Strategy	Usually prepared and published by a local housing authority following a homelessness review. The strategy outlines the causes and determinants of homelessness and what needs to be done to reduce it. It should include an action plan agreed with partners in tackling homelessness.
Housing Strategy	A document usually prepared and published by a local housing authority that considers the housing needs of the current and future population compared to the housing available in the area and directs actions to be taken both by the authority and its partners (eg, registered providers, health, social care, voluntary and community organisations) to improve the balance and meet housing needs more effectively. Housing strategies often incorporate enabling new homes, homelessness, private sector housing (rented and owner occupied), bringing empty homes back into use, adapting homes and other housing-related matters. However, an authority may also publish separate strategies and/or policies on some or all of these topics.
Intermediate market	Renting and ownership options for households who cannot afford open market ownership but also have no priority for social housing
Low Cost Home Ownership or LCHO	Subsidised home ownership eg an interest free loan for a percentage of the property value or shared ownership (part buy, part rent)

Term	Definition
Registered Provider or RP	Organisations which provide affordable housing and are registered with the Homes and Communities Agency. Registration implies that RPs meet certain standards and are also open to scrutiny in relation to their financial affairs and management of homes. The term includes housing associations (HAs) or registered social landlords (RSLs), trusts and co-operatives who are all termed 'private registered providers'. Most are not-for-profit organisations, but private landlords can now register with the HCA provided they are prepared to be open to the same level of scrutiny. Local authority landlords are automatically registered providers, but are not 'private'.
Social housing (also social rented housing)	Type of affordable housing, which includes rented dwellings, which are usually owned and managed by either the Council or other Registered Provider and let at a social rent (typically lower than an 'affordable rent')
Social landlord	Landlords of domestic properties that are let at rent levels that are below open market levels, usually provided with subsidy on the original capital cost of providing these homes. Social landlords include all registered providers and may also include private or charitable organisations that have stock let to people who can't afford open market rents or property purchase prices. Where a private organisation considers itself to be a social landlord, the expectation would be that any surpluses (profits) from the activity are used to increase the stock or improve housing management or conditions.
Tenancy Policy or TP	Every registered provider is required to publish a 'clear and accessible' tenancy policy that states, as a minimum, the kind of tenancies they will grant, where they use fixed terms, how long these will be in certain circumstances, when tenancies won't be reissued at the end of the term, how they will take into account the needs of more vulnerable households, how they will assist/advise tenants to find alternative housing if their tenancy isn't to be reissued and how tenants can appeal against decisions on tenancy matters
Tenancy strategy or strategic tenancy policy	Every local housing authority must, by January 2013, publish a tenancy strategy that provides direction to registered providers operating in their area on, as a minimum, the types of tenancy they consider suitable for local people, the lengths of any fixed term, and where these should be used and where tenancies should be reissued. Local authorities are expected to base their tenancy strategy on their understanding of the housing needs of their population and the housing market.

Annex A Affordable rent homes – current picture and what may be different

Social housing tenancies

How do things work now?

New social housing tenants are usually offered a short tenancy, for example 12 months. As long as the tenant shows they can adhere to the terms of their tenancy agreement, for example they pay their rent on time, they look after their home and are not a nuisance to neighbours, they will be invited by the landlord to take a more secure tenancy.

This starter tenancy (also referred to as an introductory tenancy or assured shorthold tenancy¹⁸) is usually converted to a more secure tenancy (called a secure tenancy for council tenants or assured tenancy for tenants of other social landlords). At the moment these tenancies do not have a fixed term: tenants can live there as long as they choose provided that they adhere to the terms of their tenancy agreement.

What will be different?

Social landlords will be able to offer tenancies for a fixed term period¹⁹. These tenancies could be as short as two years but this should be an exception. The usual length is expected to be five years. Social landlords who do introduce fixed term tenancies for new tenants must explain:

- The kind of tenancies they will grant and in what circumstances
- The length of tenancy terms
- What the exceptional circumstances are for introducing tenancies of less than five years (if they choose to do this)
- The circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted after that initial tenancy
- What approach will be taken to tenancies for people who are vulnerable because of, for example, their age, disability, health or because they have children
- What advice or assistance will be in place should a tenancy not be renewed

This will be explained in the landlord's tenancy policy.

Affordable rents

How do things work now?

Until April 2011 new affordable (social) housing was funded in a number of ways:

- Money (grant) from the government, provided by the Homes and Communities Agency
- Grant from the local council
- Free or discounted land from the council or other public body
- Bank loans to social landlords
- The use of assets already owned by the social landlord eg, land or buildings
- From the development of new homes, through planning obligations

¹⁸ East Midlands Housing Association

¹⁹ Housing associations will call these 'fixed term' tenancies; the council will call them 'flexible' tenancies.

This funding means that the rent is cheaper than rent in the private sector: the average 'social rent' for a two bedroom affordable home in North West Leicestershire is £71.59 per week, compared to £114 in the private sector²⁰. This funding also means that some households could afford discounted homeownership.

The Council, working with other councils in Leicestershire, decided where new affordable homes were needed based on:

- An assessment of who needs homes and where
- Where there is land available to build on
- What funding was available

The Local Investment Plan describes what the priorities are in Leicestershire for affordable housing. In North West Leicestershire the priority is to build grant funded affordable housing in rural settlements where the population is under 3,000, where a housing need has been identified and in the Greater Coalville area. Social landlords were required to develop new affordable homes in line with the Council's priorities.

What will be different?

To reduce the national deficit the government has reduced the amount of money available to fund affordable housing. To make up the difference so that new affordable home can still be built, there are three major changes:

- New affordable homes built with grant from the Homes and Communities Agency will be charged at a higher rent – this will be up to 80% of the market rent (ie, the rent in the private sector). Using the example of a two bedroom house, this will mean the 'affordable rent' will be £91.20 instead of £71.59 per week.
- A proportion of existing social rented homes can be converted to the new 'affordable rent' when they become available for letting
- Councils and social landlords will need to look more closely at what they can afford to contribute

In May 2011 social landlords and private developers submitted proposals to the Homes and Communities Agency for grant for new affordable homes. The Council has been asked whether these proposals meet with our local priorities. New affordable homes must be built by April 2015.

An analysis commissioned by the Council to understand who will have their housing needs met through the 'affordable rent' home has been undertaken. Detail is presented in the tables that follow but in summary:

- The difference between social rent and affordable rent varies by property size, with 4 bedroom affordable rent homes considerably more expensive than social rent homes
- Affordable rent homes will be unaffordable to 25.7% of those who may have a housing need, having taken into consideration the income profile for NWL residents
- Taking welfare reform into consideration, whilst most affordable rent homes fall below the Local Housing Allowance, this is not the case for studio flats, where the affordable

²⁰ July 2011

rent is below the LHA rate. This suggests a particular problem for single households under the age of 35.

- The district is covered by a number of broad rental market areas. There are pockets of affluence and deprivation. Access to larger homes in more expensive areas may be limited by the Local Housing Allowance rate.

Comparison of RP social rents 2011 and potential Affordable Rents

North West Leicestershire	average RP gross social rents	equivalent 80% Affordable Rent	£s difference	% difference
Bedsits	£58.95			
One bedroom	£67.48	£73.48	£6.00	8.9%
Two bedrooms	£74.68	£91.94	£17.26	23.1%
Three bedrooms	£82.59	£110.29	£27.70	33.5%
Four bedrooms	£87.78	£157.48	£69.70	79.4%

Average Affordable Rents and proportion unable to afford

Cannot afford AR	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Cannot afford	14.8%	25.5%	25.5%	47.6%
Proportions in need mix	6%	24%	66%	4%
Overall can't afford AR	0.9%	6.2%	16.8%	1.9%
Overall % cannot afford				25.7%

Derived from Find a Property PRS rents and CACI Paycheck household incomes profile. Based on rent not being more than a third of gross household income

North West Leicestershire overall average of rents (weighted)

Overall average	Monthly average asking prices	weekly PRS rent	80% of PRS rent	LHA rate	difference to LHA
Studio Flats	£340	£78.46	£62.77	£58.50	-£4.27
1 Bed Flats	£398	£91.85	£73.48	£86.54	£13.06
2 Bed Flats	£491	£113.40	£90.72	£109.62	£18.90
1 Bed Houses	£436	£100.62	£80.49	£86.54	£6.05
2 Bed Houses	£498	£114.92	£91.94	£109.62	£17.68
3 Bed Houses	£597	£137.86	£110.29	£126.92	£16.63
4 Bed Houses	£853	£196.85	£157.48	£160.38	£2.90

Tables are extracted from 'Establishing the need for provision of 'Affordable Rent' housing in North West Leicestershire', February 2012, produced by Bob Lines.

Annex B Fixed term tenancies, affordable rent and our ambitions for homes and housing services

Our vision for the future

The Council would like social landlords to bear in mind what we would like homes and housing services to look like in the future. Our vision and outcomes are those of the North West Strategic Housing Partnership and were developed in 2010/11. They are described in the 2011-2015 housing strategy (see http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/housing_strategy) and are summarised here:

- 1. Homes for all**
- 2. Healthy homes**
- 3. Content and confident communities**
- 4. Fair and equal access to housing**

We have identified a number of challenges that we need to overcome to achieve our vision.

1. There is a limited choice of housing available to people in North West Leicestershire, including a lack of affordable homes:
 - 355 affordable homes are needed per year, most for social rent
 - Between 35 and 45 affordable homes per year should be provided in rural areas
2. Improvement is needed in the condition of existing homes in both the social and private housing sector, particularly to improve health and wellbeing, The private rented sector will need to play a greater role in the future in meeting housing needs as other options are limited.
3. There is an increasingly older population, and people are living longer but not necessarily healthier lives. Other households also have additional health needs which impact on their housing requirements.
4. The economic downturn, government spending plans and welfare reform are expected to reduce household income, increase the need for affordable housing and increase vulnerability. Our collective capacity to respond to demand is also reducing and we will need to prioritise what we spend and do
5. There are a number of areas within the district with concentrations of issues, and there's a danger these areas will not improve, or will get worse

These challenges are described in more detail in our 2011 – 15 housing strategy and in our housing challenges document, http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/housing_strategy. Taking these into consideration, we describe next how we think our ambitions could be affected by changes to the rent level and/or the use of shorter, fixed term, tenancies.

Analysis of effects against our local ambitions

OUR AMBITIONS	POSSIBLE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS
Homes for all	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New homes will be suitable to meet different aspirations and needs. They will be well-designed and sustainable 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding from the Homes and Communities Agency means that some new affordable homes will be built in North West Leicestershire <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite HCA funding there will be fewer new homes than we had envisaged as funding has reduced. Income from 'affordable rent' homes may also be used to develop new homes outside of the district but in the wider housing market area If it is difficult to develop new affordable rent homes in our area, for example if there are significant objections to planning permissions by the council or communities, social landlords may choose to build elsewhere in Leicestershire. Landlords in receipt of HCA funding have to complete new homes by April 2015. NWL has specified design requirements for new affordable homes. This could mean that the number of new homes will reduce as public funding has reduced. Developers may charge more for homes and land because the 'affordable rent' will generate more income for the social landlord than a social rent Charging higher rents on new homes in rural areas and neighbourhoods where there is already a very limited supply of affordable homes will limit choice to households in housing need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a better use of existing homes to meet needs and aspirations 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed term tenancies may mean that homes in high demand can be better used if, for example, the current tenant no longer needs that type of property or tenure. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social landlords may want to dispose of some of their homes if they are high cost and/or have a high value so they can afford to develop new homes and manage a sustainable business. This might reduce the number of affordable homes to rent in the district. Charging higher rents on existing homes in rural areas will reduce the already very limited supply of homes available to households in need Tenants may not understand how important it is for us to make the best use of social housing and may not engage with social landlords in the process of reviewing their housing circumstances at the end of a fixed term tenancy
Healthy homes	

OUR AMBITIONS	POSSIBLE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes will be warm, safe, well maintained and managed 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review process associated with the introduction of fixed term tenancies should provide an opportunity for health issues to be identified and addressed. For example the tenant may need adaptations, or support to remain living in their home independently. It will be important that the review process involves the right agencies to achieve improved health outcomes. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a risk to social landlords that ‘affordable rent’ homes are not attractive to new tenants so landlords may offer a different level of service to these homes. Whilst this may be better for some, it may cause tensions amongst tenants. Social landlords who use fixed term tenancies are likely to have to change the way they work, for example they will need new tenancy agreements, new customer information and perhaps new or revised IT systems. There is likely to be a cost and money may be diverted from somewhere else to pay for this eg, from other services. Tenants in the ‘affordable rent’ homes may have to make decisions about what they spend their money on and may choose to spend less on heating their homes or keeping them in good repair Tenants with fixed term tenancies may not keep their homes in good order or invest in them if they are uncertain about how long they will be living there
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes will be flexible to meet changing needs, for example as you get older 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review process associated with the introduction of fixed term tenancies should provide an opportunity for health issues to be identified and addressed. For example the tenant may need adaptations, or support to remain living in their home independently. It will be important that the review process involves the right agencies to achieve improved health outcomes. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With less subsidy, and the potential to let homes on a fixed term tenancy ie, not a home for life, new affordable housing might not be developed to accessibility and mobility standards eg, Lifetime Homes For existing tenants the introduction of the ‘affordable rent’ model may be a disincentive to move to a different home. This may include households who we would like to move so that we can make a better use of their home, for example older households who are under-occupying their current home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood environments support a good quality of life 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants with shorter tenancies may not look after their environment if they are uncertain about how long they will be living there

OUR AMBITIONS	POSSIBLE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS
Content and confident	communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will be able to afford a wider range of housing options 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be some tenants who are able to afford to purchase a home at the end of their fixed term tenancy. They may be able to buy the home they live in, and remain living in their community. This will however mean a reduction in the number of affordable homes to rent in the area. • There may be some households who are unable to access affordable housing at the moment because their housing needs are not a high priority when compared with others. If priority households can't afford new 'affordable rent' product, these households may have a new opportunity. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Affordable rents' will be more expensive. Although people in receipt of benefits will be able to live in these homes, it might be harder for households who work to afford the rent, particularly those on a low income. As more income is needed, households in receipt of benefits might have little incentive to get work, if it is available. • Existing tenants who would like to move may choose not to do so because they don't want to pay the higher 'affordable rent'. This might have a particular impact on working-age tenants who may need to move from their current social rented home in 2013 because they are under-occupying it (housing benefit will reduce).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities will welcome and support people living in their neighbourhoods 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new affordable rent model and fixed term tenancies may cause community tensions, particularly in rural and smaller neighbourhoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rents for some homes will be higher, even if it is the same type of house on the same street ○ Tenants may be less willing to contribute to their community if they are uncertain as to how long they will be living there • There is potential for some neighbourhoods to have greater concentrations of low income and potentially vulnerable residents. These households may find their housing choices limited because they are too expensive and/or because they are unable to understand the larger range of options on offer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will understand the options open to them to maintain or improve their housing circumstances 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a wider range of affordable housing options • The process of reviewing a fixed term tenancy may identify ways in which the tenant's quality of life can be improved through their home, for example someone may need an adaptation as their health has deteriorated, or other action eg, by signposting someone to local services for assistance. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of options has the potential to be confusing to customers. Demand for housing advice and information from the council and social landlords may increase.

OUR AMBITIONS	POSSIBLE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social landlords will be required to provide advice and assistance to tenants who have a fixed term tenancy if they will not be issued with a new tenancy. It will be important that this advice and assistance is good quality and consistent, and enables the household to make an informed choice about the housing options on offer (see homelessness later)
Fair and equal access to housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will be able to live independently, particularly: older people, people with a learning disability, people fleeing domestic abuse, offenders and young people 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review process associated with the introduction of fixed term tenancies should provide an opportunity for health issues to be identified and addressed. For example the tenant may need adaptations, or support to remain living in their home independently. It will be important that the review process involves the right agencies to achieve improved health outcomes. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new ‘affordable rent’ model may mean that less new supported housing is built as it is not cost-effective • Households living in short-term supported housing or temporary housing may find it harder to move-on; they might not want or be able to afford an ‘affordable rent’ home; they might be confused by new and different types of rent and tenancy • Social landlords may seek to use fixed term tenancies as a tool to ask households who are thought to be more likely to be a challenging tenant to leave their property.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will be able to sustain their home and there is a reduction in homelessness 	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided the council and registered providers work together to develop approaches to financial inclusion and capability for tenants, tenants will be allocated a home they are able to afford in the longer term and financial issues will be identified and addressed at an early stage. <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some households, for example those who have already experienced insecure housing and/or homelessness and/or other crisis in their life, for whom uncertainty about what will happen at the end of a fixed term tenancy and/or worry about paying the rent may affect their health and wellbeing. In turn this may affect their capacity – and perhaps willingness - to sustain a settled home • Uncertainty and worry may also reduce the positive effects that a settled home can have on someone’s quality of life; enabling them to get back on their feet, to access education and employment and to begin contributing to the local community • There is a risk that households who do not receive a new tenancy at the end of their fixed term may approach the council for homelessness assistance (see advice and information earlier).

Annex C Community and customer characteristics, housing need and demand

This section should enable robust comprehensive impact assessments of tenancy and affordable rent policies. The Council will refer to this information in its own impact assessments and we would like our partners, including registered providers, to do the same.

The Council would like social landlords to bear in mind the evidence we have of housing need and demand in North West Leicestershire. The 'housing challenges' document that supports the 2011-2015 housing strategy (see www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/housing_strategy) also provides some detail.

Household/ other criteria	North West Leicestershire community, housing needs and customer profile
Age	<p>Older people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At October 2011 there were 122 applicants on the housing register over the age of 65, and 180 applicants aged between 50 – 64 years. Only 31 households over 65 were in the top two priority bands (25 households are existing tenants seeking to transfer). Just over half of the applicants are single households. Few require sheltered housing (11) or support (16). There were 64 applications from couple households • In 2010/11 26 general let affordable homes were let to older people (8%), whilst 137 sheltered homes were let. • In 2010 there were an estimated 15,985 people age 65 and over. This is projected to rise to 23,700 by 2025, an increase of 57%. Increased life expectancy does not always mean extra years in good health. • There are particular unmet needs for affordable suitable accommodation for older people, including those under-occupying larger and family homes. There is little suitable and smaller alternative accommodation. • As people get older their housing needs change. Adaptations may be needed so people can stay in their home, or people may need to move to receive support and care. • A 2010 Leicestershire study concluded that older people prefer to stay where they are and be supported to live in their own homes. • Generally older applicants in the District prefer to move into bungalows not purpose built flats. • Improving outcomes for older people with complex problems is a health priority in NWL <p>Children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At October 2011 537 applicants on the housing register were couple or lone parent households with 'one or more others' in the household. 62 of these households were in the top two priority bands. • In 2010/11 87 affordable homes were let to people aged between 16 and 24 (26%). 37.5% of affordable homes were let to families

Household/ other criteria	North West Leicestershire community, housing needs and customer profile
	<p>with children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,575 children live in poverty (defined as a household with half the average income - for a family of four this would be pay of less than £12,500 - but also suffers from material deprivation), despite overall deprivation being lower than average • At 2010 there were 21,400 people under the age of 19 living in the district. • The economic downturn has seen an increase in the demand for housing advice services from young people who would like to find their own place or have been asked to leave their current home (top three most common enquiry) • Private renting is felt to provide a flexible alternative to ownership for many younger and more mobile households, but it is unlikely to provide a suitable alternative for households requiring longer-term secure and affordable housing – particularly families with children (JRF)
Disability (physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	<p>Physical disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 1,500 Disability Living Allowance claimants (Feb 2011 DWP) • In 2010/11 36 lettings to general let affordable homes and 51 lettings to supported housing (CORE) were to households who required some form of disability related requirement • As of January 2010 there were 70 people on the Council's housing register for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). (This does not include council tenants waiting for aids and adaptations). Some people have been waiting for over 2 years. <p>Mental health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prevalence of mental health problems in North West Leicestershire between 2008 and 2025 is expected to rise. <p>Learning disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 312 known people aged 19 and over in North West Leicestershire with learning disabilities, considerably fewer than the estimated number of 1,676 people. The majority of people with learning disabilities are aged between 20 and 29 years. • The housing strategy identifies a particular need for homes and housing services to enable people with a learning disability to live independently
Gender / Sex	Profiling to be completed
Religious Belief	Profiling to be completed
Racial Group	The ethnic makeup of the district is predominately White British 98.78% (2001)
	Profiling to be completed
Sexual	There is no evidence yet to suggest that sexual orientation is affecting

Household/ other criteria	North West Leicestershire community, housing needs and customer profile
Orientation	the housing circumstances of people living in the district
Transgender	There is no evidence yet to suggest that sexual orientation is affecting the housing circumstances of people living in the district
Carers	There are 6 applicants on the housing register who are single people with carers, of which one applicant is in the second band of priority.
Priority neighbourhoods	<p>North West Leicestershire has a number of priority neighbourhoods. These are Coalville, Thringston, Whitwick Greenhill, Ashby (there are large local inequalities in these wards), Measham, Ibstock, Moira and Castle Donington. Deprivation is strongly linked to poor health, poor housing and poor local environment.</p> <p>Life expectancy is 4.4 years lower for men and 5.2 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of North West Leicestershire than in the least deprived areas (2011 Health Profile)</p> <p>North West Leicestershire is mostly rural with several large settlements, the largest of which are Coalville, Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington. North West Leicestershire has settlements with varying characteristics, with a fairly distinctive division of wealth – Ashby de la Zouch attracts wealthier households, while Coalville houses more blue-collar households.</p> <p>In rural areas where the population is less than 3,000 people there is very little social housing available which limits the choice of affordable housing for people who wish to live there, for example young people who have grown up in the area and would like to leave the family home.</p>
Other protected groups (pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	There are particular unmet needs for affordable rented family housing and housing for vulnerable people with support needs.
Other socially excluded groups (low literacy, socio-economic, rural communities, etc)	<p>Socio economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 1,091 applicants on the housing register around 800 are unable to afford other than social housing (those over income threshold of £42k, equity limit £27k or savings limit of £16k are placed in the low band) • North West Leicestershire is more affected by socio-economic deprivation than Leicestershire as a whole: 3.5% of the population live in neighbourhoods that have been classified as the most deprived nationally. • The proportion of residents employed in lower skilled occupations is high (38%) in NWL: higher than the national average. Overall the percentage of people with no qualifications is high and above the

Household/ other criteria	North West Leicestershire community, housing needs and customer profile
	<p>national average. The skills gap creates a situation where many local people are unable to take advantage of higher salaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average weekly wage £483.40, (about the national average, 2009) • In NWL the number of people unemployed for more than six months (May 2010) has been increasing steadily since October 2008 and now represents 38% of the total unemployment figures. Across North West Leicestershire the unemployment rate has risen by 2% since 2008 to 3.3% of the population. Rates peaked at 3.5% in April 2009, but it has been falling for the past five months. The number of Job Seeker Allowance claimants has tended to be higher in NWL, as a % of the total population, than other districts in the County during 09/10. • 3,660 council and housing association tenants and 1,380 private sector tenants are in receipt of housing benefit (April 2011, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Single Housing Benefit Extract) • In 2008 7,229 households were estimated to be in fuel poverty. Due to increased fuel prices and stagnation of wages, central government have indicated that the number of households in fuel poverty has increased <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the district there are higher than average levels of households which includes someone with special needs or health issues • Alcohol misuse is a problem for almost 30,000 people.
All	There are some migrant populations spread across the district, for example the Polish community in Measham.

Annex D NWLDC Settlement Hierarchies

NWLDC Settlement Hierarchies			
Settlement	Total housing stock	Under 3000 population	DEFRA Settlement Classification
Lockington	66	Yes	Hamlet
Hemington	297	Yes	Hamlet
Gelsmoor	20	Yes	Hamlet
Outwoods	48	Yes	Hamlet
Peggs Green	94	Yes	Hamlet
Staunton Harold	34	Yes	Hamlet
Lount	21	Yes	Hamlet
Chilcote	47	Yes	Hamlet
Stretton en le Field	16	Yes	Hamlet
Boothorpe	12	Yes	Hamlet
Overseal	43	Yes	Hamlet
Shellbrook	36	Yes	Hamlet
Willesley	19	Yes	Hamlet
Oakthorpe	309	Yes	Hamlet
Charley	82	Yes	Hamlet
Breedon On The Hill	326	Yes	Village less Sparse
Wilson	68	Yes	Village less Sparse
Tonge	53	Yes	Village less Sparse
Isley Walton	30	Yes	Village less Sparse
Long Whatton	502	Yes	Village less Sparse
Diseworth	271	Yes	Village less Sparse
Belton	321	Yes	Village less Sparse
Coleorton	371	Yes	Village less Sparse
Griffydam	101	Yes	Village less Sparse
Osgathorpe	177	Yes	Village less Sparse
Newbold Coleorton	228	Yes	Village less Sparse
Worthington	216	Yes	Village less Sparse
Normanton Le Heath	63	Yes	Village less Sparse
Packington	321	Yes	Village less Sparse
Ravenstone	704	Yes	Village less Sparse
Appleby Magna	482	Yes	Village less Sparse
Heather	412	Yes	Village less Sparse
Snarestone	131	Yes	Village less Sparse
Newton Burgoland	183	Yes	Village less Sparse

NWLDC Settlement Hierarchies			
Settlement	Total housing stock	Under 3000 population	DEFRA Settlement Classification
Swepstone	84	Yes	Village less Sparse
Blackfordby	450	Yes	Village less Sparse
Boundary	82	Yes	Village less Sparse
Acresford	45	Yes	Village less Sparse
Batram	98	Yes	Village less Sparse
Castle Donington	2,834	No	Town & Fringe less sparse
Kegworth	1,580	No	Town & Fringe less sparse
Ibstock	2,559	No	Town & Fringe less sparse
Measham	2,213	No	Town & Fringe less sparse
Ellistown	1,080	Yes	Town & Fringe less sparse
Swannington	554	Yes	Urban less sparse
Albert Village	352	Yes	Urban less sparse
Moira	1214	Yes	Urban less sparse
Ashby	5,367	No	Urban less sparse
Donisthorpe	771	Yes	Urban less sparse
Coalville	4,780	No	Urban less sparse
Whitwick	3881	No	Urban less sparse
Thringstone	1066	No	Urban less sparse
Greenhill	2848	No	Urban less sparse
Hugglescote	818	Yes	Urban less sparse
Bardon	1309	No	Urban less sparse

Urban Settlements not covered by AH SPD threshold of 5 dwellings
Settlements under 3,000 & covered by AH SPD

Annex E Welfare Reform – main changes

The government's welfare reform plans aim to stem the increasing public expenditure on benefits, to reduce dependency on benefits and encourage people into work. This Annex summarises the main changes and who they will affect.

Change	Effect
The excess payment of up to £15 has been stopped for tenants whose rent is below the average	Reduced household income
The 5-bedroom rate for LHA is abolished and the maximum LHA is now 4 bedrooms.	Reduced household income for large families
Absolute caps have been introduced for the benefit to be paid for each size of property.	Reduced household income
LHA rates have been set to reflect the bottom third of private rents rather than the bottom half.	Less choice of home in the private rented sector
The shared room rate now relates to claimants under 35 (previously 25) – from January 2012. There are exemptions for those aged 25-34 who have lived for at least 3 months in a homeless hostel and received support to resettle and rehabilitate, or are offenders supervised through the MAPPA ²¹ process who would pose a risk to others if they shared accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for shared accommodation • Single parent access to children may be affected
LHA rates will increase in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) from 2013	Reduced household income as CPI does not include housing costs
Universal Credit will bring together all means tested working age benefits ²² , there will be an overall benefit cap (from 2013)	Reduced household income, for larger families in particular
The combined total of Universal Credit, Child Benefit and other benefits such as contributory JSA and ESA will be capped to a maximum of median net earnings.	Reduced household income
Universal Credit will be administered by a central, national system, accessed primarily through the internet and by telephone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited local service provision • Access difficult in rural areas

²¹ MAPPA: Multi-agency Public Protection Agency

²² Universal Credit will replace: Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit

Change	Effect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all customers can use/like distant service provision
Direct payments of Universal Credit will be made to all tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent arrears may increase • Arrears will affect private landlord and registered provider business plans & in turn may limit access to supply
Non-dependent deductions have been uprated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of household asked to leave as income reduced as result • May particularly affect younger household members
Restrictions to housing benefit for working age social housing tenants who are under-occupying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing tenants will have to pay up to 14 per cent of their housing benefit if they have one spare room and up to 25 per cent for two spare rooms • Rent arrears may accumulate • May need more smaller accommodation to enable moves
An extra bedroom is now allowed for a non-resident overnight carer of an HB claimant.	People requiring care can provide a room for their carer

APPENDIX 2

Consultation responses and action

North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Recommendations

Subject to these issues being resolved in the manner described below, the NWL Strategic Housing Partnership approved the contents and direction of the strategy and acknowledged the effort and commitment of officers involved in its preparation.

Decision/solution needed	Partnership Recommendation	Action taken (<i>action outstanding</i>)
1. The level of detail we include in the strategy re: welfare reform (in the main text or in a Annex)	An Annex should be appended to cover the main issues around Welfare Reform	This has been included as Annex F
2. EMHG point about affordable rent levels	NWLDC to broker meeting between HCA (Holly Raybould is on leave until the 15 May), RPs and Council landlord to resolve prior to Cabinet 17 July 2012. Outcome to be notified to Partnership members by email	The guidance does not need to be changed but the meeting will ensure that registered providers are able to deliver what the council would prefer. <i>The HCA contact is on leave. A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.</i>
3. Role of Leicestershire Housing Services Partnership	Reference should be included in section 2.4 to the Leicestershire Housing Services Partnership	A relevant section has been included
4. The appropriate length of tenancy for older people (people over working-age) moving into non-designated accommodation that may be of value to other household groups eg, suitable for families	Councillors present felt that Members would want to debate this point as part of the democratic process.	<i>To be discussed at Policy Development Group 12 June 2012</i>
5. Agree that lifetime tenancies should be used for extra care housing	Yes but felt that a definition of Extra Care needed pre-Cabinet. CL said that County were doing some work in this area and it was expected that this would be completed end of April/May time	The definition of extra care on Leicestershire County Council's website has been used until such time as the County provide an alternative definition (a definition has been requested)
6. Point raised by EMHG regarding	Acknowledged that this can be confusing as	As with the issue of affordable rent, this matter

Decision/solution needed	Partnership Recommendation	Action taken (<i>action outstanding</i>)
<p>allocation of homes in rural areas had previously been made outside the normal property size eligibility criteria & the need for a flexible approach to rural lettings</p>	<p>there is no single definition of 'rural' & that we may need to vary S106 agreements in light of HB reforms JR suggested that S106 wording might address this issue</p>	<p>relates primarily to the process of agreeing lettings policies in rural areas and does not change the direction of the tenancy strategy. <i>This matter will be included in discussions with HCA re 2. Above</i></p>
<p>7. Agree preference for households in crisis and definition of crisis (if agreed necessary)</p>	<p>Partnership felt that 5 years was acceptable for families in crisis</p>	<p>This has been added to the strategy, alongside the requirement for RPs to work with the council and partners to enable the household to set up and sustain their home, and for support to be made available to help them overcome the crisis they have experienced eg, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse etc</p>
<p>8. How to progress the communication of information and monitoring to enable the impact of the introduction of tenure reforms and the affordable rent model to be monitored by the public, the council, registered providers and other interested stakeholders.</p>	<p>Agreed that Task & Finish group be set up and coordinated by the Strategic Housing team to agree how this should be done and who needed to be involved. JR suggested a leaflet/handout with a simplistic explanation</p>	<p><i>Task and finis group discussion 17/5/12</i> Volunteers from the floor – CL/HRA representative, JR, EMHA, LH or LM,</p>

Consultation Responses to 'The Future of social and affordable homes in North West Leicestershire' March 2012

Summary of action taken by NWLDC

1. Process of development has been amended to reflect the NWL Strategic Housing Partnership's involvement and membership.
2. Wording in 2.1 amended in light of NWL Homelessness Project suggestion
3. Two charts added to break up the text
4. Updated wording to reflect that:
 - a) Social to affordable rent conversions may take place in an area other than where the new build homes will be built
 - b) Registered Providers may choose to offer low cost home ownership
 - c) Right to Buy discounts may impact on supply
 - d) Welfare reform – particularly the under-occupation 'tax' and potential impact on demand for smaller homes
 - e) Disabled should also reflect other long term conditions eg, mental health
 - f) Employment opportunities should be a focus of joint working with providers
5. Revised wording to reflect council's ambition to meet housing need and demand
6. Addition of wording to reference opportunities offered by construction of new homes
7. Household group titles amended to working age and above working age – in response to feedback at Leicestershire event and subsequent responses
8. Wording amended to reflect the need to work together re: rural areas and priority areas

Summary of points to discuss at the NWL SHP on 23 March 2012

1. The level of detail you include in the strategy re: welfare reform (in the main text or in a Annex)
2. EMHG point about affordable rent levels
3. Role of Leicestershire Housing Services Partnership
4. The appropriate length of tenancy for older people (people over working-age) moving into non-designated accommodation that may be of value to other household groups eg, suitable for families
5. Agree that lifetime tenancies should be used for extra care housing
6. Point raised by EMHG re: allocation
7. Agree preference for households in crisis and definition of crisis (if agreed necessary)
8. How to progress the communication of information and monitoring to enable the impact of the introduction of tenure reforms and the affordable rent model to be monitored by the public, the council, registered providers and other interested stakeholders.

Section 1: Purpose

Action taken

- 1 Process of development (1.1) has been amended to reflect the NWL Strategic Housing Partnership's involvement and membership.

Respondent	1. Is the purpose of this document clear?	2. Is our description of how we have developed the content of this document clear? Is there anything else you feel we need to do?
NWL Homelessness Project	Yes	(a) Yes. (b) No
Waterloo Housing Group	Waterloo Housing Group welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the North West Leicestershire Tenancy Strategy. We hope that our responses are of use in helping to develop this. The document itself is very clear in its aims and context.	As outlined above, the document is very clear-both in terms of structure and content- and provides very useful data about the district, and resulting strategic priorities.
East Midlands Housing Group	In terms of the draft tenancy we feel that really useful and comprehensive.	
Leicestershire Police	Yes clear bullet points	Yes clear ~ no other comment
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Yes – plain English version and glossary will be very useful for non-experts	Yes – can't think of anything
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Yes	Suggest you include the consultation with tenants.
Sanctuary Housing Group	Yes. The purpose of the document is clear and is placed in relevant context with regard to the Localism Act, current economic and political environment.	The content is clear, the development process aligned to key strategies are clearly defined and referenced. There are no significant gaps that we have noted.
David Wilson Homes	Yes	I would elaborate a little more on the working party and how many companies were involved in shaping the document
Sheila Sharpe	Relatively clear	

Section 2: Social and affordable housing in North West Leicestershire

Action taken

2. Wording in 2.1 amended in light of NWL Homelessness Project suggestion
3. Two charts added to break up the text

The role and shape of the social and affordable housing market today

Respondent	3. Is it clear what the role of affordable housing is in North West Leicestershire?	4. Is the information provided about affordable housing in the district enough for you to understand what the market looks like? If not, what further information would you like to see?
NWL Homelessness Project	Yes but 2.1 would more accurately read "gives the opportunity to" rather than "enables".	Would be helpful to explain the factors which result in 355 per year affordable homes being required e.g. population growth, economic decline, low turnover.
Waterloo Housing Group	The consultation document provides a very clear context for strategic thinking in relation to development of the overall Tenancy Strategy, and clearly reflects the fact that affordable housing is a relatively scarce resource that needs to be managed appropriately.	The information on key facts about affordable housing in North West Leicestershire provided a very informative detailed context for the overall strategic approach. The consultation document provides a great degree of clarity on the need both for more affordable housing in general, and the need to address the particular housing needs- such as those of rural communities- in particular.
Leicestershire Police	Yes	Read with interest and very understandable
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Yes	Yes – sufficient information but could some of it be presented in a different format e.g. bar/pie charts etc as it's a bit difficult to read.
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Still unclear – perhaps you should emphasise the importance of assisting those in greatest need.	Yes
Sanctuary Housing Group	Yes, this is described in relation to the overall housing market in NWL succinctly.	The information about affordable housing is sufficient to make an assessment of the market, the data on stock profile, income and demand was particularly useful, we have not seen this in all consultations we have responded to.
David Wilson Homes	Yes	Yes it gives a clear picture.

Social and affordable housing in the future

Action taken

4. Updated wording to reflect that:
 - Social to affordable rent conversions may take place in an area other than where the new build homes will be built
 - Registered Providers may choose to offer low cost home ownership
 - Right to Buy discounts may impact on supply
 - Welfare reform – particularly the under-occupation ‘tax’ and potential impact on demand for smaller homes

Points to consider at NWL SHP

1. The level of detail you include in the strategy re: welfare reform (in the main text or in Annex Z)

Respondent	5. If you are familiar with the Localism Act 2011 and relevant social housing reform policy, is our interpretation of the choices available to the Council as a landlord and registered providers correct and fair?	6. For those who are unfamiliar with social housing reform, are the available choices clear?	7. Are there other choices that providers have that we should recognise?
NWL Homelessness Project	As far as I am aware.	It is unclear how this process links in with CBL and how far the intention it to manipulate applicants offering only affordable rent housing when they would prefer social housing.	Ensuring type of affordable rent/social housing provided reflects changed need e.g. for more shared accommodation
Waterloo Housing Group	The consultation document correctly summarises and interprets the key changes introduced as a result of the Localism Act, and resulting anticipated changes to the revised Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012. We have developed specific policy and procedures on Affordable Rents, and are working to develop our overall Tenancy Policy currently. We are keen for this to be informed by the strategic priorities of our partner authorities.	Not applicable	Low-cost home ownership initiatives also have a key role to play in ensuring the sustainability of local communities, for example in rural areas. These have the potential to encourage those who currently live or work in the area to be able to live locally.
Leicestershire Police	I'm aware of the impact of the Act on local housing and planning and I feel that has been well interpreted	N/A	Not within my personal knowledge

Respondent	5. If you are familiar with the Localism Act 2011 and relevant social housing reform policy, is our interpretation of the choices available to the Council as a landlord and registered providers correct and fair?	6. For those who are unfamiliar with social housing reform, are the available choices clear?	7. Are there other choices that providers have that we should recognise?
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Yes – clear summary provided	N/A	Not aware of any
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Yes.	N/a	Happy with what's already recognised.
Sanctuary Housing Group	We are familiar with the Localism Act and reforms to social housing policy, your interpretation cannot be faulted and is presented in an easy to understand manner for those who may not be aware of the key issues and implications. We believe your analysis is a correct and fair representation.		Annex A provides important information on the impact of 'affordable rents' in comparison to market and intermediate rent levels, the link to affordability is appropriate here too. We feel that it is not clear that providers can convert to affordable rent in the NWL area whilst not necessarily having new provision in the district, the new HCA grant process does provide for this. Better referencing to the welfare reform bill would have been useful here; we accept much of the detail was not known and/or subject to amendment when this consultation was issued.
David Wilson Homes	Yes- However have we looked at off loading all owned affordable units to a registered landlord or mentioned why this would not be feasible? (Blaby DC do not own any)	Yes	No
Sheila Sharpe		Relatively clear	

Partnership working

Action taken

5. Revised wording to reflect council's ambition to meet housing need and demand
6. Addition of wording to reference opportunities offered by construction of new homes

Points to consider at NWL SHP

3. EMHG point about affordable rent levels
4. Role of Leicestershire Housing Services Partnership

Respondent	8. We have identified a number of areas for joint work between the council and registered providers in this document. Are there other issues we could usefully be working together on?
NWL Homelessness Project	To ensure as far as possible, profile of houses meets current need.
Waterloo Housing Group	The consultation document is very refreshing in its approach and highlights a number of possibilities for joint working. We welcome the opportunity to continue to develop partnership working in a number of ways to benefit the needs and overall sustainability of the communities in North West Leicestershire. Our work to support the needs of rural communities in the district (e.g. Long Whatton, Diseworth) provides a good example of joint working to enhance the sustainability and quality of life in rural communities.
East Midlands Housing Group	The document suggest to RPs that they charge social rents on studio flats and 4 bed houses - as you know where HCA funding or nil grant schemes are included in the HCA contract, providers have to deliver the affordable rent product at 80%. It would be useful to have a discussion with RPs and the HCA lead for the District to find out if and what flexibilities there might be for charging less than 80% of the market rent. We will need to bear in mind that the HCA's driver appears to be to minimise grant requirements.
Leicestershire Police	Not within my knowledge
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Do we need to mention the Leics. Housing Services Partnership?
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Development of good neighbourhood agreements/Resident Involvement (worklessness)
Sanctuary Housing Group	Partnership working around employment, these can be linked to the HCA affordable homes programme through providers extracting maximum value from investment, for example, training and job creation opportunities via construction and supply chain, joint community action in procurement of support for NEETS etc...
David Wilson Homes	Not that I can think of
Sheila Sharpe	What employment choices are available?

Section 3 The Council's guidance for registered providers

Respondent	9. Are the council's preferences for the use of fixed term tenancies – if they are to be used at all - clear, and do you agree or disagree with these:
	a) Overall?
NWL Homelessness Project	Yes
Waterloo Housing Group	Overall the strategic approach outlined in the consultation document is broadly in accordance with our existing thinking. We intend to let those properties considered suitable for affordable rent for a period of 5 years, which will be renewed in most cases, with the exception of a limited number of circumstances (e.g. if this would conflict with the Group member's charitable status due to high income levels, or substantial under-occupation for example). Although it is unlikely we would develop studio accommodation, the only issue may be in relation to always letting the limited number of 4 bedroomed homes at a social rent, rather than at affordable rent as outlined above. We would offer the view that it is important that such a scarce resource is managed in a way that ensures that it continues to meet the needs of those who need a larger home. If let on a social rent basis this may potentially limit this opportunity.
East Midlands Housing Group	Our overall comment would be that whilst we understand the specific recommendations for particular groups this may be difficult to administer and monitor and therefore would ask if this could be simplified in any way.

Leicestershire Police	Agree
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Yes –agree
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Agree
Sanctuary Housing Group	Yes, these are clear and we support the council's preferences.
David Wilson Homes	Agree with the fixed term initiative – A thorough review of circumstances should be undertaken at the end of each term. If circumstances have improved, what are the options?
Sheila Sharpe	I don't think 5 years is long enough

Respondent	9. Are the council's preferences for the use of fixed term tenancies – if they are to be used at all - clear, and do you agree or disagree with these: For each household group?				
	Families with children of school age or younger	Single and couple households under the age of 50	Households on a low income, but not in receipt of housing benefit	Households with a disabled member	Older people over the age of 50
NWL Homelessness Project	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waterloo Housing Group	We are still in the process of developing our overall Tenancy Policy as outlined above, so haven't as yet resolved at what stage we may introduce fixed term tenancies for those properties that continue to be let at a social rent. However the proposal of a 5 year fixed term tenancy in relation to properties let at an Affordable Rent is in accordance with our current position.		We fully support the need to develop appropriate financial inclusion services. As outlined above we haven't as yet resolved at what stage we may introduce fixed term tenancies for those properties that continue to be let at a social rent. However the proposal of a 5 year fixed term tenancy in relation to properties let at an Affordable Rent is in accordance with our current position.	We are still in the process of developing our overall Tenancy Policy as outlined above, so haven't as yet resolved at what stage we may introduce fixed term tenancies for those properties that continue to be let at a social rent. Although the proposal of a 10 year fixed term tenancy is different to our current position of offering 5 year fixed term tenancies for Affordable Rent homes, it is the case that in most cases these would continue to be renewed, other than a limited number of exceptional circumstances.	We are still in the process of developing our overall Tenancy Policy as outlined above, so haven't as yet resolved at what stage we may introduce fixed term tenancies for those properties that continue to be let at a social rent. However the proposal of a 5 year fixed term tenancy in relation to general needs properties let at an Affordable Rent is in accordance with our current position. Likewise we also intend to continue to let sheltered accommodation for older people as lifetime homes.
Leicestershire Police	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree that this needs to be flexible especially where internal alterations have taken place	This has to be relative to the occupancy at the time of review, especially where one person may be occupying a 3 bed house.
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Yes –agree	Yes –agree	Yes –agree	Yes –agree	Yes –agree

Respondent	9. Are the council's preferences for the use of fixed term tenancies – if they are to be used at all - clear, and do you agree or disagree with these: For each household group?				
	Families with children of school age or younger	Single and couple households under the age of 50	Households on a low income, but not in receipt of housing benefit	Households with a disabled member	Older people over the age of 50
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Sanctuary Housing Group	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Sheila Sharpe	No	No	No	No	No
David Wilson Homes	Agree with the fixed term initiative – A thorough review of circumstances should be undertaken at the end of each term. If circumstances have improved, what are the options?				

Points to consider at NWL SHP

5. The appropriate length of tenancy for older people moving into non-designated accommodation that may be of value to other household groups eg, suitable for families
6. Agree that lifetime tenancies should be used for extra care housing

Respondent	10. In relation to older people:	
	a) Do you think the preference for a minimum of 5 years in general needs accommodation should be revised to general needs <u>family</u> accommodation?	b) Please tell us your views on the use of fixed term tenancies in extra care housing.
NWL Homelessness Project	Yes	Life time preferable.
Waterloo Housing Group	Our policy perspective is that there may be accommodation that is non-sheltered that may be appropriate to continue to let as lifetime homes. This would include properties with alarm call facilities for example, so greater clarity on the type of accommodation may be of use.	We welcome the views of other providers- including specialist providers- in response to this question, but wonder if it would be more sensitive to simply offer lifetime accommodation, as for sheltered housing. This would perhaps be more understandable for customers, and alleviate any worries that a fixed term tenancy may cause.
Leicestershire Police	Agree healthy & mobile older people should be able to access housing to suit their needs, but with acknowledgement to family support, especially in rural locations.	The needs of those occupying this type of accommodation should contain a level of flexibility within the fix term relative to the care requirements that may change yearly.
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	No – leave as general needs accommodation.	My initial feeling is that these should be lifetime tenancies – although in terms of couples this could depend if both parties need that particular level of care? Alternative to care home placements.
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Agree	Lifetime tenancies
Sanctuary Housing Group	We support lifetime tenancies for older people in sheltered, we are not clear what question (a) above is asking, whichever way it is stated it amounts to the same situation. We support assisting older people who are under occupying to make better use of stock by excluding 'downsizers' from conversion to AR and providing practical help with moving.	We would wish to exclude adapted properties from fixed term tenancies in all of our stock.
David Wilson Homes	Yes – there needs to be a break clause if circumstances significantly change ie extra child.	If the house is adapted then it needs to be fixed term to recover the adaption cost
Sheila Sharpe	I don't think 5 years is enough	Minimum term should take individual needs into consideration This is a difficult one to look at you could have someone able to cope now but with a degenerative condition that will impact on future ability to cope so I think a fixed

		term is very difficult to apportion to such cases.
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Action taken

- 7. Household group titles amended to working age and above working age – in response to feedback at Leicestershire event and subsequent responses
- 8. Wording amended to reflect the need to work together re: rural areas and priority areas

Points to consider at NWL SHP

- 8. Point raised by EMHG re: allocation
- 9. Agree preference for households in crisis and definition of crisis (if agreed necessary)

Respondent	11. Do you think we should ask providers to consider different tenancy lengths in rural parishes?	12. Do you think we should ask providers to give particular consideration to the impact of the 'affordable rent' product and fixed term tenancies on our 'priority neighbourhoods'?	13. Do you think we should ask providers to consider different tenancy lengths for households who have experienced crisis?
NWL Homelessness Project	Yes in the interests of strengthening the local community.	Yes	Yes
Waterloo Housing Group	We would take the view that broadly a fixed term minimum length of 5 years would be appropriate to both meet rural housing needs, and provide a greater degree of community sustainability. As outlined above, it is our position that in most cases such fixed term tenancies would continue to be renewed where needed.	It will remain important overall to monitor the impact of tenure reform moving forward, both in terms of its impact on priority neighbourhoods, as well as rural communities and particular protected characteristics, to ensure that the needs and sustainability of the community are being addressed.	Our view is that a normal fixed term minimum of 5 years-renewable in most cases- would provide both flexibility, and continue to ensure that the needs of those people who are most vulnerable continue to be addressed where needed.
East Midlands Housing Group	Allocation in rural areas to households that fall outside the normal property size criteria – would be helpful to discuss this further to see how this can be accommodated / managed.		
Leicestershire Police	Those living within rural locations are more likely to be dependent on local extended family support, thus requiring a different approach to fixed term contracts. A lot of families may have resided in NWLDC affordable housing in excess of 30 years; unfortunately as they get older single individuals may be occupying properties more suitable for larger family use. The limited supply of single occupancy type properties, coupled with the cost of other	Priority neighbourhoods and those living within it require a higher level of tenancy management and whilst fixed term may give an element of control, consideration has to be given to the higher level of need and access to services of those identified as vulnerable.	Yes, those especially where young people/children are involved require stability in their lives. This is also helpful to support agencies working with individuals or troubled families.

Respondent	11. Do you think we should ask providers to consider different tenancy lengths in rural parishes?	12. Do you think we should ask providers to give particular consideration to the impact of the 'affordable rent' product and fixed term tenancies on our 'priority neighbourhoods'?	13. Do you think we should ask providers to consider different tenancy lengths for households who have experienced crisis?
	housing, can therefore act as a 'blocker' to supplying property to those young people wishing to remain in the villages.		
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	The draft Leicestershire Family Poverty Strategy includes the following recommendation: 'Poverty should be considered within all Equality Impact Assessments that are conducted, which should also consider the impact of access to services for low income families in rural areas.' Yes - we should ask for consideration of different tenancy lengths in rural areas. Tenants tend to move less often but are also more dependent on the support and proximity of family and friends.	We should aim to reduce disparities between different neighbourhoods in terms of affordable rent prices to ensure affordability for both low income and working households, and also for households dependent on welfare benefits. To ensure mixed and sustainable communities and preserve affordability, providers should avoid setting rent levels that risk households being unable to afford their rent. Need a minimum 5 year so that tenant 'invests' in their home and community. Local Lettings Policy???	I think we should ask them to consider – but would need to define 'crisis' – also need to consider wider support needs/signposting.
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Sanctuary Housing Group	We believe it is appropriate to deal with specific communities and neighbourhoods through local letting plans that could include differing tenancy lengths, our approach at present is not to offer fixed term tenancies.	Yes, bearing in mind providers have to raise the additional capital to support new provision so it may be a difficult balance to achieve. We support engagement with our local authority partners with regard to both conversion to AR and flexible tenancies.	We believe that 5 years as a minimum would cover most circumstances, as stated above, at present we do not plan to use fixed term tenancies. Having a large number of tenancy lengths can cause providers to bear unnecessary administration costs.
David Wilson Homes	No	Yes	There should be a special circumstances break clause
Sheila Sharpe	Yes	Yes	Most definitely

How we will monitor the impact of choices in North West Leicestershire

Points to consider at NWL SHP

10. How to progress the communication of information and monitoring to enable the impact of the introduction of tenure reforms and the affordable rent model to be monitored by the public, the council, registered providers and other interested stakeholders.

Respondent	14. What information would you like the council, the North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership and registered providers to monitor on a regular basis to understand the impact of decisions on social and affordable housing in the district?	15. What information would you like to see made available to the public? How often and in what format?	16. Have you any other questions or comments you would like to make about the content of this document and the direction it aims to provide to registered providers?
NWL Homelessness Project	Largely covered by Annex D. In addition, levels of homelessness under new regime, to identify any increase since regime change, plus collation of profiles of those identified as affected in this way.	6 monthly statistics, and waiting times and cost implications on line and in Vision.	Influence on private rented sector an unknown quantity – potentially needs to be more involvement of these providers from an early stage.
Waterloo Housing Group	We think that the factors proposed in Appendix D offer a very useful starting point for information collection and sharing. This can of course always be open to review as needed.	The document provides a useful summary of these but could include the following examples:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new affordable (social and Affordable Tenure) homes developed • Number of new low cost home ownership homes developed • Summary of key housing needs • Summary of comparative rent levels • Key availability of different forms of housing and where this is located • The types of accommodation that are in greatest demand, and where there is greater availability
East Midlands Housing Group			Review period - It would be useful to have regular reviews of the strategy and as part of this have a dialogue with RPs. As noted above EMH will review its approach.
Leicestershire Police	Annex D seems to cover everything	I suspect public requirements are limited more to locality, size and affordability. Plus information that available stock is being used to best advantage to address any negative impact on lack of use of void properties.	I'm not familiar with what is currently displayed on the website, but I would suspect regular updated information on current and future availability of current and future housing stock is important especially those living in rural locations. Again additional information on local schools, amenities is always helpful.
NWLDC - Head of Planning and Engagement	Annex D looks very comprehensive, if partners can/will provide it.	I'm not sure how much interest in the data there would be from the general public – via website,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the document going to be published in paper format or on-line? It may be useful to include hyperlinks to other documents if

Respondent	14. What information would you like the council, the North West Leicestershire Strategic Housing Partnership and registered providers to monitor on a regular basis to understand the impact of decisions on social and affordable housing in the district?	15. What information would you like to see made available to the public? How often and in what format?	16. Have you any other questions or comments you would like to make about the content of this document and the direction it aims to provide to registered providers?
		annual summary report?	<p>on-line e.g. those at 1.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 5, 1st bullet point should read 'Spend time with their family and friends...' • Page 11, end of 1st para – after 'vulnerable groups' suggest insert (see 3.2) to clarify what these are
NWLDC Council Landlord Service	Availability of accommodation by location and type to inform the review process. Demand for accommodation by location and type to inform the review process.	Average time on the Housing Register by band and property type – colourful charts on website.	Not at this stage
Sanctuary Housing Group	We believe the 'starting point' already provides for a comprehensive list of datasets that will provide useful monitoring, of course other can be considered if required.	We believe information on AR, flexible tenancies and the HCA AHP can be easily incorporated into exiting mechanisms that council's and providers have for conveying such news to the public.	Not at this time.
David Wilson Homes	Number of empty homes. Waiting list (by category). Number of homes made available through upgrading, new build, tenant circumstances. Impact in community.		no
Sheila Sharpe	Personal needs and abilities Employment prospects in all age groups	All as possible. IN Touch, vision, website, newspapers, via social services	



NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION FORUM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2012

Present

Bob Dawe – (Chair), Linford & Verdon Tenants' & Leaseholders' Association (BD)
 Joan Cox - Linford & Verdon Tenants' & Leaseholders' Association (JC) Sheila
 Sharpe – Tenant (SS) Jeanette Collins -
 Greenhill Tenants' and Residents' Association (JCo) Gloria Richardson –
 Greenhill Tenants' and Resident's Association (GR)
 Jason Summerfield – Riverway Resident and Measham Parish Council (JS)
 Colin Manifold – Chair, Measham Parish Council (CM)
 Glynn Truswell - Tenant (GT) Pauline
 Innet – Tenant (PI)
 Pam McGowan – (PM)
 Ron Collins – (RC)
 Cllr Derek Howe - (DH)
 Cllr Sean Sheahan – (SS) Amanda
 Harper – Service Manager, Housing Management (AH) Peter Oliver –
 Senior Housing Officer (PO)
 Sue Hallam – Strategic Housing Team Manager – (SH)

1.		Lead/Action
	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Kate Nicholls – (Vice Chair) Riverview Tenants and Residents Association (KN) Kath Whittaker Roger Ludgate - Willesley Estate Tenants & Residents Association (RL) Pat Guymer – Linford & Verdon Tenants' & Leaseholders' Association (PG) Cllr Roger Bayliss - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services (RB) Chris Lambert – Head of Housing and Customer Service (CL) Nick Jones – Resident Involvement Officer (NJ) Beverley Curry - Resident Involvement Officer (BC)</p>	<p>NJ</p>

	Hearing that Pat Guymer is in hospital it was agreed to send a card from the Forum	
2.	<p>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by JCo and agreed by GT as a true record.</p>	
3.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p><u>Review of INTouch</u></p> <p>AH advised that North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) is awaiting costs from the folding machine supplier.</p> <p><u>Tenant Scrutiny</u></p> <p>AH advised that the outline of the scrutiny model has been agreed by residents. AH will circulate the outline with the minutes. A report is going to Cabinet on the 13th March.</p> <p>Action: AH to circulate outline of scrutiny model</p>	AH
4.	<p>RIVERVIEW ESTATE REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT PRESENTATION</p> <p>JS and CM presented their request for funding. They asked for £2800.00 towards the cost of new play equipment.</p> <p>The following questions were asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is there anywhere else where you can get the money from? CM responded that the April deadline was tight, so it was unlikely that the money could be found elsewhere. ii. Have we got the money to fund this left in the resident involvement budget? BD replied that there were sufficient funds to meet the full amount. <p>Agreed: for £2800.00 from the resident Involvement budget to fund the replacement play equipment</p>	
5.	<p>INTouch Review</p> <p>Item referred to next meeting whilst costs for a different folding machine are confirmed.</p>	NJ

6. The Future of Social and Affordable Housing – Guidance from North West Leicestershire District Council for Registered Providers (The Tenancy Strategy) February 2012-02-28 – Sue Hallam

SH presented the strategy.

The following questions were asked:

- i. What is a strategy? SH responded that it is a plan – how to get from A to B.
- ii. Where has the age of 50 plus come from as a category that was considered by the workshop? SH responded that NWLDCs minimum age for sheltered accommodation is 55 years old, but for other providers it can be 50.
- iii. When the new rules come in, if there is a couple and one of them dies what will happen? AH advised that if a joint tenant passes away then the remaining person may have a right to succession under the Housing Act. The Localism Act may amend this – we would need to look at each individual case. SH commented that if a landlord wants to end a tenancy they have to give notice, and Housing Advice would become involved at this point.
- iv. Will the new tenancies apply to existing tenants? SH said that they would not - existing tenants will be protected.
- v. Will there be a register of approved landlords / how will private landlords be vetted? SH said that NWLDC already works closely with private landlords, and operates a rent deposit and guarantee scheme – NWLDC insist on a 12 twelve month tenancy for these schemes, and have a liaison officer that visits the property to make sure that it meets the decency standard. NWLDC is exploring options around a landlord accreditation scheme.
- vi. In the supporting information, are the figures referred to for NWLDCs housing stock? SH responded – yes, and housing association stock is also included.
- vii. What proportion of existing social homes will be converted to affordable rent? SH said that initial figures estimate that this will be 69% social rented / 31% affordable rent - these figures will be worked on and are subject to change.
- viii. It doesn't seem fair, the Housing benefit bill will go up, and people will be punished for doing well. SH said that a balance will need to be struck in lots of areas.
- ix. At Page 30, what is meant by "The Councils HRA Management, disposal policy and plans to dispose of housing stock, with sufficient notice to enable providers to suggest alternatives"?
- x. AH said that if NWLDC was to dispose of a property, the Asset Management Strategy would be followed - this means that NWLDC would consult other providers to see if they wanted to buy the property for it to be retained as affordable housing.
- xi. Is there any way of forecasting what the employment situation will be in the future? SH said that there was not.
- xii. Do you take travel and bus services in to account when delivering housing? SH said yes, transport is an aspect that is considered

	<p>where new developments are planned.</p> <p>xiii. At Annex C – there are currently 302 applicants that are 64 years old. By 2025 this will have doubled - however the properties won't be there due to the level of stock decreasing? AH said that people see social housing as for life. The purpose of new legislation is to create mobility – so that social housing can help more households and act as a stepping stone.</p> <p>xiv. If NWLDC sells 20 houses, will 20 more be built? AH replied that concerns of this nature have been taken in to account when replying to the recent Right to Buy Consultation. SH commented that Leicester has not received much money from government to build more houses.</p> <p>Agreed - to take the Tenancy Strategy to Housing Management working Group with information to be fed back to the Forum.</p>	SH
7.	<p>Forum Pilot Donations</p> <p>BW asked that the forum consider parameters around how they issue funding. The following was suggested as a starting point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must benefit the whole community • Direct link to tenants • A cap on the amount requested / agreed • Donations in rotation by area • Evidence of wide consultation • Indication of how many people will benefit • Detail around other funding streams applied for • There could be a couple of funding rounds <p>Questions were asked as follows:</p> <p>i. Does MyPlace get funded from the Resident Involvement Budget? AH said that it was, however contributions also come from other sources.</p> <p>ii. Will the Tenant Scrutiny budget come from the Resident Involvement Budget? AH said that the Scrutiny Panel will have its own funding.</p> <p>iii. Is the pilot scheme just for TARAs? BW said that it was not, it's just that the TARA's find out about it at the Forum.</p> <p>Action: AH to put together some guidelines based on the above</p>	AH
8.	<p>TARA Updates</p> <p><u>Greenhill</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1400.00 in bank account • After school clubs ongoing • Bingo ongoing 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning underway for a Jubilee party with the local church <p><u>Linford and Verdon</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last meeting cancelled due to illness • £700.00 in bank account • Exploring opportunity around a trip in April 	
9.	<p>Forward Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice Based Lettings - Scoping Session • INTouch Review 	
10.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>PM asked why the rent increase referred to by CL before Christmas was 7.45%, but the latest figure is 8.25%. AH responded that the 7.45% was a working figure at the time, whereas 8.25% is the confirmed figure.</p> <p>PI asked why there were so many take-aways in Ashby. AH said that there is a Licensing Section at NWLDC that manages applications, however she was unsure as to whether they managed applications for Ashby, and could confirm to the Forum if required.</p> <p>SS presented an article to the forum which stated that 9000 calls had gone unanswered - citing that she had called the Repairs section and it took three attempts to get through. AH responded that it is recognised that there have been problems and they are being addressed.</p>	
	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING Monday 26th March 2012 at 6.00pm, Council Offices, Coalville</p>	

Notes from Housing Management Working Group 21 March 2012

Present: Council tenants

The purpose of the session was to find out what the Group thought about the length of fixed term tenancies and what information would be needed to tenants to enable them to move. This information will be used to inform the council's own landlord tenancy policy, in addition to informing the shape of the tenancy strategy (the strategy is relevant to all registered providers and offers guidance only).

Overall comments

In general the Group liked the idea of fixed term tenancies and were supportive of the length of minimum tenancy lengths suggested. However, there was concern about the capacity of housing officers to give the help and support that will be necessary to help people move at the end of their fixed term tenancy, if this was the outcome of the review.

More specific comments from individuals at the meeting

On the length of tenancy

- Families with children should have a minimum term of 10 years
 - 2 year fixed for families with children that cause ASB and property damage.
- Single people and couples would be ok with 2 year fixed term [note these can only be used in exceptional circumstances]
- For older people of working age I think 5 years fixed is good.
- Disabled people should have longer than 10 years.
- I think the length of the fixed term tenancies is good but can it be reviewed.
- Reasonable as long as regular renewals of terms.
- People with disabilities agree 5 year and 10 year fixed.
- Families with children 5 years is too short
- 5 year fixed is fine for singles and couples of working age.
- 10 year fixed for people with disability is not long enough I have concerns about this. What about people with a lifetime disability?
- People on low incomes but not HB- I have concerns about employment availability.

On the information and support needed to enable fixed term tenancies

- Older people and the vulnerable will need practical and financial support if they are expected to move.
- Expecting people to move could be tricky and an awkward situation to deal with generally
- What about people with clinical depression the thought of having to move after 5 years could make them worse.
- The information provided to people will need to be clear and simple.
- Clear, simple information accessible for all regardless of abilities.
- Information must be in plain English.
- A great deal of advice on private rented sector will need to be given.