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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Bill Cullen MBA (ISM), BA(Hons) MRTPI
Chief Executive

Date: 03 September 2025

To: Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Cllr C Lambert (Chair)
Cllr MJ Surtees (Vice-Chair)
Cllr P Williams (Vice-Chair)
Cllr DS Cope
Cllr MJ Crooks
Cllr C Harris

Cllr J Moore
Cllr A Pendlebury
Cllr M Simmons
Cllr R Webber-Jones
Cllr A Weightman

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear member,

There will be a meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** in the De Montfort Suite, Hinckley Hub on **THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2025 at 6.30 pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Owen'.

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

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- *There are two escape routes from the Council Chamber – at the side and rear. Leave via the door closest to you.*
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- **Do not** use the lifts.
- **Do not** stop to collect belongings.

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Thank you

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

2. **MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025.

3. **ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

To be advised of any additional items of business which the Chair decides by reason of special circumstances shall be taken as matters of urgency at this meeting.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive verbally from members any disclosures which they are required to make in accordance with the Council's code of conduct or in pursuance of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. **This is in addition to the need for such disclosure to be also given when the relevant matter is reached on the agenda.**

5. **QUESTIONS**

To hear any questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

6. **QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF COUNCIL**

This is an opportunity for members of the Scrutiny Commission to put questions to the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council about their priorities, achievements and challenges.

7. **SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 5 - 10)**

Work programme attached.

8. **HERITAGE STRATEGY UPDATE (Pages 11 - 54)**

To consider the Heritage Strategy and action plan.

9. **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION POLICY (Pages 55 - 76)**

To seek support for the implementation of a prevention policy to prevent people becoming homeless.

10. **COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICE RENT POLICY (Pages 77 - 102)**

To seek support for the draft rent collection policy and consultation with tenants.

11. **FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (Pages 103 - 108)**

Forward plan for the period September to December 2025.

12. **ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DECIDES HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS MATTERS OF URGENCY**

As announced under item 3.

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

26 JUNE 2025 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Cllr C Lambert – Chair
Cllr MJ Surtees and Cllr P Williams – Vice-Chairs
Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks, Cllr C Harris, Cllr J Moore, Cllr A Pendlebury,
Cllr M Simmons and Cllr R Webber-Jones

Officers in attendance: Daniel Britton, Matt Burns, Bill Cullen and Rebecca Owen

74. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Weightman.

75. **Minutes**

It was moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Crooks and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March be confirmed as a correct record.

76. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Williams declared a non-registrable interest in the Environmental Improvement Programme as heritage champion and sponsor of one of the projects.

77. **Supported bus network**

It was reported that, since despatch of the agenda, the Choose How You Move team at Leicestershire County Council had stated they would no longer be able to attend the meeting to present details of their project due to a county council policy which prevented engagement with district councils' scrutiny bodies.

78. **Cineworld Hinckley**

The general manager of Cineworld in Hinckley and the Senior Regional Manager were in attendance to inform members of their community offer in Hinckley. During discussion, the background context around the significant public support that had been expressed for a cinema in the Crescent regeneration scheme was highlighted and the following points were noted:

- £1 children's films would be available again this summer
- The cinema held screenings for people with autism and for parents with babies
- There were dementia group screenings
- "Secret screenings" were occasionally held, in which a mystery film was shown

- Covid and the resulting lack of new films and increase in use of streaming services had impacted the cinema industry since 2020.

Opportunities for closer working between the council and Cineworld to cross-promote events and share social media posts to reach new customers were discussed, along with working with local businesses to create deals for customers. It was also suggested that links be facilitated with the schools in Hinckley for children with special educational needs.

79. **Scrutiny Commission Work Programme**

In considering the work programme, the following was agreed:

- A workshop would be held to progress the digital poverty review, focussing on HBBC services and signposting to other organisations
- The September meeting may need to be pushed back to accommodate the final proposal in relation to local government reorganisation
- The public transport review, which would have commenced following the attendance of the Choose How You Move team, would be reconsidered given the lack of engagement of Leicestershire County Council with the scrutiny process in districts. In the meantime it would be added to the work programme “to be scheduled”. It was agreed that Councillor Pendlebury would raise the matter of attendance at scrutiny with Leicestershire County Council
- The report in relation to children and young people would be scheduled as an annual report.

80. **Environmental Improvement Programme 2025/26**

Members were informed of the enhancement schemes to be implemented under the Environmental Improvement Programme.

A members asked about the process for gravestone repairs and it was noted that the stones would be assessed then an application made for funding towards repair. It was suggested that parish councils be made aware of this.

It was suggested that there were some areas that had been home to notable residents and could be considered for a blue plaque, and members were informed that the criteria was on the council’s website.

RESOLVED – the enhancement schemes be noted.

81. **Overview & Scrutiny statutory guidance**

The overview and scrutiny statutory guidance was introduced to members. It was agreed that a small working group consisting of the chair and vice-chairs and any other interested members be set up to undertake a self-assessment and produce an action plan if necessary.

82. **Overview & Scrutiny annual report 2024/25**

The Scrutiny Commission received the overview and scrutiny annual report for 2024/25 prior to consideration by Council. It was

RESOLVED – the report be endorsed and RECOMMENDED to Council for approval.

83. **Forward plan of Executive and Council decisions**

The forward plan of Executive and Council decisions was noted.

84. **Minutes of Finance & Performance Scrutiny**

In noting the minutes of Finance & Performance Scrutiny, it was requested that the resource implications of the local plan be included in future reports.

(The Meeting closed at 7.45 pm)

CHAIR

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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2023-2027

SEPTEMBER 2025

Date	Issue (report author)	Reason	Outcomes	Supports corporate aims
11 September 2025	Question and answer session with Leader & Deputy	Holding the Executive to account	Scrutiny of the Executive	All
	Heritage Strategy update	Reporting pathway	Recommendations to Executive	2
	Homelessness prevention policy implementation	Reporting pathway	Recommendations to Executive	1
	Council house service rent policy	Reporting pathway	Recommendations to Executive	1
6 November 2025	Planning appeals update (Chris Brown)	Annual report	Monitoring of performance on appeals	2
	Affordable housing delivery (Valerie Bunting)	Annual report	Awareness of delivery	1, 2
	Adoption of infrastructure review final report (Scrutiny review / Becky Owen)	Conclusion of scrutiny review	Recommendations to appropriate body	2
	Housing associations review (Scrutiny review)	Request of members: matter of importance to residents	Scoping of review	1, 2
	Budget strategy (Ashley Wilson)			3
	Overview & Scrutiny statutory guidance	Final report following task & finish group	Recommendations to officer and/or Council	All
	Housing task & finish group – implementation of outcomes	To consider the outcomes of the review	Action outstanding items	1
	Local Government Reorganisation – final proposal	Reporting pathway	Recommendations to Executive	All
	Infrastructure funding statement (Lesley Keal)	Annual report	Awareness of S106 contributions and allocations	2

Date	Issue (report author)	Reason	Outcomes	Supports corporate aims
	Review of recommendations of planning service review (2022) (Scrutiny review / Becky Owen)	Monitor implementation of recommendations	Ensure recommendations have been actioned	2
22 January 2026 (budget meeting)	Budget reports (Ashley Wilson)	Normal reporting pathway	Scrutiny prior to Council decision	All
	Pay policy statement (Julie Stay)	Normal reporting pathway	Scrutiny prior to Council decision	All
	Economic regeneration strategy 2026 – 2030	Refresh of strategy	Recommendation to decision making body	2
12 March 2026	Voluntary & Community sector partnership update and commissioning outcomes (Rachel Burgess)	Annual update	Awareness of VCS activity	1
	Parish & Community Initiative Fund allocations (Paul Scragg)	Normal reporting pathway	Recommendations to SLT	2
May / June 2026				
July / August 2026	Environmental Improvement programme (Daniel Britton)	Annual report	Consult with members	2, 3
September / October 2026	Economic regeneration strategy (Daniel Britton)	Annual report	Briefing on outcomes	2, 3
	Infrastructure funding statement	Annual report	Awareness of S106 contributions and allocations	2

Date	Issue (report author)	Reason	Outcomes	Supports corporate aims
	(Lesley Keal)			
	Overview & Scrutiny annual report (Becky Owen)	Annual report – good practice	Recommendations to Council	All
November / December 2026	Planning appeals update (Chris Brown)	Annual report	Monitoring of performance on appeals	2
	Affordable housing delivery (Valerie Bunting)	Annual report	Awareness of delivery	1, 2
February 2027 (budget meeting)	Budget reports (Ashley Wilson)	Normal reporting pathway	Scrutiny prior to Council decision	All
	Pay policy statement (Julie Stay)	Normal reporting pathway	Scrutiny prior to Council decision	All
March / April 2027	Voluntary & Community sector partnership update and commissioning outcomes (Rachel Burgess)	Annual update	Awareness of VCS activity	1
	Parish & Community Initiative Fund allocations (Paul Scragg)	Normal reporting pathway	Recommendations to SLT	2

To be programmed
Public transport review

Key to corporate aims
1 – People
2 – Places

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Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission	11 September 2025
Executive	24 September 2025

Wards affected: All Wards

Heritage Strategy 2025-2029

Report of Director (Community & Development Services)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Commission of the drafting of the Heritage Strategy 2025 – 2029 and accompanying Background and Action Plan document.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Commission endorses the Heritage Strategy and accompanying background and action plan document and they continue on the forward timetable of decision making.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The borough has a unique and distinctive heritage which is required to be preserved and enhanced for present and future generations by statute and national policy. The Borough Council require an overarching strategy to achieve this so the purpose of the Heritage Strategy 2025 - 2029 is to guide conservation and heritage activities in the borough over the next five years. This is a refreshed version of the Councils 2018 - 2023 Heritage Strategy.
- 3.2 The historic environment is a valuable asset which contributes to broader strategic objectives including economic development, urban and rural regeneration, culture and tourism, leisure and recreation, good design and town planning, development of skills and education, addressing climate change and achieving sustainable development. The Heritage Strategy aims to help define, reinforce and bring these diverse aspects together and to complement mutual objectives within existing Council strategies including the:

- Corporate Plan
 - Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy
 - Culture Strategy
 - Economic Regeneration Strategy
 - Hinckley Town Centre Strategic Vision
 - Tourism Strategy
- 3.3 The Heritage Strategy provides a vision, key aims and objectives for the borough's heritage. It is supported by a detailed Background and Action Plan document which reviews the national and local heritage context, summarises key issues and challenges for the heritage sector and service delivery before setting out detailed actions and initiatives to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. Successful delivery and lessons learned from initiatives identified within the Council first Heritage Strategy 2018 – 2023 have been considered in the preparation of this refreshed version of the Strategy.
- 3.4 Agreement was provided by SLT and Executive Leads for public consultation of a draft version of the Heritage Strategy and Background and Action Plan documents. The views from national and local heritage organisations, statutory and relevant stakeholders, borough residents, borough council members and departments were sought during the consultation period of 16 June and 25 July 2025.
- 3.5 Public consultation on the Strategy was focused on the following questions:
- Question 1. What do you consider to be Hinckley and Bosworth's heritage?
 - Question 2. What aspects of the borough's heritage do you value, care for and enjoy?
 - Question 3. Are there any themes of the borough's heritage you would like to highlight?
 - Question 4. What do you consider to be the issues affecting the heritage of the borough?
 - Question 5. How could the borough's heritage be better managed and enhanced?
 - Question 6. Do you have any comments on the proposed vision, strategic aims and objectives of the Heritage Strategy?
 - Question 7. Do you have any general comments on the proposed Heritage Strategy and Action Plan documents?
- 3.6 Consultation comments received are summarised in Appendix 1 of the Background and Action Plan document. Relevant officer responses and how the comments have been incorporated within the final version of the Strategy and Action Plan are also identified. The vast majority of the consultation comments received were of a positive nature and reinforced the proposed content of the Strategy and Action Plan.

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

4.1 This report is to be taken in open session.

5. Financial implications [CS]

5.1 On page 23 of the Background and Action Plan document there is an option to increase the Environmental Improvement Programme budget. Any such increase would require approval in accordance with financial procedure rules.

5.2 Should additional funding be required for projects and initiatives identified within the Action Plan approval will need to be sought in accordance with financial procedure rules.

6. Legal implications [SN]

6.1 None raised directly by this report. However, the legal implications for individual projects and initiatives outlined in the Action Plan will be considered as they progress.

7. Corporate Plan implications

7.1 The Strategy would contribute to the following priorities of the Council:

- Places - Creating clean and attractive places to live and work
- Prosperity- Encouraging growth, attracting businesses, improving skills and supporting regeneration.

7.2 The Council is committed to refreshing the Heritage Strategy under the Prosperity theme of the Corporate Plan.

8. Consultation

8.1 A summary of the consultation undertaken on the Strategy and Action Plan document is included within section 3.4 – 3.6 of this report.

9. Risk implications

9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
None		

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 Projects suggested in the Action Plan generally have a good spread over the whole of the borough and this includes the rural area.
- 10.2 It is considered that this report will not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics and therefore no further analysis or action is necessary.

11. Climate implications

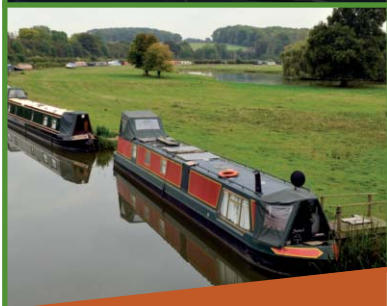
- 11.1 A key objective of the Strategy is to address the wider challenges posed to the historic environment by climate change with a number of potential projects and initiatives identified within the Action Plan to meet this objective.

12. Corporate implications

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
- Community safety implications- none directly arising from this report
 - Environmental implications- the Strategy seeks to protect and enhance the borough's heritage and historic environment
 - ICT implications- none directly arising from this report, although some ICT support may be required for implementation of projects e.g. website development
 - Asset management implications- none directly arising from this report, although initiatives are proposed in the Action Plan regarding implementing energy efficiency improvements to Council owned heritage assets
 - Procurement implications- none directly arising from this report
 - Human resources implications- none directly arising from this report
 - Planning implications- planning permissions will be sought where required for any projects
 - Data protection implications- none directly arising from this report
 - Voluntary sector- assistance and partnerships will be sought from the voluntary sector to allow for development and delivery of projects and initiatives

Background papers: Heritage Strategy 2025 – 2029
Heritage Strategy Background and Action Plan 2025 - 2029

Contact officer: Paul Grundy, 01455 255671
Executive member: Councillor S Bray



Background and Principles

The purpose of this document is to set out a clear strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth to guide conservation and heritage activities in the borough from 2025 to 2029.

The borough has a unique and distinctive heritage which should be preserved and enhanced for present and future generations. This strategy advocates a joined up approach between the council, its partners and key stakeholders to the management of the borough's heritage.

The historic environment is a valuable asset which contributes to broader strategic objectives including economic development, urban and rural regeneration, culture and tourism, leisure and recreation, good design and town planning, development of skills and education, addressing climate change and achieving sustainable development. This strategy aims to help define, reinforce and bring these diverse aspects together and to complement existing Council strategies including the:

- Corporate Plan
- Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy
- Culture Strategy
- Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Hinckley Town Centre Strategic Vision
- Tourism Strategy

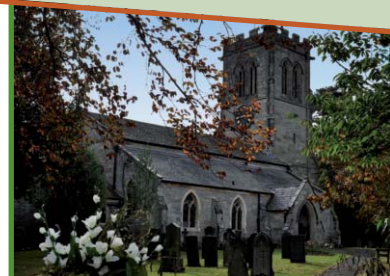
The Heritage Strategy provides a vision and key aims and objectives for the borough's heritage. It is supported by a detailed Background and Action Plan document which reviews the national and local heritage context, summarises key issues and challenges for the heritage sector and service delivery before setting out detailed actions and initiatives to achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy.

The Vision

- To increase our understanding and awareness of the borough's heritage with improved accessibility to the historic environment
- To implement positive action and active management of the borough's heritage to ensure its conservation and enhancement
- To enable an approach of partnership and collaboration where people, groups and communities come together to care for the borough's heritage
- To celebrate and promote the borough's heritage and identity, allowing it to make a difference for people, groups and communities

Key statistics

- 353 statutory listed buildings
- 28 conservation areas
- 22 scheduled monuments
- One registered battlefield – Battle of Bosworth 1485
- Numerous heritage based tourism destinations across the borough, including a thriving Hinckley & District Museum
- Various knowledgeable local history and amenity groups operating in the borough
- Successful delivery of heritage-led regeneration projects across the borough including most recently the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone
- An annual budget for undertaking heritage works across the borough (Environmental Improvement Programme)

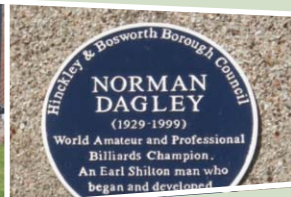


Key Aims and Objectives

1

Increase understanding and awareness of heritage with improved accessibility

- To ensure **information** on heritage assets is up-to-date, accurate and accessible
- To increase **accessibility** to the historic environment
- To support the development of **learning, skills and training**
- To support existing **educational resources**



2

Implement positive action to manage and enhance heritage

- To ensure **conservation areas** are adequately protected and thoroughly understood
- To develop and adopt a **list of local heritage assets**
- To maximise funding opportunities to **deliver heritage-led regeneration** projects, enhancements to the public realm and historic environment
- To ensure the appropriate tools and advice are available to **guide decision taking** on heritage matters
- To provide **pro-active enforcement** and address **heritage at risk** through appropriate management techniques
- To address the wider challenges posed to the historic environment by **climate change**



3

Ensure a partnership approach to care for our heritage

- To maintain and develop **positive working practices** with heritage stakeholders
- To increase **community engagement** about heritage matters
- To ensure **integrated and joined-up working** within the council and between relevant local government partners



4

The promotion and enjoyment of heritage

- To promote a positive image and identity of the borough to **increase heritage related tourism**
- To support the **discovery and exploration** of heritage
- To advertise **best practice** in dealing with heritage
- To **celebrate and promote achievement** in the historic environment

Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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For more information please contact:

Planning and Development Services, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

tel **01455 238141** online contact form:

www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/conservationQ

website: www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Heritage Strategy

2025 - 2029



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Background and Action Plan



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INTRODUCTION

This Background and Action Plan supports the Heritage Strategy 2025–2029, setting out key actions to deliver its aims. It provides context, identifies challenges and opportunities, and outlines targeted initiatives. Lessons from the 2018–2023 strategy and feedback from stakeholders, residents, and councillors have informed this updated approach.

The plan will guide the Council’s heritage work for the next five years, ensuring our historic environment contributes to a vibrant, sustainable borough.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE CORPORATE PLAN

Heritage activity directly supports Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council’s Corporate Plan, by aligning to the Places priorities:

- Adopt a new and ambitious Local Plan – embedding heritage in planning policy to protect assets and shape quality places
- Work towards a greener borough – promoting heritage-led regeneration that enhances green spaces and biodiversity
- Promote sustainable development and cut carbon – encouraging sensitive re-use of historic buildings with energy efficiency improvements where appropriate

By aligning with these priorities, the Heritage Strategy will protect our past while shaping a sustainable and distinctive future.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

What is heritage?

The scope of heritage is very wide and can mean a variety of things to different people and organisations. As part of the public consultation exercises to inform the Council's first and this Heritage Strategy the question "*What is heritage?*" was asked, which generated a breadth of responses. Common themes emerged, and included the historic and natural environments, buildings, structures and spaces, places, natural and designed landscapes, archaeology, historical records, objects and collections, culture and tradition, people, communities and groups, and stories and experiences. These themes fit nicely into definitions used in the heritage sector, which includes the English Heritage (as then) definition of heritage as "*all inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility*" (Conservation Principles, 2008).

The heritage of Hinckley and Bosworth

The Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth has a rich, varied and unique history. The evolution of the borough continues to be relevant to people living within and outside of the borough and its history and heritage acts to shape people's lives and the landscape around them. As part of the public consultation exercises to inform the Council's first and this Heritage Strategy the question "*What is the heritage of the borough?*" was asked. Again this generated a range of responses with common elements being identified. It is considered that the heritage of the borough includes and can be attributed to the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- A long history of human settlement in the area with a **fine archaeological resource** providing information about past activity (dating as far back as the Palaeolithic Period with sites recorded on the Historic Environment Record). This resource is both below and above ground with many sites helping people learn about past events. One such event is the **Battle of Bosworth**, which is internationally renowned
- The **geology** of the borough has had a defining influence on settlement distribution, form and land use. Many settlements established during Anglo-Saxon, Norman and the Medieval periods are located on ridge tops and then developed around **agriculture**, with the predominantly clay soils of the borough allowing a range of arable and pastoral practices to take place. The borough remains predominantly rural. **Mineral extraction**, from the **quarrying** of granites and slates in the Charnwood Forest, the **mining** of coal from the Leicestershire Coalfield and the digging of **clay pits** for the production of bricks has marked the landscape
- The **hosiery industry**, introduced as a domestic industry in a number of the borough's settlements during the 17th century, then developed on an industrial scale during the 19th century which led to associated urban expansion and the establishment of associated industries including the production of **boots and shoes**
- **Transport** routes and infrastructure constructed largely as a result of the development of the borough's industries and to transport goods, including the Ashby Canal and the Leicester to Swannington and Ashby to Nuneaton railway lines. Some have found new uses as tourism and recreational assets and remain an lasting feature of the landscape. Sites within the borough have been heavily involved with

the development of motor transport, including the Hansom Cab, Triumph Motorcycles and more recently MIRA Technology Park

- A diverse range of high quality **public and private buildings and spaces**, ranging from Medieval market places (Hinckley market was established in 1311), commercial and civic buildings constructed as a source of pride and prosperity, and fine public parks and green spaces maintain a legacy of commercial activity and leisure
- Fine historic churches and **places of worship** are located throughout the borough and many settlements have high quality structures and spaces for commemoration, contemplation and reflection. The borough was a focal point for the formation of a number of **non-conformist movements** including Baptism and Methodism and independent religions such as the Quakers
- The **natural landscape** of the borough offers a wide range of **biodiversity**, flora and fauna, alongside human influences which have created high quality **semi-natural landscapes**, such as Burbage Common and Woods, the remnant parklands of Gopsall and Bosworth, the creation of Thornton Reservoir and more recent initiatives as part of the National Forest
- **People** (individuals, groups and communities) have shaped the heritage of the borough, harnessed over time as **cultural traditions**, recorded memories and stories, literature, collected objects, archives and artefacts, and demonstrations of skills and innovation. Cultural heritage can often be intangible

Planning for our heritage

Local planning authorities already have various statutory duties under Planning legislation but have now also been tasked to set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The presumption is to deliver sustainable development and conserving and harnessing heritage should play an important part in this process.

This process also needs to reflect changing attitudes and perspectives. Conservation planning used to be seen as seeking to preserve sites “in an unaltered state” or “in aspic” but now the focus is changing to a more positive and integrated approach where heritage is seen as an asset rather than a constraint and where conservation refers to the active and informed management of change in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances the significance of heritage assets.

The value of heritage

The value of the historic environment is enshrined in national government policy and legislation, articulated by local government policy and practice, supported by national and local amenity groups and expressed in the popularity of heritage in the public mind. The case for heritage providing key economic, social and environmental benefits is now well evidenced via sources such as *Heritage Counts*, the annual audit of England’s heritage produced by Historic England. Consequently, the historic environment is a valuable asset which can contribute to broader strategic objectives such as economic development, urban and rural regeneration, tourism, leisure and recreation, community development, good urban

design and town planning, provision of formal and informal education, development of skills, and achieving sustainable development, as demonstrated in the diagram below.

Economic development and tourism
Historic places, buildings, events and activities and a high quality environment, old and new, is a prerequisite to maximising economic development potential, projecting a positive image, attracting investment, jobs and tourism
Regeneration
Historic buildings and areas are key elements in the regeneration of urban and rural areas, transforming them into thriving sustainable communities and creating places where people want to live, work and visit
Intrinsic and economic value
The historic environment and places have intrinsic value in their own right as the fabric of human achievement. The historic environment is an attractive proposition, and historic properties and those with original features deliver consistently higher yields and values than other buildings
Leisure and recreation
The historic environment is the embodiment of culture and it often accommodates a range of activities, buildings, sites and landscapes that provide a focus for exploration, visits, leisure and recreation
Local distinctiveness, pride and communities
Investment in historic places and increasing understanding of the historic environment helps to support local communities, preserve local distinctiveness and identity, reinforce a sense of place, and foster local pride
Urban design quality
The historic environment often provides demonstrably superior urban design, legible townscapes, mixed use, greater variety of urban forms and quality public realm. It can create a context and stimulus for creative and innovative design
Skills and education
The historic environment, archives and collections, people and their knowledge and experiences provide a tangible resource for research and teaching across all ages, creating a better understanding of our past and today's society and in practice creates more skilled employment in craft-based industries
Sustainable use of resources
The practices of conservation and refurbishment are environmentally friendly and an intrinsically sustainable form of development, avoiding the use and waste of scarce resources associated with demolition and redevelopment, and contributing towards addressing the challenges posed by climate change and reducing carbon emissions

The scope of the strategy

As demonstrated by the public consultation exercise to inform the first Heritage Strategy the scope of heritage within the borough is very wide, however the ownership and management responsibilities for heritage assets are often complex and shared amongst many bodies, organisations and individuals. Therefore the emphasis of the heritage strategy will be on the heritage where the council and its partners have a direct role and responsibility and some influence in the decision making or management process. The document will also seek to positively include or make reference to private and voluntary sector owned or influenced heritage and heritage related activities and highlight the council's role in encouraging and supporting these.

The document also plays a complimentary role in informing and managing the aspects of Hinckley and Bosworth's cultural and natural heritage that contribute to the borough's

historic environment as they are predominantly covered and appropriately managed via other national and local strategies and policies. Reference will be made to these where relevant.

The national context

Legislation

Local planning authorities derive their duties, responsibilities and powers in relation to the historic environment principally from the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In delivering these functions the council must have special regard to preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, determine applications for listed building consent, enforce the preservation of listed buildings where appropriate, and offer grants where appropriate for building repair and maintenance to prevent deterioration. For conservation areas the council must pay special attention to preserving and enhancing these areas when considering development proposals, determine worthy areas and designate them as conservation areas, formulate proposals for their preservation and enhancement, control demolition, and offer grants where appropriate for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

Additional responsibilities and powers for local planning authorities and public bodies are included within the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, which provides specific protection for scheduled monuments, and sections of numerous more recent and broader Acts which still cover specific planning mechanisms and reform regarding heritage.

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies and states how the planning system should deliver sustainable development which satisfies three mutually dependant economic, social and environmental roles. The NPPF is clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

A heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as “*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*” and includes those designated and identified at the national and local level.

It is recognised that the significance of heritage assets should be identified, assessed and considered in determining any planning application. The different types of heritage asset, potential harm, securing its optimum viable use and public benefits should be weighed to produce a balanced judgement. Local planning authorities should also look for opportunities to better reveal the significance of heritage assets and take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets whilst putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Reference is also made to the importance of having an up-to-date historic environment evidence base and maintaining or having access to such a record.

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides information on the practical application of the NPPF and includes guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

National heritage "stakeholder" organisations

Historic England is the executive non-departmental body sponsored by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) to look after England's historic environment by championing historic places and helping people to understand, value and care for them. National Amenity Societies also provide knowledge and expertise on particular aspects of the historic environment. Both Historic England and the National Amenity Societies are a statutory consultee on relevant planning and listed building applications. The National Amenity Societies are listed in Appendix 2.

Different bodies have different responsibilities and remits for the historic environment. The DCMS are responsible for statutory listing and determining applications for scheduled monument consent based on the guidance of Historic England. Local planning authorities are responsible for designating and reviewing conservation areas, local listing, and determining planning applications that affect all heritage assets. Expertise for archaeology and the management of the Historic Environment Record (HER) lies with Leicestershire County Council.

Practical and professional advice on specific elements of the historic environment is also provided by a wide range of organisations and professional associations and institutes.

The local context

Hinckley and Bosworth has a number of historic towns and villages set within a diverse landscape. The borough's attractive environment, geographic location at the centre of the country, being close to the major urban centres of Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham and served by an extensive transport network, makes it a highly desirable place to live and work. This desirability means there is pressure for development with the challenge to ensure any future change will sustain a rich and varied historic environment.

Hinckley and Bosworth's heritage assets include:

353 statutory listed buildings, designated by the DCMS on the advice of Historic England to mark and celebrate a building's special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded according to their quality and interest and within the borough 8 are listed at grade I, 36 are listed at grade II* and 309 are listed at grade II. There is a wide range of buildings and structures on the list including churches, farm houses and farm buildings, cottages and manor houses, war memorials and commemorative structures, former hosiery industry buildings, mills, public houses, walled gardens, bridges, railings, telephone boxes and village pumps.



Church of St Edith, Orton on the Hill. A grade I listed building from the 14th century



Hinckley Water Tower, constructed 1889. A likely inclusion within a local heritage list

A list of **local heritage assets** is being developed by the council with assistance from local stakeholders. The local heritage list will identify heritage assets that merit protection due to their contribution to local character and distinctiveness but do not meet the criteria to be statutory listed. This list will draw upon heritage identified in Neighbourhood Plans, which the council will encourage and support those drawing up these plans, to consider the importance of local heritage recording and explaining their findings.

28 Conservation Areas

which have been designated as an area of special architectural or historic interest. Such areas include the length of the Ashby Canal within the borough, centres of the hosiery and boot and shoe industries, historic town and village centres, and areas including historic parkland.



The market place at the centre of Market Bosworth Conservation Area



Remains of the motte and bailey castle in Hinckley, a scheduled monument

22 Scheduled Monuments, designated by the DCMS on the advice of Historic England to recognise the national importance of these archaeological sites. Types of monuments in the borough include Neolithic bowl barrows, an Iron Age hill fort, Roman villas and settlements, Saxon burial mounds, Norman motte and bailey castles, Medieval moats and fishponds, farmsteads, manorial complexes and deserted villages. A great number of local archaeological sites are also recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

1 Registered Battlefield, identified by Historic England to offer protection through the planning system due to its national significance. The Battle of Bosworth in 1485 marked the end of the Plantagenet dynasty as King Richard III was killed in the battle leading to the crowning of Henry Tudor and the ascension of the Tudor dynasty. King Richard III's reinternment took place at Leicester Cathedral in 2015 following the discovery of his remains in a car park, with his cortege procession passing through key locations across the battlefield and through Market Bosworth and associated villages.



Panoramic view of Crown Hill at Stoke Golding, location of the crowning of Henry Tudor in 1485

Strategic documents

The Heritage Strategy seeks to address conservation and heritage issues more widely across the borough by according with the council's priorities for people, places and prosperity as part of the Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028, and interacting with and supporting the following strategic documents (which are current at the time of drafting):

- **Core Strategy (2009)** in respect of providing the vision and spatial strategy for the borough with the objective of enhancing the identity and distinctiveness of the built and natural environment. Revised strategic direction will be provided within the emerging Local Plan
- **Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan (2009)** in respect of providing the strategy for the future of the town centre with the objectives of developing new cultural facilities, promoting the town centre as part of wider tourism initiatives and enhancing the historic character of the town centre through heritage-led regeneration. Revised strategic direction will be provided within the emerging Local Plan and associated evidence bases including a Hinckley Town Centre Feasibility Study and Masterplan
- **The Bosworth Battlefield Conservation Plan (2013)** in respect of providing a framework for landowners and other stakeholders to work towards developing a shared understanding of the battlefield, its values and significance
- **Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan (2014)** in respect of providing the strategy for future development across the two settlements including seeking the regeneration of their historic centres. Revised strategic direction will be provided within the emerging Local Plan
- **Town Centre's Vision (2015)** in respect of providing master plans to guide the regeneration and redevelopment of historic town centre sites across the borough. Revised strategic direction will be provided within the emerging Local Plan and associated evidence bases including a Hinckley Town Centre Strategic Vision
- **Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016)** in respect of providing a framework for development across the borough and the policy base on which to manage change to heritage assets and

ensure adequate controls. New allocations development management policies will be provided within the emerging Local Plan

- **Economic Regeneration Strategy (2021 - 2025)** in respect of providing the strategy for economic regeneration in the borough with the objectives of local investment and ensuring opportunities for regeneration are realised, including 'heritage-led' initiatives
- **Culture Strategy (2024 - 2028)** and **Tourism Strategy (2024 - 2028)** in respect of providing the strategies to support the council's cultural offer by valuing and promoting the Borough's tourism and heritage offer including leading in the delivery of the Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail project and supporting improvements to Hinckley & District Museum
- **Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy (2024 - 2028)** in respect of providing the strategy for the actions and opportunities that the Council will undertake to continue to address the climate change emergency, including ensuring Council owned buildings, some of which are heritage assets, are energy efficient

The council and Neighbourhood Planning Forums/Groups have produced supplementary planning and guidance documents to guide the management of the historic environment, including the following:

- **Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans:** for each designated conservation area in the borough there is an accompanying appraisal which defines the significance of the area and a management plan which sets out suggested actions for preservation and enhancement
- **Good Design Guide (2020):** this provides supplementary guidance on design of development, and aims to raise design quality in the borough, all while ensuring that local identity and the heritage of the area is preserved and enhanced. The guide includes specific guidance on shop fronts and conversion of rural buildings, as well as character statements for each settlement in the borough
- **Neighbourhood Plans:** A Neighbourhood Plan can be used to identify what makes an area locally distinctive, influence design and protect the historic and natural environment. At the time of drafting this document there are seven Plans for areas within the borough, with further plans actively progressing

Local heritage "stakeholder" organisations

The borough benefits from a number of highly knowledgeable and committed stakeholder groups who share a passion for local history, heritage and the historic environment. Although complete coverage of the borough is not yet in place, local knowledge is often provided by the relevant Parish Council where there is no stakeholder group. A list of known local heritage groups and societies is included in Appendix 2.

In many cases these groups have produced educational material on their area of interest that is presented in a number of ways including interpretation boards, the installation of blue plaques, information contained in publications and web sites, and publicising heritage on social media.

Hinckley & District Museum has been open to the public since 1995 and hosts a diverse mix of collections, displays and activities that provide an invaluable representation of Hinckley and its environs, the borough, its people and history. These collections are an irreplaceable

learning resource for present and future generations and the museum provides opportunities for people to engage with heritage. Extensive collections on the history and culture of the borough are also held in the Leicestershire Records Office and the libraries located throughout the borough contain material on the local history of the area.

There are a number of attractions (both physical and natural) located throughout the borough that celebrate its heritage and provide a focus for tourism and recreation. These are managed and maintained by both public authorities and private or charitable organisations, and include the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- The Battlefield Line steam railway
- Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre
- Market Bosworth Hall and Country Park
- Burbage Common and Woods
- Ashby Canal
- Groby Pool
- Thornton Reservoir
- Mallory Park motor racing circuit
- Triumph Motorcycles visitor centre
- Various buildings and sites that opened for public access (via Heritage Open Days weekends etc.)

There is also a Hinckley Business Improvement District (BID) which effectively promotes and develops projects to benefit local businesses within Hinckley town centre.

What does the council do?

The council has a full-time Conservation Officer who is based in Planning & Development Services. The main purpose of the officer is to provide specialist support for the council on matters relating to the historic environment and thus fulfilling the statutory duties of its preservation and enhancement. The role has a range of accountabilities including:

- Providing advice to elected members, officers and members of the public on all elements of the historic environment
- Analysing and defining the special interest of the historic environment
- Providing professional advice on statutory applications and assessing impacts from proposals upon heritage assets
- Preparing applications for funding and assisting with administering council funding streams
- Contributing to and writing plans, planning policies and evidence bases
- Completing building and area surveys and providing repair specifications
- Preparing, reviewing and appraising advice on existing and new designations including conservation areas and local listings
- Providing design analysis
- Engaging with communities and stakeholders

The council currently administers an Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP) which provides funding to deliver schemes that improve the physical environment within conservation areas or historic areas. Since its establishment in the mid-1990s the

programme has delivered numerous high-quality capital schemes either independently or in partnership with other organisations and by providing contributions to the private sector. Council grants are also available for parish and town councils and community groups for capital projects in the historic environment via the Parish Community Initiative Fund and the Hinckley Community Initiative Fund. Other occasional council funding streams do also become available. During 2022 – 2024 Government funding via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has also been used to run a Heritage Building Improvement Grant programme offering grants to private owners for repairs and enhancements to historic buildings and sites, and this grant programme is to be continued during 2025. UKSPF funding has also been utilised to support the Museum in developing their plans for an extension, and towards delivery of elements of the Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail.

Alternative opportunities to obtain funding for the historic environment are provided via organisations including the Arts Council, the Leicester & Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership (LLBSP) (formerly the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)), the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Historic England, however the availability and suitability of funding from such sources does depend on the nature of the particular project and the application process can be very competitive. However, the council were successful in establishing a High Street Heritage Action Zone within Hinckley town centre with projects totalling £1.65m delivered during the period 2020-2024, thanks to circa. £0.65m match funding provided from Historic England and £0.5m from the LLEP to facilitate project delivery and heritage activities.

The council also direct individuals and organisations to alternative funding streams but often for the private individual looking to maintain or invest in the historic environment obtaining financial assistance can be challenging.

Heritage activities and projects delivered

The council has initiated and assisted in the delivery of a wide range of heritage activities and projects since the first Heritage Strategy was endorsed in 2018. A summary and highlights of the activities and project delivered under each of the key aims of the Strategy is provided below, followed by a short summary of lessons learned.

Aim 1. Increase understanding and awareness of heritage with improved accessibility

- Completion of an audit via Parish Councils and local heritage groups to identify the heritage of their area
- Awareness of heritage has been increased with the installation of numerous heritage interpretation boards (including via the Environmental Improvement Programme and the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone), the installation of 13 new blue plaques, and with the production of heritage trails across various sites within the borough
- Continued support for the annual Heritage Open Days event
- The Hansom Cab was brought back to Hinckley and located within the Atkins building gallery
- Via the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone production of a Building Maintenance Guide for historic property owners and enhancing information on listed building entries within Hinckley town centre

Aim 2. Implement positive action to manage and enhance heritage

- Statutory action has been taken to address the poor condition of the grade II* listed building Bradgate Stables with voluntary works now undertaken. An Options Appraisal has also been produced. All local authority activities have been grant aided by Historic England
- Development of a Local Heritage List, devised in part conjunction with a number of Neighbourhood Planning Groups, reinforcing the 'sense of place' within a locality by understanding and documenting its heritage
- Production of a Public Realm Masterplan and Wayfinding Strategy for Hinckley town centre to identify and guide delivery of enhancements to the public realm and usability of the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area. Developer contributions have been secured for the implementation of town centre projects and public realm enhancements
- A wide range and number of enhancements to both public and private buildings and sites located within the historic environment have been delivered during via the Environmental Improvement Programme and the UKSPF Heritage Building Improvement Grant
- Continued support has been to other Council departments in the development and delivery of projects with a focus on the historic environment via applicable funding streams, for example from the Parish & Community Initiative Fund and the Developing Communities Fund
- Delivery of capital projects via the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone, including:
 - Shopfront reinstatement and building repairs completed via a third-party grant scheme
 - Public realm improvements to Church Walk, Castle Street, and town centre yards and jitties
 - Temporary establishment of a HSHAZ Hub with Atkins Building

Aim 3. Ensure a partnership approach to care for our heritage

- Ongoing support has been provided to Neighbourhood Planning Groups to ensure the historic environment is adequately planned for at the Neighbourhood level
- Establishment of a Heritage Forum to encourage capacity building in the voluntary sector, develop skills and effective means of communication. Members of the forum include Parish Councils, Local Heritage Groups and other heritage stakeholders. Forum meetings were held during 2019 and 2020
- The involvement of the Council's Heritage Champion in the assessment of blue plaque nominations to provide additional scrutiny to the process
- Production of conservation area and good practice articles in conjunction with Market Bosworth Society for publication

Aim 4. The promotion and enjoyment of heritage

- Support given to Hinckley & District Museum for development of the extension proposal with assistance provided for funding bids, facility maintenance and upgrades etc.

- Opening of the Triumph Visitor Centre with successful promotion of the attraction
- Delivery of the initiatives contained within the Heritage and Culture programme of the North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth Destination Management Plan (2017-2022)
- Development and delivery of the Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail
- Delivery of the community engagement and cultural programmes via the via the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone

There were challenges to the successful delivery and implementation of the aims and objectives of the 2018 – 2023 Strategy and lessons to be learned, including:

- The impact of Covid-19 upon development and delivery of projects, particularly during 2020 and periods of lockdown, and legacy impacts including challenges raised by the pressure of inflation and increased project costs
- The required focus of the council's conservation resource upon the development and delivery of the Hinckley HSHAZ during 2020 – 2024 has led to difficulties in delivery numerous short-medium term objectives of the Heritage Strategy. Whilst some legacy activities from the HSHAZ remain, given completion of the projects there should be greater conservation resource during 2025 and beyond
- Delivery of some aims and objectives continue to rely on the time and will of the voluntary sector
- Ensuring information on heritage assets is fully up-to-date, accurate and accessible in resource intensive
- The council's conservation resource has to focus on statutory requirements, so heritage of 'less' significance, such as local heritage assets, cannot always be prioritised
- The difficulty of obtaining public funding means some aims may not be delivered fully, e.g. acquiring a budget to comprehensively address heritage at risk, securing funding to deliver key elements of the Hinckley Town Centre Public Realm Masterplan etc.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The current issues and challenges affecting heritage and the delivery of heritage activities in Hinckley and Bosworth are identified through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis below. The analysis considers challenges from both the national and local level and will be refined following any comments received and gathered during the public consultation exercise. In some cases, an issue has multiple components and be demonstrated as both a strength and a weakness or provide an opportunity or a threat.

STRENGTHS

- Increasing levels of awareness and recognition of the importance of heritage and the historic environment as demonstrated by central and local government
- An established events calendar (including Heritage Open Days) where heritage assets are accessible and open to the public
- A committed Planning Enforcement Team providing an effective tool to control and ensure the pro-active management of the historic environment
- A considerable number of extremely knowledgeable local stakeholders who support heritage and have influence within their community
- An extremely interesting and thriving local Museum with aspirations for future growth
- Council membership of a Conservation Officers Forum for Leicestershire & Rutland which allows for the sharing of best practice in the management of the historic environment
- The council's recent experiences in delivering heritage-led regeneration projects
- The council's recent experiences in developing and delivering heritage-led tourism offer (e.g. Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail)

WEAKNESSES

- Constraints on the council's available heritage resources can create a focus on short term reactive and statutory work
- The length of time since conservation areas within the borough have had an updated appraisal and management plan
- The continued need for up-to-date, accurate and accessible information on heritage assets which confirm to all audiences why the asset is of significance and value
- The need for accessible information for interested stakeholders and heritage asset owners on skilled craftsmen operating within the borough
- The need for an expanded Heritage at Risk Register to identify buildings and sites within the historic environment that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development
- Limited sources and amounts of funding available to support heritage projects and deliver enhancements to the historic environment
- Heritage can sometimes be seen as academic, re-active and elitist and it is particularly difficult to engage with certain sections of the community

OPPORTUNITIES

- To use this strategy to identify and agree objectives, priorities and actions to ensure the council deliver effective and efficient management of its heritage and the historic environment
- To increase the number and types of heritage assets that are accessible and open to a wide range of people

- To support and develop means of training and learning to develop heritage skills and knowledge to those who need it
- To explore and grasp funding opportunities to deliver heritage projects, heritage-led regeneration and enhancements to the public realm
- Use voluntary sector expertise and resources to assist the council in delivery of projects and services
- Develop and expand partnership working with existing and new stakeholders
- To improve and provide effective engagement with local communities through different and innovative methods of communication
- To celebrate and promote achievement and best practice for exemplar projects within the historic environment that positively influences others
- Provision of further guidance and advice to assist with the management of the historic environment
- To utilise different mechanisms to contribute towards addressing the challenges posed by climate change and reducing carbon emissions

THREATS

- The potential conflict between development pressure and ensuring the significance of the historic environment is preserved and enhanced
- A continued shortage of skilled quality craftspeople which has the effect of increasing the cost of conservation works or reducing the quality of works
- An inability to effectively address Heritage at Risk through management techniques leading to the threat of heritage being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development
- Continued limitations on available funding for maintenance and improvements to public and privately owned heritage assets which can perpetuate a lack of investment
- Loss of staff or resource at key stakeholder organisations which includes accumulated knowledge
- Ensure that proposals for the voluntary sector to assist in the delivery of the council's heritage services are realistic, appropriate, rewarding for participants and that there is not an overreliance on this sector

KEY AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Following review of the council's first Heritage Strategy 2018 – 2023 and assessment of successful delivery and lessons learned from initiatives, it is considered that the four key aims with associated objectives remain relevant to address the identified issues and challenges and deliver the vision of the revised strategy. The Action Plan identifies actions and initiatives to achieve each objective, to be developed and delivered over the next five years.

Many of the objectives are complimentary and ensure that the aims of the document will be achieved through a number of positive actions and initiatives, for example promotion of the historic environment will increase understanding and awareness.

KEY AIM 1

Increase understanding and awareness of heritage with improved accessibility

The historic environment is where we live, work and visit on a daily basis so it is personal to us all. In order to protect and enhance it, we need to ensure the management of change is based on a shared understanding of its value and importance. The council has a key role in enhancing the public's understanding, awareness and appreciation of the borough's historic environment and increasing physical accessibility to heritage. It has a responsibility to make sure expertise, knowledge, skills and resources are accessible to those who need it, and to develop new approaches and support existing means that assist improved understanding and management of historic assets.

The objectives to achieve this aim are:

- To ensure **information** on heritage assets is up-to-date, accurate and accessible
- To increase **accessibility** to the historic environment
- To support the development of **learning, skills and training**
- To support existing **educational resources**

KEY AIM 2

Implement positive action to manage and enhance heritage

Active management of the historic environment is an essential element in the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. There is a considerable range of positive action and intervention that the council can and has taken, ranging from heritage-led regeneration projects, offering grants for improvements to the historic environment, and enhancements to the public realm. Positive action is often essential to secure the future of heritage at risk and undertake planning enforcement to control unauthorised works to heritage assets. Often the council has a statutory duty or responsibility to take a lead role in these initiatives but does require the cooperation and support from others for a successful outcome.

The objectives to achieve this aim are:

- To ensure **conservation areas** are adequately protected and thoroughly understood
- To develop and adopt a **list of local heritage assets**

- To **maximise funding** opportunities to deliver **heritage-led regeneration** projects, enhancements to the public realm and historic environment
- To ensure the appropriate tools and advice are available to **guide decision taking** on heritage matters
- To provide **pro-active enforcement** and address **heritage at risk** through appropriate management techniques
- To address the wider challenges posed to the historic environment by **climate change**

KEY AIM 3
Ensure a partnership approach to care for our heritage

The borough's heritage resource is by its nature very fragmented and involves a wide ranging and diverse group of organisations, agencies, individuals and volunteer groups. The value of a partnership approach and collaborations to delivering the aims and objectives of this strategy is recognised and is vital to its success. It is considered that the council should play a central role in pulling together the interests of the heritage community.

The objectives to achieve this aim are:

- To maintain and develop **positive working practices** with heritage stakeholders
- To increase **community engagement** about heritage matters
- To ensure **integrated and joined-up working** within the council and between relevant local government partners

KEY AIM 4
The promotion and enjoyment of heritage

To complement the aims of increased understanding, improved management and collaboration the council has a fundamental role in promotion and developing a strong identity for the borough rooted in its history and heritage. The borough has a relatively strong tourism offer with based around heritage assets, but it has the potential for future growth, incorporating heritage assets at a range of scales and interests. Coordination of initiatives to allow for discovery and exploration, advertising best practice and celebrating achievements in the historic environment will ensure for a high quality and enjoyable experience for people, groups and communities when interacting with the borough's heritage.

The objectives to achieve this aim are:

- To promote a positive image and identity of the borough to **increase heritage related tourism**
- To support the **discovery and exploration** of heritage
- To advertise **best practice** in dealing with heritage
- To **celebrate and promote achievement** in the historic environment

ACTION PLAN

Timeframe for development and delivery of actions - Key
S = Short Term: Ongoing / 1 Year
M = Medium Term: 3 Years
L = Long Term: 3 – 5 Years

Aim 1. Increasing understanding and awareness of heritage with improved accessibility

Objective: To ensure information on heritage assets is up-to-date, accurate and accessible			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Support the development of the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) as the primary source of information for the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine how the borough council and other interested stakeholders can assist Leicestershire County Council in the development and accessibility of the record Promote the HER as the primary source of information to all interested stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of HER visits User feedback 	S/M
Determine the need for improvements to the Conservation section of the council's website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure an appropriate level of information about each type of heritage asset is available and accurate Increase level of signposting to alternative sources of information on the historic environment (including the HER, information from local amenity societies etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of website visits User feedback 	S/M
Ensure information on heritage assets is accurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach and work with asset owners and interested stakeholders to ensure information on the borough's heritage assets is accurate and determine whether the level of information could be increased Approach Historic England with new and/or amended information to enrich the statutory list of heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of heritage asset record accuracy Number of records improved 	S/M
Improve awareness of heritage with increased accessibility to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide means of further information, with the development or instigation of council schemes or support of schemes proposed by other stakeholders (e.g. blue plaques, heritage trails, interpretation boards, oral recording etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and delivery of schemes and projects 	S/M

Objective: To increase accessibility to the historic environment			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Explore the potential of increasing access to council owned collections and sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit the current collection and determine feasibility of providing access without comprising significance Audit current sites and determine feasibility of providing access without comprising significance Determine whether accessibility improvements are required or can be made to sites that are already open to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of collections and sites open and accessible Number of visits Visitor feedback 	S/M
Increase the number of heritage assets that are accessible and open to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the feasibility of increased accessibility with asset owners and managers Create new initiatives and expand existing events (including Heritage Open Days) that allow public access to heritage assets and the historic environment Promote all external (not borough council organised) events across the borough that provide access to heritage (e.g. Hinckley Museum etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sites open and accessible Number of events Number of visits Visitor feedback 	M

Objective: To support the development of learning, skills and training			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Encourage further capacity building in the voluntary sector and in the community through heritage activities and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist voluntary organisations and local societies in developing the skills to enable heritage activities and projects to be delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of successful activities and projects delivered Capacity building 	S/M
Develop links with the employment sector and appropriate training and educational centres to increase the level of skilled craftspeople	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the feasibility of introducing the understanding of traditional construction methods and crafts to be delivered (as part of the curriculum or singular training events) at local training and educational centres (including North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College) Determine whether local contractors are willing to develop apprenticeship schemes or offer similar professional development opportunities External funding bodies, such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, require projects to make a difference to people so if 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of curriculum or singular training events Number of apprenticeships and professional development opportunities 	M/L

	funding is secured training can be provided when key projects are being implemented (likely delivered by a combination of heritage training providers, the borough council, local contractors etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of activities as part of successful funding schemes 	
Offer training opportunities and capacity building at the council and for associated partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an internal training programme for related professionals as part of a wider continued professional development programme. Similar could be offered to members of the public and elected members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training events delivered 	M/L

Objective: To support existing educational resources			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Build upon good practice and excellence in educational provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct interest to and support excellent existing educational resources including local libraries, Hinckley & District Museum, Leicestershire Records Office, the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record, and electronic resources (such as Hinckley & District Past & Present, Hinckley Past & Present etc.) • Support any events and activities undertaken by local stakeholders that increase educational awareness of the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to education resource • Number of events and activities delivered 	M/L

Aim 2. Implement positive action to manage and enhance heritage

Objective: To ensure conservation areas are adequately protected and thoroughly understood			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Undertake reviews of existing conservation area appraisals and management plans with delivery assessed against a timetable of review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The borough council will take the lead with resource assistance sought from relevant Parish Councils, local amenity groups and interested parties. Ensure all appraisals and management plans have a consistent format Training on completing area assessments can be provided by the borough council or Historic England (and associated consultants) as undertaken elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of reviews completed against timetable 	S
Consider whether new conservation area designations are appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential areas for designation and complete surveys and assessment with relevant Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Plan Groups, local amenity groups and interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of surveys and assessments 	S/M

Objective: To develop and adopt a list of local heritage assets			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Develop and adopt the list of local heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential assets for the list based on the selection criteria with relevant Parish Councils, local amenity groups and interested parties. Produce list and guidance and seek adoption Seek collaboration with Neighbourhood Planning Groups to identify local heritage assets in Neighbourhood Plans complimented by relevant policies to provide management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of list with regular review Number of Neighbourhood Plans including identification of assets 	S

Objective: To maximise funding opportunities to deliver heritage-led regeneration projects, enhancements to the public realm and historic environment			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Continue to deliver enhancements to the historic environment via the Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Parish Councils and interested stakeholders to identify and deliver a wide range of projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of programmes to existing budget 	S

Improvement Programme and UKSPF Heritage Building Improvement Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for an increased number of projects that could be delivered by the programmes, particular using potential works identified in Conservation Area Management Plans Determine feasibility of increasing the EIP budget and the potential extra resource required to deliver an expanded programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of expanded scheme via and increased budget 	
Explore and grasp opportunities to regenerate historic sites and areas in both an urban and rural context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with all interested stakeholders to formally identify priorities for investment and regeneration across the borough Grasp opportunities should they be presented by market forces Explore funding opportunities to deliver regeneration when they are available, this can be from both council sources (such as the Developing Communities Fund) and external sources (Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England, LLEP etc.) Assist with the delivery of key actions relating to heritage-led regeneration within the Corporate Plan, Economic Regeneration Strategy, and emerging Hinckley Town Centre Strategy Determine demand and feasibility of particular growth industries being located within historic buildings, such as creative industries etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal identification of opportunity sites Number of sites coming forward Inward investment Determine demand for growth industries 	S/M
Explore and grasp opportunities to improve shop fronts and the public realm across the borough (this will be a complementary aim to addressing heritage at risk in some areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with all interested stakeholders to formally identify priorities for improvements across the borough, likely to be a focus on town and district centres Consider need for additional guidance for particular centres to promote positive shop front design Explore funding opportunities to deliver improvement schemes when available, this can be from both council sources and external sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal identification of improvements Number of improvements implemented 	S/M

Objective: To ensure the appropriate tools and advice are available to guide decision taking on heritage matters			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Provide clear and timely professional advice on statutory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a clear protocol for consultation responses and monitoring to ensure specialist advice is provided to Development Management in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice provided within timeframe 	S

applications to allow for effective decision taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure negotiation and discussion with Development Management applicants and consultees to ensure applications (at pre or submitted stage) are of a satisfactory standard to obtain approval • Explore funding opportunities to deliver improvement schemes when available, this can be from both council sources and external sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of sound decisions issued 	
Ensure heritage and the historic environment is given full and due consideration in the development of the Local Plan, planning policies and associated evidence bases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure early engagement with Planning Policy and the local community to identify potential impacts upon heritage assets within the development of the Local Plan • Determine if further guidance or advice is required on any elements of the historic environment and produce documents at an appropriate level • Provide complementary support and advice where required – e.g. on proposed Design Codes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of Local Plan • Development and endorsement of evidence bases and guidance 	S/M
Encourage further capacity building of existing council resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider establishing a programme of capacity building and training for relevant Planning staff and local members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training events delivered • Capacity building 	S/M

Objective: To provide pro-active enforcement and address heritage at risk through appropriate management techniques			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Identify buildings and sites within the historic environment that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Historic England with the survey and identification of grade I and grade II* listed buildings and other heritage assets that fall within their remit of survey • Council to complete annual survey of grade II listed buildings. Determine level of support that can be provided from local stakeholders to complete surveys based on standard methodology. Provide training if required • Continue to complete risk surveys of conservation areas, likely in line with conservation area appraisal reviews • Determine if any further heritage assets require surveying at the local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey to be completed annually • Publication of Local Risk Register 	S

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a local risk register that identifies all buildings and sites considered to be at risk and in most need for action 		
Determine appropriate actions and management techniques to address heritage at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine effective management techniques for each site and type of heritage asset (Article 4 directions, enforcement action etc.). Provide training or advice for particular issues Instigate positive discussion and negotiation with those responsible for each heritage asset to address particular issues Signpost and promote existing effective guidance documents and advice to ensure that heritage is effectively managed and does not become at risk in the first place Provide recognition and promote positive action where buildings have been removed from the Risk Registers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sites removed from the Local Risk Register Instigation of management techniques (Article 4 Directions made etc.) 	S/M
Where reasonable ensure that appropriate and timely enforcement action is pursued to address heritage at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if and what type of enforcement action will be appropriate working with the council's Enforcement Team and in accordance with the Enforcement Protocol Promotion of successful outcomes and negotiations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of successful outcomes Reduction in enforcement cases 	S/M

Objective: To address the wider challenges to the historic environment posed by climate change			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Encourage better management and maintenance of our historic assets to address climate change challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance and advice to all stakeholders on the positive contribution that the retention, repair, retrofit and reuse of historic buildings can make to climate change mitigation. Include signposting to existing comprehensive guidance produced by others e.g. Historic England Provide guidance and support to assist implementation of energy efficiency improvements to Council owned heritage assets, as in accordance with the objectives of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of instances of guidance/advice implemented Number of improvements delivered 	S/M
Exploration of Planning mechanisms to ensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the soundness of Planning policies and similar mechanisms that require a retrofit before demolition approach to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of policy 	M

climate change challenges	<p>development. Utilise Policy examples from elsewhere and assess success of implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore contemporary ideas and mechanisms for addressing the climate change challenge 		
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Aim 3. Ensure a partnership approach to care for our heritage

Objective: To maintain and develop positive working practices with heritage stakeholders			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Ensure and maintain a positive working relationship with heritage bodies to ensure the successful management of the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all local and national consultees feel their input into the plan-making and decision-taking process is worthwhile • Conservation Officer to continue to provide professional support and advice to heritage bodies on general issues with the management of the historic environment • Continue to seek support and advice from relevant local heritage groups on matters within their area of interest • Continue to work with and support Parish Councils and interested local stakeholders to identify and deliver a wide range of projects to enhance the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultee feedback • Stakeholder feedback • Effective service delivery • Delivery of projects 	S/M
Ensure the council retains active representation on the Leicestershire & Rutland Conservation Officers Forum and as part of other relevant professional associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to have active participation in the Forum as a means of positive interaction with conservation professionals across the county and region • Conservation Officer to maintain involvement with the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) so can ensure there is a relationship between the IHBC and county practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued involvement with Forum • Continued officer membership and involvement with IHBC 	S

Objective: To increase community engagement about heritage matters			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Ensure the conservation of the historic environment is reflected within Neighbourhood Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the historic environment is often a fundamental component of local character and that it should be incorporated in Neighbourhood Plans, providing a means of effective engagement with communities in planning for their area • Continue to support the positive role of the historic environment in adopted plans and through development of new plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful engagement during the Neighbourhood Planning process 	S

Determine community interest in heritage and formalise methods of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-establish the Heritage Forum and determine frequency of meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Forum meetings 	S/M
Explore and support initiatives to get more people and communities involved in heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support all existing heritage events delivered by the council and external groups and consider how their appeal could be widened to more people and groups Identify particular non-heritage events which could be utilised to showcase the rich and diverse heritage of the borough. Initiatives could include “pop-up” heritage stalls and displays, etc., as often undertaken by local groups Consider a range of engagement methods (social media, physical displays etc.) to encourage involvement Consider focussing methods of engagement on underrepresented groups within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants in events Interest shown by individuals and groups Website visits etc. 	S/M

Objective: To ensure integrated and joined-up working within the council and between relevant local government partners			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Ensure that the value and benefits of heritage are understood as a corporate asset and responsibility and establish clear and appropriate roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure heritage and the historic environment is reflected within the Corporate Plan and any later revisions Continue to brief relevant members of the Council Executive of the benefits and values of heritage. The council has a Heritage Champion and relevant Executive members to ensure integrated corporate working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful functioning of the Executive Heritage Champion ensuring integration 	S
Ensure that appropriate communication networks and consultation protocols are established and maintained in order that heritage is dealt with in a collaborative way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the role of the heritage and the historic environment is promoted and understood when strategic decisions are being made. Officer involvement in relevant steering groups etc. Follow internal consultation protocol during development management process. External consultation protocol is in place to work with Leicestershire County Council departments (highways, archaeology, ecology etc.) Continue practice of informal discussion between officers where relevant to effectively manage heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory representation in steering groups etc. Following of consultation protocol 	S/M

Support the development of the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) (see aim 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine how the borough council and other interested stakeholders can assist Leicestershire County Council in the development of the record to ensure information on heritage assets is up-to-date, accurate and accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of HER visits User feedback 	S/M
Ensure that council owned and managed heritage assets have appropriate conservation and management plans in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and assistance to Asset Management team (and any other relevant team) to ensure these plans are in place and to an appropriate standard Recognise any resource implications to implement the plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of plans Implementation of plan recommendations 	M/L

Aim 4. The promotion and enjoyment of heritage

Objective: To promote a positive image and identity of the borough to increase heritage related tourism			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Promote and support the existing tourism offer of key heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote all council and external heritage events and sites across the borough which provide access to heritage (e.g. Hinckley Museum etc.) through appropriate publicity. Provide officer support where possible to all sites/events Determine whether the tourism offer of existing sites can be improved or expanded and support the development of associated infrastructure and projects, e.g. Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sites open and accessible Number of events Number of visits Visitor feedback 	S/M
Promote and publicise a positive image of the borough's historic identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a positive image of the borough and its heritage assets through publications, media, supporting events etc. Consider development of heritage specific events Utilise the role of Heritage Champion to provide a positive image of the council's and promote heritage Promote the 'Destination Hinckley' brand for Hinckley town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of publications (etc.) developed and produced Development of events Feedback on image and identity 	S/M
Explore new and innovative tourism initiatives from key heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether existing heritage assets could be developed as a destination in their own right or positioned in a way to offer a unique product. Determine the feasibility of product development (use of relevant baseline economic/tourism data (e.g. ONS/STEAM etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant data outputs etc. New sites open and accessible Visitor feedback 	M/L

Objective: To support the discovery and exploration of heritage			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Develop the council's collection and support the collections development of heritage partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the feasibility of displaying items of the councils heritage collection accompanied with interpretation and promotion Provide support to Hinckley and District Museum with their bid to expand their collection and construct an extension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compilation of inventory Collections development 	S/M

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grasp opportunities to acquire heritage items to be added to collections (displayed at the council owned sites, the Museum or other relevant sites) and compile and advertise an inventory of associated heritage items located outside of the borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progression of Museum funding application 	
Increase accessibility to the historic environment to allow for discovery and exploration (see the actions for aim 1: objective – to increase accessibility to the historic environment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support new and innovative events that provide access for a wide range of people, groups and communities Support the infrastructure requirements around existing and new events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events Number of visits Visitor feedback 	S/M
Improve awareness of heritage with improved accessibility to information to allow for discovery and exploration (also see the actions for aim 1: objective – to ensure information on heritage assets is up-to-date, accurate and accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote all schemes and projects and ensure that the content and information is accessible to all people, groups and communities Develop digital technology and online solutions to increase awareness and support discovery Support researchers and historians with means of discovery and exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and delivery of schemes and projects Development of online solutions 	S/M

Objective: To advertise best practice in dealing with heritage			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Ensure accessibility to existing skills registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide accessibility through appropriate means to existing databases and skills registers for use by interested stakeholders and heritage asset owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and monitoring of registers and databases 	S
Promote best practice in dealing with heritage in the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise and publicise the development and delivery of works, projects and schemes within the borough that have been carried out to a high standard as an exemplar to others Publicise the achievements of the Environmental Improvement Programme and other relevant funding schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular publications 	S/M

Develop and publicise a local craftsman and skills register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify craftsmen who have undertaken works to heritage assets within the borough that have been completed to a high standard Determine the geographical scope of their works and seek references from elsewhere Publish and maintain a register for use by interested stakeholders and heritage asset owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development, publication and maintenance of register 	M/L
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Objective: To celebrate and promote achievement in the historic environment			
Action	Potential initiatives/partners	Monitoring	Timeframe
Continue to promote the regeneration of the Atkins building as an exemplar of council-led redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote achievements through appropriate means Utilise it as an example of successful project delivery to assist in the development of funding bids etc. Utilise the building as a priority to host conferences and events, particularly those with a heritage focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of project Number of events held at the building 	S
Develop a Conservation and Design Awards scheme to provide recognition for exemplar projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine feasibility and interest in an annual awards scheme that demonstrates best practice in conservation and design Entries could include conversions, restorations, new build categories etc. Determine make up of a judging panel, likely to consist of representatives from Historic England, the borough council, local amenity societies, architectural practices etc. Promote achievements through appropriate means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of awards scheme 	L

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN

Delivery of the Action Plan will be dependent upon a strong relationship between the borough council and its key partners, alongside the ongoing and continued delivery of actions and statutory functions by the council's existing resource. Where appropriate working and steering groups will be instigated to develop and guide actions and initiatives. It is likely in some cases that extra council funding or resources may be required to fully realise and deliver actions and initiatives, and where reasonable a business case will be made.

There will be the need for regular monitoring of the Action Plan to determine the progress of the development and delivery of actions, therefore progress reports will be provided on an annual basis. Where actions are not being delivered or timescales are not being met there will be the need to adapt accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Local authorities are required to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The council's Heritage Strategy provides the framework for how we understand, manage, enhance, promote and enjoy the borough's rich and diverse heritage in the immediate and long-term. It has reviewed the national and local heritage context, identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the service before identifying key aims and objectives to be achieved through the delivery of a detailed Action Plan. The strategy establishes the council's direction of travel to form the basis for scoping and prioritising the future work of the council's heritage resource, whilst ensuring that the service delivers the council's corporate ambitions of providing opportunities for people, places, and prosperity.

APPENDIX 1. CONSULTATIONS SUMMARY

A round of public consultation on the draft Heritage Strategy 2025 – 2029 and its associated Action Plan took place between 16 June 2025 and 25 July 2025.

Consultee comments were requested on the content of the Strategy and Action Plan, with specific questions asked. Comments received are summarised below alongside with relevant officer responses as to how the comments have been incorporated within the final version of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Question 1. What do you consider to be Hinckley and Bosworth's heritage?

25 relevant comments were received identifying a range of different types of heritage within the borough. All types of heritage have been adequately identified and summarised within the "What is Heritage" and "What is the heritage of Hinckley and Bosworth?" sections of this document.

Question 2. What aspects of the borough's heritage do you value, care for and enjoy?

28 relevant comments were received identifying a wide range of different types of heritage within the borough that people value, care for and enjoy. All types of heritage have been adequately identified and summarised within the "What is Heritage" and "What is the heritage of Hinckley and Bosworth?" sections of this document.

A common theme was identification of Bosworth Battlefield as a heritage asset that is valued and enjoyed.

Question 3. Are there any themes of the borough's heritage you would like to highlight?

15 relevant comments were received highlighting different types of heritage within the borough. All highlighted heritage has been adequately identified and summarised within the "What is the heritage of Hinckley and Bosworth?" section of this document.

Common themes of heritage highlighted in the comments included Bosworth Battlefield and the hosiery industry.

Question 4. What do you consider to be the issues affecting the heritage of the borough?

24 relevant comments were received identifying a range of issues affecting the borough.

Common themes emerged regarding:

- *the pressure from new development and the adverse impact such development can have on the historic environment and heritage.* The threat to heritage of the borough caused by the potential conflict between development pressure and ensuring the significance of the historic environment is preserved and enhanced is identified within the "Summary of Key Issues and Challenges" section of the Background and Action Plan document. The conservation of heritage assets is managed by the local planning authority through the application of existing planning policy frameworks when new development is proposed.

- *Insufficient funding to conserve and enhance heritage assets.* The weakness and threat to the preservation and enhancement of heritage within the borough posed by a lack of funding is identified within the “Summary of Key Issues and Challenges” section of the Background and Action Plan document. Where funding can be secured this also presents an opportunity to preserve and enhance heritage and this is recognised in the “Summary of Key Issues and Challenges” section of the Background and Action Plan document. The Council will continue to seek to achieve the objective of maximising funding opportunities, as identified within aim 2 (implement positive action to manage and enhance heritage) of the Strategy.

Question 5. How could the borough’s heritage be better managed and enhanced?

19 relevant comments were received identifying how respondents believed the borough’s heritage could be better managed and enhanced.

Where suggested actions and initiatives are achievable, they have been incorporated into the Strategy under the relevant aim.

Question 6. Do you have any comments on the proposed vision, strategic aims and objectives of the Heritage Strategy?

11 relevant comments were received, the majority of which supported the proposed vision, strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy.

Based on the content of the comments, no revisions to the proposed vision, strategic aims and objectives are required.

Question 7. Do you have any general comments on the proposed Heritage Strategy and Action Plan documents?

11 further relevant comments were received, the majority of which support the content of the Strategy.

A small number of comments were received suggesting that the Strategy is too focused on Hinckley rather than other settlements, however the Strategy is clear in that actions and initiatives are applicable to and proposed for the whole borough.

APPENDIX 2. NATIONAL AND LOCAL AMENITY SOCIETIES

NATIONAL AMENITY SOCIETIES

- The Council for British Archaeology
- The Gardens Trust
- The Georgian Group
- Historic Buildings and Places (formerly The Ancient Monuments Society)
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
- The Victorian Society
- The Twentieth Century Society

LOCAL HISTORY AND CIVIC SOCIETIES

- Ashby Canal Association
- Atherstone Civic Society (also covers Witherley Parish)
- Burbage Heritage Group
- Desford & District Local Heritage Society
- Earl Shilton Local History Group
- Hinckley & District Museum
- Hinckley Archaeological Society
- Hinckley District Past and Present
- Hinckley Past and Present
- Market Bosworth Society
- Markfield Local History Group
- Ratby Local History Group
- Sheepy Local History Society
- Stoke Golding Heritage Group

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Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission	11 September 2025
Executive	24 September 2025

Wards affected: All Wards

Homelessness Prevention Policy Implementation

Report of Director (Community Services)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek support for the implementation of a Prevention Policy in the Housing Options Team, to set out clear prevention tactics available to the service to prevent people becoming homeless and assist in getting cases moved on from temporary accommodation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Prevention policy be supported and endorsed to Executive and the implementation steps in 3.6 be noted.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced new duties for local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, regardless of priority need. This has significantly expanded the responsibilities of the Housing Options Team and has also led to an increase in temporary accommodation requirements.
- 3.2 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has developed a comprehensive Prevention Policy to formalise the approach taken by the Housing Options Team in meeting these duties. The policy outlines the tools, interventions and support available to prevent homelessness and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation.

3.3 The policy includes a range of measures such as mediation, rent top-ups, financial assistance for deposits and rent in advance, discretionary housing payments, and partnership working with external agencies. It also sets out the Council's approach to supporting specific groups including rough sleepers, prison leavers, hospital discharges, and victims of domestic abuse. The policy is found in Appendix A.

3.4 **Strategic Context**

3.5 The Prevention Policy supports the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and helps meet legal duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It contributes to the Council's wider aims of reducing homelessness, improving housing stability, and promoting early intervention. The policy is closely linked to the Council's Corporate Plan (see 7.1) and reflects a commitment to preventing all forms of homelessness through targeted support, early intervention, and partnership working.

3.6 The policy will be implemented by the Housing Options Team and embedded into day-to-day service delivery. Officers will receive training on the use of prevention tools and the development of Personalised Housing Plans. The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by legislative changes.

4. **Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**

4.1 Open

5. **Financial implications [CS/IB]**

5.1 Although there are none directly arising from the report, this policy should help manage the increase in demand on the service. Net homelessness costs have increased from £415,000 in 2022/23 to a current forecast of £800,000 in 2025/26.

6. **Legal implications [ST]**

6.1 None

7. **Corporate Plan implications**

7.1 The objectives of the report and subsequent service delivery align to the following corporate objective:

People: The policy supports vulnerable individuals and families to remain in or access suitable housing, improving wellbeing and reducing crisis situations.

Places: By preventing homelessness, the policy contributes to safer, more stable communities and reduces the use of temporary accommodation.

Prosperity: Stable housing supports access to employment, education, and health services, contributing to long-term economic and social inclusion.

8. Consultation

8.1 None.

9. Risk implications

9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
1. Inconsistent application of the policy by staff	Provide comprehensive training and regular refresher sessions for Housing Options Officers	Housing Options Team Leader/Housing Options Manager
2. Insufficient funding to support financial assistance schemes	Monitor budget usage closely and explore external funding opportunities (e.g. grants, partnerships)	Housing Options Team Leader/Housing Options Manager/Head of Housing
3. Increased demand on the Housing Options Team due to broader eligibility criteria	Review staffing levels and caseloads regularly; consider temporary resourcing during peak periods	Housing Options Manager/Head of Housing
4. Legal challenge due to failure to follow statutory duties	Ensure legal compliance through regular case supervision and updates to procedures in line with legislation	Housing Options Team Leader/Housing Options Manager
5. Delays in partnership agency responses impacting prevention outcomes	Establish clear service level agreements (SLAs) and escalation protocols with key partners	Housing Options Team Leader/Housing Options Manager/Head of Housing

6. Unrealistic expectations from applicants regarding housing outcomes	Provide clear, consistent communication and manage expectations from the outset	Housing Options Officers
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10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 The Housing Options service will assist in people finding accommodation across the Borough, often near to support networks, employment and schools.
- 10.2 The Housing Options service works to meets the needs of all customers approaching for homelessness supporting in accordance with the Equity Act 2010.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 The Housing Service continues to deliver its services with regarding to climate change impacts.

12. Corporate implications

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
 - Community safety implications
 - Environmental implications
 - ICT implications
 - Asset management implications
 - Procurement implications
 - Human resources implications
 - Planning implications
 - Data protection implications
 - Voluntary sector

Background papers: Prevention Policy (Appendix A)

Contact officer: Ashleigh Brightmore/Maddy Shellard
 Executive member: Cllr M Mullaney



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Prevention Policy

June 2025

INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has a legal responsibility to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to help relieve homelessness for all eligible individuals. This duty applies to everyone, not just those considered to be in priority need, as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into effect on 3 April 2018.
- 1.2 Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all local authorities must maintain a homelessness strategy, which must be reviewed and updated at least every five years. This strategy outlines how the Council plans to prevent homelessness and ensure that suitable accommodation and support are available for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- 1.3 The Council must take reasonable steps to help any eligible person who is at risk of homelessness, regardless of their priority need status, whether they are considered intentionally homeless, or whether they have a local connection to the area. This is known as the **Prevention Duty**, which lasts for 56 days unless it ends earlier—for example, if suitable accommodation is secured or the person becomes homeless.
- 1.4 If someone is already homeless when they approach the Council, or becomes homeless during the prevention stage, the Council must then take steps to help them find new accommodation. This is known as the **Relief Duty**, which also lasts for 56 days unless ended earlier. If the Council believes the applicant may be eligible and in priority need, it must provide temporary accommodation under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996.

1.5 This policy outlines the council's approach to the following:

- How the Council works to prevent homelessness
- When the prevention duty applies
- The methods used to prevent or relieve homelessness

2. Objectives of this Policy

2.1 This policy supports the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and aims to:

- Ensure legal compliance when accepting a homelessness duty
- Address homelessness or the risk of homelessness as early as possible
- Reduce the time households spend in temporary accommodation
- Lower the Council's annual expenditure on temporary accommodation
- Improve access to private rented housing for those owed a homelessness duty
- Promote early intervention for individuals at risk of homelessness
- Provide a range of tools and support to help prevent homelessness

3. Scope of this Policy

3.1 This policy applies to all individuals and households to whom Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has accepted a prevention, relief, or main homelessness duty.

4. Definition of homelessness

4.1 A person or household is considered legally homeless if they do not have a home in the UK or anywhere else in the world that is both available and reasonable for them to live in.

4.2 Examples of homelessness include, but are not limited to:

- Sleeping rough (street homelessness)
- Temporarily staying with friends or family (sofa surfing)
- Being illegally evicted
- Living in accommodation that is unaffordable
- Living in housing that is unfit or severely overcrowded
- Experiencing domestic abuse or threats of abuse
- Being asked to leave by parents or guardians
- Friends or family no longer able or willing to accommodate
- Leaving care, prison, or the armed forces without accommodation
- Receiving a valid notice to quit from a landlord

4.3 All local authorities must provide free advice and information to anyone in their area about:

Preventing homelessness

- Finding a home
- Understanding their rights if they are homeless
- Accessing local support services

- 4.3 Anyone aged 16 or over who believes they are homeless or at risk of homelessness can apply for help from any local authority. If the applicant is aged 16 or 17, they may also be referred to Children's Social Services for additional support.
- 4.4 A household that normally lives in the UK and has the legal right to remain without restrictions is generally eligible for assistance.

5. The Prevention duty

- 5.1 The Local Authority owes an applicant and their household the prevention duty if it is satisfied that they are threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance.
- 5.2 A person is considered threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days, or if they have been given a valid section 21 notice in respect of their only accommodation which is due to expire within 56 days.
- 5.3 The prevention duty requires an authority to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available to them.
- 5.4 Where the local authority owes an applicant the prevention duty, it also under a duty to assess their housing needs and produce a personalised housing plan (PHP). The assessment and plan should inform all relevant action taken under the prevention duty.
- 5.5 As part of the PHP the applicant may be required to take reasonable steps to find accommodation or prevent themselves becoming homeless from the accommodation that they are applying from.
- 5.6 The local authority might find the applicant has failed to cooperate with the PHP if they do not take a reasonable step set out in the plan. This can allow the local authority to end the prevention duty early.
- 5.7 The local authority cannot refer an applicant to another local authority under the prevention duty. The local authority that the applicant applies to must under the prevention duty take steps to prevent homelessness, regardless of whether they have a local connection.
- 5.8 The Homelessness code of Guidance states that 'Help to secure' does not mean that the authority has a duty to directly source and provide accommodation for the applicant but involves the authority working with applicants to agree (where possible) reasonable steps that the applicant and the housing authority can take to identify and secure suitable accommodation.
- 5.9 The code of guidance further states that in providing 'help to secure', the housing authority is able to provide support and advice to households who are taking some responsibility for securing their own accommodation. This approach is intended to increase choice and control for applicants and allow the housing authority to help to resolve particular problems rather than direct resources at securing accommodation for households regardless of what assistance they need.
- 5.10 The Code of Guidance suggests an authority should first focus on steps which might assist the applicant and their household to stay in their current home. Where this is not possible,

then the focus should be on trying to secure other accommodation so that the person does not cease to have accommodation available to them.

5.11 The prevention duty can be brought to an end by:

- Suitable accommodation being available for at least six months
- The applicant refusing an offer of suitable accommodation
- The applicant becomes homeless
- The applicant becomes homeless intentionally
- The applicant ceases to be eligible
- The applicant withdraws their application

5.12 Accommodation secured must be available and suitable for occupation by the applicant and any other person who normally resides with them as a member of their family, or any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them.

6. The Relief duty

6.1 A local authority owes an applicant and their household a relief duty where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is homeless and eligible.

6.2 The local authority must take reasonable steps to help the applicant secure accommodation that will be available to them for at least six months.

6.3 The assessment and PHP should inform all action taken under the relief duty.

6.4 A new PHP must be issued under the relief duty.

6.5 The authority can discharge the duty by securing accommodation for the person and their household, but they are not required to provide accommodation directly. There must be a reasonable prospect of the accommodation being available for at least six months.

6.6 The local authority must secure emergency interim accommodation under S188 if it has reason to believe that the applicant is homeless, eligible and is in priority need.

6.7 Where there is reason to believe the person might be in priority need, the authority must provide interim accommodation for the duration of the relief duty, unless inquiries evidence at a later date that the applicant does not have a qualifying priority need.

6.8 The local authority is able to refer the person to another local authority at the relief stage if they are homeless and eligible for assistance, but do not have a local connection to the area where they applied. The relief duty is not owed by the referring authority if that authority:

- is satisfied that the person is eligible and homeless
- believes that conditions for a local connection referral are met
- notifies the applicant that it has notified or intends to notify another local authority of its opinion that the conditions for a referral are met

6.9 The duty to provide interim accommodation is not conditional on the person having a local connection to the local authority, where they apply. If the local authority is making a referral on local connection grounds and it is believed the applicant is in priority need, then it must provide emergency accommodation until the person is notified of the decision as to whether the conditions for the referral are met.

6.10 The relief duty can be brought to an end by;

- Suitable accommodation being available for at least six months
- The applicant refusing an offer of suitable accommodation and there was a prospect of it being available for 6 months
- The applicant becomes intentionally homeless from any accommodation made available under the relief duty
- The applicant is no longer eligible for assistance
- The applicant has withdrawn their application
- The applicant refuses a final accommodation offer or a final Part 6 offer of social housing

A final accommodation offer is an offer of a six-month assured shorthold tenancy.

7. The Main duty

7.1 A local authority will owe an applicant the main housing duty when the duty to relieve homelessness has ended, and they are satisfied the applicant is:

- homeless and eligible for assistance
- in priority need
- not intentionally homeless

7.2 The duty is owed by the authority to which the application was made unless the authority makes a local connection referral.

7.3 The main housing duty is a duty to provide temporary accommodation until such time as the duty is ended, either by an offer of settled accommodation or for another specified reason.

The main housing duty can be brought to an end by:

- The applicant ceases to be eligible for assistance
- The applicant becomes homeless intentionally from accommodation provided to them under the main duty
- The applicant voluntarily ceases to occupy the accommodation provided
- The applicant accepts an offer of a fully assured tenancy from a private landlord, including a housing association
- The applicant accepted a private rented sector offer of an offer under the local authorities' part 6 allocation scheme
- The applicant refuses certain accommodation

8. Housing Options Team

The Housing Options Team are focused on building skills, confidence and empowering people so that they can manage themselves and their accommodation as much as possible. This might mean making short term plans with people whereas others will benefit from focused longer-term work, and the appropriate referrals for this support will be made with the applicant's permission.

Applicants accessing the service will be required to complete a homelessness application and provide relevant documentation to evidence the risk of homelessness or actual homelessness, along with a form of identification for each member of the household.

They will then be assigned for a full housing assessment with a Housing Options Officer and will be asked at that point to provide a wider range of documentation, to not only show the risk of homelessness, but also any other factors associated with that person or household. This will include, but not limited to, household income, bank statements and medical information.

When applicants have an assessment with the Housing Options Team, the outcome they wish to have is not to not just have advice, but to be provided with a home or a resolution to their current housing situation. However, it is important to be able to manage these expectations and to be clear about the broader outcomes from receiving advice, an understanding of the housing market along with the rights, responsibilities and actions associated with resolving a problem.

The Housing Options Officer will assist the applicant to understand the range of potential options available to them based on their personal circumstances. Following this assessment each applicant will be issued with a personal housing plan which offers tailored advice based on their particular situation.

The Housing Options Team will provide:

- A person centred, holistic and tailored advice service
- Privacy and confidentiality
- A genuine and accurate attempt to address the situation
- A plan of how the issue may be able to be resolved
- Referrals to partner agencies and follow-up action (if required)

9. Personalised Housing Plans

Housing authorities are under a duty to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

This assessment will identify what has caused the homelessness or threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and any support they need in order to be able to secure and retain accommodation.

Following this assessment, the housing authority will work with the applicant to develop a personalised housing plan which will include actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the authority and the applicant themselves to try and prevent or relieve homelessness. Actions for third parties who are supporting the applicant may also be included.

The Housing Options Team will help people to understand the full range of options available to them by offering them tailored advice which will then be included into their personal

housing plan. The personal housing plan is based on their personal circumstances and will include appropriate advice and assistance on a realistic assessment of their particular needs. Other care and support needs that are identified as part of the full housing assessment will also be included in this document.

The personal housing plan will then be reviewed with the applicant during the course of the prevention and relief duty, approximately every 2 weeks.

The applicant is under a duty to ensure that they notify the housing authority of any changes in their circumstances at the point that they occur and should not wait until a review of the personal housing plan.

10. Prevention measures

10.1 Mediation

The Housing Options team can offer mediation in order to resolve a risk of homelessness or actual homelessness, where the reason you are being asked to leave accommodation is due to a relationship breakdown.

Housing Options Officers will receive mediation training to ensure any mediation is as effective as possible, to try and prevent or relieve homelessness.

Mediation can be used between, but is not limited to, applicants and their family members, friends, partners and landlords.

Mediation may include the agreement of a contract between parties around any payment of rent arrears, or to address behaviour concerns.

10.2 Rent top up scheme (Priority need cases only)

The Council recognises that good quality, affordable private rented housing can be vital in preventing homelessness. Unfortunately, local housing allowances are not currently in line with market rent prices and therefore can make accessing the private sector unaffordable for a lot of applicants, increasing the time it may take to resolve their situation.

Therefore, the Council will assist households, with an active homelessness duty, with rent tops ups towards accommodation that is otherwise suitable for their needs and available for their occupation.

Financial assessments will first of all be completed to assess how much the applicant themselves is able to contribute towards the monthly rental amount.

The council can also produce evidence that can be supplied to any landlord or estate agent to evidence the support in place, should an agreement be made to issue the applicant with a secure tenancy agreement.

The Housing Options Officer should always be consulted, before any tenancy agreement is signed, to ensure appropriate checks are carried out on any potential property. Failure to do so will result in the Council being unable to assist with rent top ups.

The amount of support with rent top up that will be provided will depend on a case-by-case basis, depending on the household make up. The maximum amount of financial support that will be provided will be recorded and detailed in the personal housing plan.

10.3 Financial assistance for deposit and rent in advance – private sector (Priority need cases only)

The council can also assist with up to one month's rent in advance and help to pay any deposit required on a suitable and affordable tenancy in the private sector, where there is an active homelessness duty accepted.

The Housing Options Officer should always be consulted, before any tenancy agreement is signed, to ensure appropriate checks are carried out on any potential property. Failure to do so will result in the Council being unable to financial assist with obtaining a tenancy.

In line with the Renters Right Act 2025 this payment will be made to the landlord In between the period of the tenancy agreement being signed, and the commencement date.

This financial assistance is offered in the form of an interest free loan, where a loan agreement will be signed. The Housing Options Officer will carry out an income and expenditure assessment before the assistance is granted, to ensure that the property is affordable to the applicants need. This assessment will also determine the amount per month that the loan needs to be paid back at and will be included in the loan agreement.

Applicants who have previously received this assistance and have not stuck to the terms of repayment of the loan agreement may be exempt from receiving this assistance again.

Failure to stick to the terms of repayment can also impact your ability to be included onto the Housing Register and may result in court action being taken by the Council, in order to recoup the debt owed.

10.4 Discretionary Housing Payments

Where a property becomes unaffordable to an applicant during the course of a tenancy, an application for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) will be required to be made.

Applications for DHP are managed by the Housing Benefit Team, and the Housing Options Officer will offer support (if required) to the applicant to complete an application. They will also liaise with the Housing Benefit Team regarding this claim.

10.5 Cashless bond scheme

The Council operates a cashless bond scheme. This scheme uses a written and legally binding agreement between the Council, the tenant and a landlord to replace any upfront cash deposit that is normally required by landlords to cover the cost of any damage to their property or any rent owed when a tenant moves out up to the value of £500.

10.6 Partnership working and signposting advise

The Council recognises that homelessness prevention activity is important and can make a difference across many factors in relation to health, education, child protection, community safety, employability and community engagement.

The Council is committed to ensuring knowledge is embedded across the whole organisation, along with effective activity with other organisations and services working in tandem.

The Council has established close links with other organisations and agencies to prevent homelessness. Examples of this are through establishing joint working groups, and links with housing providers to maximise the supply of properties allocated through our housing register.

The Housing Options Officers will also be able to offer signposting and referrals to services for support with:

- Advice and assistance with personal budgeting and dealing with debts, including maximising your income
- Support with employment
- Care and support needs
- Drug and alcohol support
- Rough sleeping support
- Advice or assistance in helping individuals to move

10.7 Domestic Abuse Services

There are circumstances in which it is not always possible to prevent homelessness.

There are occasions where it may be possible for safety measures and additional security to be put in place at the property, to make the accommodation safe and secure and reasonable to remain. However, this method will be discussed with the applicant to ensure suitability.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council are committed to tackling both the cause and effect of domestic abuse, and to identify ways in which to prevent domestic abuse, and where this is not possible, to protect its victims.

We aim to protect and support those who experience, or are affected, by domestic abuse and to support and develop a range of services for those who have experienced domestic abuse. The Housing Options Team has a specialist domestic abuse housing options officer within the team who specialises in all high-risk approaches from men or women fleeing any form of domestic abuse.

The officer will work closely with all domestic abuse support agencies, GP's and the Police and also support people whilst they obtain legal advice or court orders to secure their right to remain within the family home .

The Council will make every effort to prevent homelessness for people suffering domestic abuse, and when the person has made a decision to move home, we will seek to make offers of settled housing as quickly as reasonably possible.

Sanctuary Schemes are a multi-agency initiative that aim to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced secure measures and support. The Council offers this initiative to those people under any tenancy tenure or risk level and will work closely with other social housing providers to ensure support for their own tenants.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is part of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). MARAC is a national approach where information is shared amongst agencies on the highest risk domestic abuse cases. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented, a co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim.

10.8 Housing Register

Homelessness and a housing crisis can be avoided when people can easily apply for, and obtain, social housing.

There does however have to be an understanding of waiting times and the lack of social housing and depending on the size of property and area there may be significant demand for each property which becomes available.

The Council operates a Housing Register in line with our Allocations Policy, a copy of this is available on the Council's website www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk.

The Housing Register is a single online application form for anyone aged 18 years or over, though support can be given by the Housing Options Team to anyone who is unable to access the online application.

The Council operates a priority allocation system based on an assessment of housing need, and properties are allocated through a shortlisting process. The homelessness duty will dictate the level of priority awarded to an applicant if they are eligible for inclusion onto the Housing Register.

The acceptance of a homelessness duty does not entitle someone to an allocation of Social Housing, or inclusion onto the Register.

We encourage current social housing tenants to resolve their housing need through mutual exchanges managed via the Homeswapper website. This website can be accessed by visiting www.homeswapper.co.uk.

Alternatively existing social housing tenants can apply for a transfer where their home no longer meets their needs, for example: if they wish to downsize to a smaller property.

10.9 House Share & Lodging

Lodging in someone else's home is recognised as being a positive and affordable housing option for some people, and friends sharing a private rented property can be a good way of securing affordable housing.

Both situations are particularly positive for people under the age of 35 who struggle to find affordable accommodation due to the reduction in the local housing allowance that they are able to receive.

For home owners and tenants, taking in a lodger can help to maximise income and reduce housing related outgoings for them. The Council will, in certain circumstances and after making thorough investigations into the suitability, accept house shares as a resolution to preventing homelessness.

10.10 Adaptions

The Council can help with arranging adaptations in order to enable a person to remain or return to their home.

The Housing Options Team will work closely with the any Occupational Therapist to establish whether alterations and adaptations can be installed to assist an applicant in preventing avoidable homelessness and also allowing people to remain in their current home.

11. Private sector notices

Tenants are legally able to occupy a property to which they hold a tenancy until such a time that a Possession Order is obtained to bring that tenancy to an end and the Council will support this right, should the applicant choose to exercise this right.

Where a person has applied for homelessness assistance because they are being evicted from their current accommodation, the Housing Options Team will make every effort to negotiate with the landlord to try and prevent the eviction taking place.

If the landlord has the right to end the tenancy, and has followed the correct procedure, the Housing Options Team will advise the tenant of this. We will also advise them of their rights in relation to the homeless legislation and that we intend to contact the landlord to determine if there are any options to negotiate the continuation of the tenancy.

As an example, if there are rent arrears, would the reduction of the arrears and the provision of support to ensure ongoing regular payments, mean that the landlord would consider allowing the tenant to remain.

If the landlord has the right to end the tenancy but has not followed the correct procedure, the Housing Options Team will advise the tenant of their rights to remain in the property until such time as the correct procedure has been followed.

We will also contact the landlord to advise them of their responsibilities and advise them to seek their own legal advice. Tenants can occupy a property to which they hold a tenancy until such time as an eviction order is obtained to bring that arrangement to an end.

The Housing Options Team will, where they are satisfied that the landlord does intend to seek possession of the property back, work with applicants under a prevention duty, prior to being threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

11. Hospital Discharges

A Leicestershire wide Hospital Discharge Protocol has been developed and is in place for the involvement of all relevant agencies in pre-discharge assessments and the formulation of after-care plans.

The overall purpose of the Protocol is to:

- Reduce delayed transfers of care in Leicestershire hospitals and to reduce the length of stay for patients where accommodation is a barrier to discharge
- Reduce the number of unplanned referrals to Leicestershire Local Housing Authorities for patients recently discharged from hospital
- Reduce the health inequalities among homeless patients.

Pre-discharge discussions are vital, particularly where individuals may be reluctant to reveal any housing difficulties for fear these could delay their discharge. Where accommodation is already available, checks by the health professionals and will be undertaken to make sure that it is still suitable (for example for a person who has become physically disabled) or that support services are in place.

The Housing Options team will comply with the protocol and in all instances, should be notified of a potential homelessness situation at the earliest possible point, preferably upon admission to hospital, so that early intervention work can start straightaway.

12. Prison Leavers

Many prisoners do not have secure accommodation available on their release making it less easy for them to integrate successfully into the community increasing the risk of both homelessness and re-offending.

A Leicestershire Prison Release and ex offender Housing Protocol is in place. This protocol is an agreement between The Probation Service and Leicestershire District and Borough Councils.

The intention of the protocol is to reduce the number of Leicestershire adults on Probation who leave custody without suitable accommodation to move into, and especially to reduce the number of adults on Probation obliged to sleep rough or to move into accommodation which is unsafe for themselves or others.

13. Rough Sleepers

The Council currently has a contract with The Bridge In partnership with Leicestershire District and Borough Councils for the provision of Rough Sleeper Intervention and Support Services.

The purpose of this contract is:

- To provide intensive support to people who are sleeping rough in order to find accommodation in the Hinckley and Bosworth Council area if this is their home area or locating back to their home area if it is outside of our District.
- To support and engage the people with the local community and employment opportunities
- Support rough sleepers to access benefits and medical services along with any other services that they need
- If appropriate, to attend any appointments with them and provide support around these.
- To be a positive influence and support for the person.
- To continue to work with the person for a period sufficient enough to settle them into their new homes and ensure all services/utilities/furniture, etc. are in place.

14. Armed Forces

Armed Forces personnel can be vulnerable to homelessness at the point of discharge from the Services but also at later points in their housing as a consequence of poor health or disability. When leaving accommodation the Ministry of Defence (MOD), will issue a Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy.

In the case of all service personnel approaching their date of discharge from the Services, a certificate will be issued 93 days prior to discharge.

Where official documentation is provided, the Housing Options Team will ensure that service personnel receive timely and comprehensive advice of the housing options available to them when they leave the Armed Forces.

15. Reviews and appeals

Housing authorities must provide written notifications to applicants when they reach certain decisions about their case and the reasons behind any decisions that are against the applicant's interests. Applicants can ask the housing authority to review most aspects of their decisions, and, if still dissatisfied, can appeal to the county court on a point of law. Housing authorities have the power to accommodate applicants pending a review or appeal to the county court. When an applicant who is being provided with interim accommodation requests a review of the suitability of accommodation offered to end the relief duty, the authority has a duty to continue to accommodate them pending a review.

16. Equalities statement

The Council recognises that it delivers its homelessness services to communities within which there is a wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.

Through the management of its homelessness service, the Council will treat all customers fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.

Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability and age is not acceptable.

The Council will tackle inequality, treat people with dignity and respect and continue to work to improve services for all service users. The legal framework for the Council's approach is provided by the Equality Act 2010 and specifically by the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which a public authority must work consciously to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics.

To enable customers to have clear information and equal access to our Housing Options service information will be made available in a range of appropriate languages and formats, when requested.

17. Measuring Quality and Performance

The Council is committed to ensuring that its homelessness prevention activities are delivered to a high standard, providing high levels of customer satisfaction and value for money. We monitor all homelessness prevention practices through an effective record keeping system. Government indicators to measure performance will be published on the website <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness> and reviewed on a regular basis.

18. Complaints

If for any reason an applicant is not satisfied with the service that has been provided, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. This can be viewed via the link below https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/200025/compliments_and_complaints/268/how_to_make_a_complaint_or_compliment/2.

19. Review of Policy

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as changes in legislation or regulation dictate. Changes will be made to the document under the authority delegated to the Directorate of Housing or Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing.

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Main Duties

1. Prevention Duty

Applies when someone is threatened with homelessness within 56 days

- The Council must take reasonable steps to help people remain in current accommodation or secure alternative housing
- Involves creating a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP)

2. Relief Duty

Applies when someone is already homeless

- The Council must help secure accommodation for at least 6 months
- May involve interim accommodation if needed
- Involves creating a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP)

3. Main Housing Duty

Applies if relief duty ends without resolving homelessness and the applicant is:

- Eligible
- In priority need
- Not intentionally homeless
- The Council to provide temporary accommodation until settled housing is found

Key Prevention Tools and Measures

Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs)

- Tailored action plans developed
- Reviewed every **2 weeks**
- Include responsibilities for applicant, Council, and third parties

Mediation Services

- Used to resolve disputes
- Aims to prevent eviction or relationship breakdowns leading to homelessness

Rent Top-Up Scheme

(Priority Need Cases Only)

- Financial support to bridge the gap between housing allowance and market rent to increase opportunity to discharge duties into the PRS

Deposit and Rent in Advance Assistance

(Priority Need Cases Only)

- Interest-free loans for private sector tenancies
- Includes affordability assessments and repayment agreements

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

- Temporary financial support when tenancy becomes unaffordable, managed by Housing Benefits

Cashless Bond Scheme

- Replaces deposits with a legal agreement covering up to **£500** in damages or arrears designed for no priority need cases

Partnership Working and Signposting

- Referrals for budgeting, employment, addiction, and mental health support

Domestic Abuse Services

- Specialist officer support, sanctuary schemes, and MARAC participation
- Focus on safety, legal support, and rapid rehousing

Housing Register Access

- Online application system with priority based on assessed need
- Encourages mutual exchanges and transfers for social tenants

House Share & Lodging Options

- Promoted especially for **under-35s**
- Includes vetting and suitability checks

Home Adaptations

- Coordinated with Occupational Therapists to prevent homelessness due to disability or health

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Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission	11 September 2025
Executive	24 September 2025

Wards affected: All Wards

Council House Service Rent Policy

Report of [Director (Community Services)]

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the revised draft Council Housing Rent Collection policy.
- 1.2 To seek support to consult with tenants regarding the revised policy.
- 1.3 To seek support for the implementation of the policy following and subject to tenant consultation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Commission notes the report and accompanying policy and recommends it to the Executive.
- 2.2 That the Scrutiny Commission endorses a period of tenant consultation.
- 2.3 That the Scrutiny Commission supports delegation of authority to the Interim Director of Community Services and the Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety to make any amendments to the policy arising from the consultation and to agree an implementation date, following tenant consultation.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Housing Service is committed to ensuring that rent and service charges for council housing remain fair, affordable, and accessible while maintaining compliance with all legal and

regulatory requirements. The updated Rent Policy outlines how rents are set, collected, and recovered to ensure financial stability for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and to support tenants who may face financial difficulties.

3.2 Purpose of the Policy

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure rents and service charges comply with statutory regulations.
- Maximise rental income efficiently to prevent the HRA from falling into deficit.
- Identify and support tenants in financial hardship.
- Provide repayment plan options as an alternative to legal action.
- Collaborate with internal teams and external partners to support tenants.
- Comply with the Pre-Action Court Protocol to ensure fair debt recovery practices.
- Ensure tenants are not charged for costs they are not responsible for.

3.3 Key Policy Areas

3.4 Rent Setting

- Rent increases are limited to CPI + 1% as per government policy.
- The Council primarily offers social rents, with affordable rents only considered for new housing on a site-by-site basis.
- Affordable rents will generally be capped at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to maintain affordability.
- Rent flexibility allows the Council to increase rents by up to 5% above formula rent (10% for supported housing) in specific circumstances. Currently it is proposed that this will be limited to accommodation used as temporary accommodation only, including the hostels and dispersed housing stock, where a property is let at EPC band B or above, has significant adaptation or is less than 3 years old and not subject to affordable rent levels.

3.5 Service Charges

- Service charges are based on actual costs incurred and are reviewed annually.
- Tenants will receive clear and transparent information about how service charges are calculated.
- Increases will be kept within CPI + 1% where possible to ensure affordability, or in accordance with government rent policy.

3.6 Rent Collection and Arrears Management

- Rent is payable weekly in advance, with multiple payment options available.

- Tenants will receive written notice four weeks in advance of any rent changes.
- Debt recovery follows an incremental approach, with early intervention and support offered to tenants in arrears.
- The Council will work with external agencies (e.g. Citizens Advice, Department for Work and Pensions) to provide financial advice and assistance.
- Eviction is a last resort, with alternative repayment plans encouraged wherever possible.

3.7 Former Tenant Arrears Recovery

- The Council will pursue former tenant arrears where it is economically viable.
- Recovery methods may include Money Judgment Orders, tracing agents, or external collection agencies already employed by the Council. This will be done in a sensitive way, in accordance with the Council's existing approach to debt recovery via a third party as utilised by the Revenues and Benefits service.
- In cases of financial hardship, the Council may consider writing off debt.

3.8 Monitoring and Reporting

- Weekly monitoring of rent arrears across the borough.
- Quarterly performance tracking on arrears recovery.
- Annual benchmarking against comparable councils to drive improvements.
- Review of eviction rates to ensure the policy supports sustainable tenancies.

3.9 Tenant Engagement

A workshop was recently held with tenants on the 18 June 2025, supported by TPAS, to shape the updated Rent Policy and ensure it is fair, transparent, and responsive to tenant needs. Key feedback included a strong focus on affordability, repair quality, security, and clear communication. Tenants valued transparency on service charges, preferred monthly payments, and requested improvements like opt-in reminders, clearer arrears processes, and better access to support. Suggestions included introducing a handyperson service and improving contact with the council. The engagement has directly informed refinements to the proposed Rent Policy and a summary of the workshop session is found in Appendix A.

3.10 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in response to any changes in legislation to ensure it remains effective and compliant.

3.11 Recommendations

The introduction of this Rent Policy will ensure financial sustainability whilst supporting tenants who experience financial hardship. The Executive is recommended to approve the policy to ensure fair and transparent rent-setting, collection, and arrears management processes that balance affordability with financial responsibility.

- 3.12 A wider tenant consultation is now required, to allow all Council tenants and opportunity to comment on the revised policy.

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 4.1 Open

5. Financial implications [CS]

- 5.1 A one per cent loss in rent amounts to around £157,000. If rent is not maximised, for every one per cent lost, the 3 year cumulative impact on the HRA will be around £490,000.

6. Legal implications [ST]

- 6.1 None

7. Corporate Plan implications

- 7.1 The report and accompanying policy aligns to the following corporate objectives.

People- Help people to stay safe, healthy, active and in employment.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Initial tenant engagement has been undertaken to inform this policy. Additional tenant consultation will be undertaken following approval by the Executive to provide all HBBC tenants to have an opportunity to respond.

9. Risk implications

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failure to have adequate controls in place in relation to rent collection.	The policy provides a robust framework to ensure rent collection processes are effective.	Head of Housing/Rent Manager

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 The policy provides a flexible approach to debt recovery informed by a person's circumstances.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 The Housing Service strives to delivery its services with climate change implications in mind. The policy outlines rent collection process that minimise carbon emissions.

12. Corporate implications

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

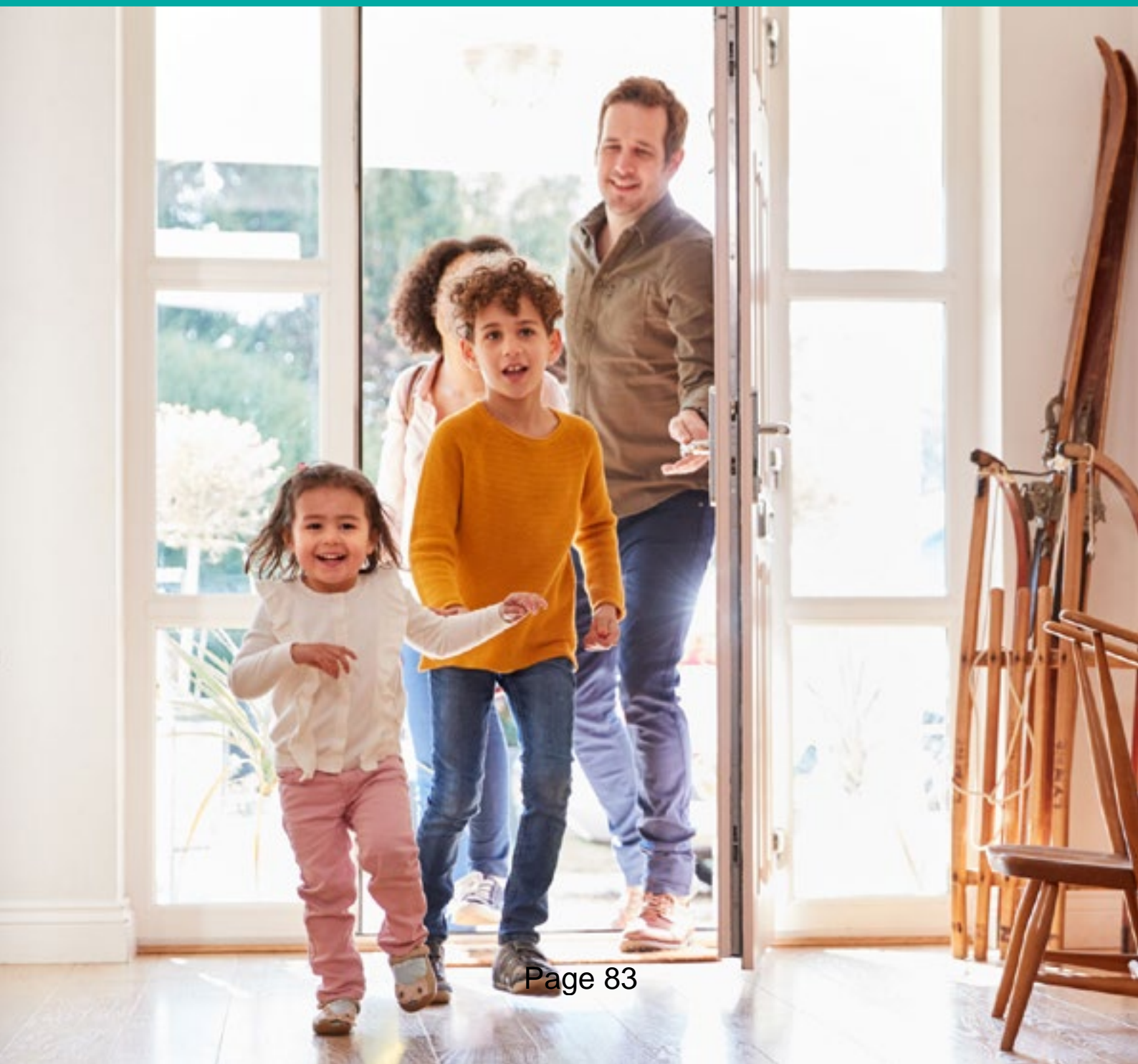
Background papers: Proposed Rent Policy

Contact officer: Kim Fearn/Lois Hodgins/Maddy Shellard

Executive member: Cllr M Mullaney

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COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICE RENT POLICY



Glossary of Terms

Arrears-Money that is overdue or unpaid. In this context, it refers to unpaid rent.

Attachment of Earnings-A legal order that allows the deduction of money from a person's wages to repay a debt.

ASB-Anti-Social Behaviour-The ASB and Tenancy Manager is responsible for tenancy breaches, including arrears and conduct.

Court Order-A legal directive issued by a court. In rent arrears cases, this may include possession orders or repayment arrangements.

Decant-When a tenant is required to temporarily move out of their home, usually due to repairs or redevelopment.

Direct Debit-A payment method allowing money to be automatically deducted from a tenant's bank account on an agreed schedule.

Enforcement Action-Steps taken to recover a debt, including legal actions such as obtaining a money judgment or wage deductions.

Housing Benefit-A government benefit that helps people on low income pay their rent. It is being replaced by Universal Credit in most areas.

Housing Officer- Any member of staff working in the council's housing service.

Housing Options Team-A team within the council that provides advice and support to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Introductory Tenancy-A trial tenancy lasting 12 months (extendable by 6 months). Tenants have fewer rights than secure tenants and can be evicted more easily.

Money Judgment Order-A court order that formally recognises a tenant owes money to the Council and can be enforced through other legal means.

Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP)-A formal notice served by the landlord to start legal proceedings to end a tenancy due to a breach such as rent arrears.

Outright Possession Order-A court order requiring the tenant to leave the property by a specific date.

Pre-Action Protocol - A legal framework that landlords must follow before starting court proceedings for possession due to rent arrears.

Rent Statement-A summary provided to tenants showing rent charged, payments made, and the current balance over a specified period.

Repayment Plan-An agreement between the Council and the tenant to pay back rent arrears in instalments.

Secure Tenancy-A long-term tenancy offering stronger legal rights and protections, including the right to remain in the property as long as the tenancy conditions are met.

Suspended Possession Order-A court order allowing the tenant to stay in their home as long as they comply with agreed payment terms.

Tenancy Agreement-A legal contract between the tenant and the landlord outlining rights and responsibilities.

Tenancy Management Officer-A Council officer responsible for managing tenant issues, including rent arrears, support needs, and tenancy enforcement.

Tracing Agents-External services used to locate former tenants who have left with arrears and whose current address is unknown.

Universal Credit-A government welfare benefit replacing Housing Benefit and other benefits, providing financial support for housing and living costs.

Vulnerable Tenant-A tenant who may need extra support due to mental health, age, disability, or other personal circumstances.

1.0 Purpose, Scope and Objectives

1.1 Purpose

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council aims to set and vary rents across its housing stock in a way that keeps rent both affordable and accessible for new and existing tenants, whilst ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The council also needs to ensure that it has enough income to ensure that its housing services continue to be effective and meet customers' needs.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to the efficient and effective maximisation and recovery of:

- Rental income
- Service charges
- Former tenant arrears

The policy will be implemented by officers of the Council undertaking housing management activities.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that rents and service charges are set in accordance with statutory regulation.
- To protect the Council's income stream, maximising income from all housing-related charges to prevent the HRA from falling into deficit.
- To proactively identify tenants in financial hardship and provide early support and advice.
- To support tenants in hardship with repayment plan options and offer alternatives to legal action.
- To work collaboratively with other council teams and external partners to ensure tenant support.
- To comply with the Pre-Action Court Protocol.
- To protect tenants from contributing to costs they are not responsible for.

2.0 Monitoring and Reporting

- Weekly monitoring of rent arrears by area across the borough.
- Quarterly reporting of arrears and recovery action using the Council's performance management system.
- Annual sharing of performance with elected members and tenants.
- Benchmarking against comparable organisations to inform service improvements.
- Monitoring of tenancy terminations due to eviction for rent arrears.
- Annual review of the standards of services charged to tenants.

3.0 Use of Your Information

3.1 A Customer-Focused Response

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council aims to provide services that consider the personal circumstances of each tenant. To do so:

- Consent may be requested to share information with partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- Personal information, including photographs, will only be shared with third parties when legally required or with tenant consent.
- All information will be held in line with GDPR and retained only as long as necessary.

4.0 Rent Setting

From the 1 April 2020 the Rent Standard permitted rent increases of up to CPI + 1% for a period of five years. All tenants will be notified of any increase in writing, at least four weeks in advance.

4.1 Social Rent

Social rents are set using a national formula based on:

- 70% of national average rent, adjusted by county earnings and bedroom weight, plus
- 30% of national average rent, adjusted by property value.

The Council's stock is primarily let at social rent. Existing properties will not be converted to affordable rent, though new stock may be assessed on a site-by-site basis.

4.2 Affordable Rent

Affordable rent may be charged when:

- The property is covered by a delivery agreement with Homes England;
- HBBC has an agreement with the Secretary of State;
- The property was acquired as affordable rent stock.

Affordable rents are capped at 80% of local market rent, including service charges. The Council will generally cap rents at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, with exceptions for high-value rural areas.

4.3 Setting Affordable Rents

- Rents will not exceed 80% of market rent (inclusive of service charges).
- If formula rent exceeds 80% of market rent, the lower of the two will apply.
- Reference: Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing (Feb 2019, GOV.UK).

4.4 Rent Flexibility

Registered providers (including HBBC) may apply a rent uplift of:

- Up to 5% above formula rent for general needs housing
- Up to 10% for supported housing

4.4.1 Supported Housing

Properties classified as supported housing include:

- Sheltered housing
- Homeless hostels
- Dispersed temporary housing

A 10% rent flexibility uplift is applied to cover the additional costs associated with temporary housing support.

4.4.2 General Needs Stock

A 5% uplift may be applied:

- Upon first let or re-let of a property less than 3 years old (where affordable rent is not applicable)
- When significant improvements or upgrades are completed
- When the property achieves EPC Band B or above

5.0 Service Charges

5.1 General Principles

Service charges cover services, maintenance, improvements, insurance, or management costs—usually related to communal areas in flats.

- Charges will aim to recover full actual costs
- Increases will generally be kept within CPI + 1%
- Clear information will be provided to tenants on how charges are calculated
- For affordable rent properties, service charges are included in the rent

5.2 Calculating Service Charges

The Council will:

- Set reasonable and transparent charges
- Ensure value and quality of services
- Separate service charges from rent in billing
- Consult tenants when new services introduce additional charges
- Base charges, where possible, on actual expenditure from the previous financial year
- Adjust charges downward if actual expenditure is lower

Note: Most service charges are eligible for Housing Benefit.

6.0 Rent Collection

The Tenancy Agreement outlines the responsibility of all council tenants to pay their rent.

Rent is payable weekly in advance and may be paid weekly, monthly, or at another agreed interval.

Rent and service charges are due for every week of the year — there are no rent-free periods.

6.1 Payment Methods

Tenants can pay their rent using a range of methods, including:

- Direct debit
- Online payments
- Standing order
- Telephone payments
- Card reader
- AllPay cards

For tenants in financial difficulty, support may be available via Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.

6.2 Communication

The Council will:

- Inform tenants in writing at least four weeks before any rent or service charge changes.
- Notify tenants in writing if they are in arrears.
- Issue annual rent statements summarising balances and payments over the past 12 months.
- Send text message reminders to prompt payments where needed.
- Contact tenants by telephone to discuss rent accounts.
- Provide online services to view rent balances and make payments.

6.3 Debt Recover

An incremental approach to debt recovery will be taken in line with the Pre-Action Court Protocol.

In persistent cases of non-payment, the Council may:

- Apply to the County Court for possession of the property.
- Seek a Money Judgment Order for recovery of debt.
- Recover any legal costs incurred.

6.4 Tenant Responsibilities

If a tenant falls into arrears:

- They may lose eligibility to join or remain on the housing register.
- They may be ineligible for mutual exchanges.
- They must honour arrangements related to previous debts, including management move arrears, rechargeable repairs, and court costs.
- Before ending a tenancy, tenants must arrange to repay any debts and provide a forwarding address.

6.5 Temporary Accommodation

- Tenants decanted into alternative accommodation remain liable for rent (not exceeding their current monthly rent).
- Individuals under licence agreements will be charged for occupation.

6.6 Approach to Rent Collection

The Council balances support with enforcement and aims to:

- Take early action in every case.
- Provide up-to-date rent account balances.
- Record all actions and communications in the housing management system.
- Communicate clearly in plain English.
- Use multiple contact methods (text, phone, letters, visits).
- Agree on repayment plans based on income and expenditure.
- Offer basic debt advice (e.g. via Citizens Advice).
- Support tenants in claiming housing-related benefits.
- Work closely with the DWP and other partners to prevent legal action.
- Allow long-term repayment options in cases of hardship.

6.7 Joint Tenancies

Joint tenants are jointly and severally liable for all rent and arrears. The Council will:

- Address correspondence to all named tenants.
- Engage with any party representing all joint tenants.
- Provide legal documentation to all tenants named in the agreement.

6.8 Introductory Tenancies

During the introductory period, tenancy breaches (e.g. rent arrears) may result in possession proceedings.

Tenants will be:

- Notified in writing and given opportunities to address issues.
- Able to apply for a review of any decision to end or extend the tenancy.

Note: Under Section 125A of the Housing Act 1996, the introductory period may be extended by six months where necessary.

6.9 Tenancy Ready Approach

All housing applicants placed in temporary accommodation by the Housing Options team will be offered support to prepare for and maintain their new tenancy.

This clause belongs here, as it links support before and during a new tenancy.

6.10 Interviews

All rent-related interviews — whether in-person, at home, or by phone — will be:

- Conducted sensitively and in private.
- Scheduled in advance where possible.

In cases without prior appointments (e.g. at home), tenants will be informed at the time that the purpose of the visit is to discuss rent.

- Rescheduled if inconvenient, and documented accordingly.

If a tenant fails to keep a rescheduled appointment without good cause, the case may proceed to the next rent arrears stage.

All interviews will be documented, with key points confirmed in writing.

6.11 Home Visits

For home visits, Housing officers will:

- Show identification.
- Explain the purpose of the visit.
- Ensure privacy for discussions.
- Encourage the presence of a carer/family member if needed.
- Make referrals if vulnerabilities are identified (e.g. to Social Care or Tenancy Support)

7.0 Person-Centred Approach

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is committed to treating each tenant as an individual. We recognise that personal circumstances, such as mental health challenges, age, learning difficulties, or physical disabilities, may require tailored support from Housing Officers. Where such needs are identified, the Council may adopt a more comprehensive approach, which may include the following:

7.1 Tenants with Vulnerabilities or Mental Health Needs

- Repayment plans will be realistic and affordable, taking into account the tenant's circumstances.
- The tenant will be sent written confirmation of any repayment agreement, including payment dates where appropriate.
- A Notice of Seeking Possession will not be served until a home visit or interview has been considered.
- Where court proceedings are necessary, the Council will request that any County Court Possession Order be suspended on the condition of regular rent payments plus an agreed additional amount.
- If there are concerns about the tenant's vulnerability, Adult Social Care will be notified before applying for a warrant for possession.

7.2 Households with Children Under 16

- Housing Officers will assess whether additional support is needed for the household.
- If necessary, Children's Services may be notified before possession proceedings begin.
- The Council will generally request that Possession Orders are suspended, contingent on an affordable repayment arrangement.
- On a case-by-case basis, Children's Services will be informed when a warrant for possession is requested.

7.3 Tenants Who Cannot Read or Write, or Who Face Language Barriers

- Key decisions and communications will be delivered verbally or with the assistance of a translator, wherever possible.

All actions involving social care or external referrals will be managed through the Tenancy Management Officer/Housing Officer.

8.4 Safeguarding and Referrals

Where appropriate, Housing Officers/Tenancy Management officers may refer a tenant or household member to relevant support services in line with the:

- Adult Safeguarding Policy, or
- Children and Young Persons' Safeguarding Policy

This ensures additional protection and coordinated support for those at risk.

8.0 Tackling Rent Arrears- Our Processes

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council recognises that some tenants are unable to meet their responsibilities regarding rent payment due to financial hardship. As such, we remain committed to supporting our tenants and working with them to help them maintain their tenancy.

However, some tenants are persistently in rent arrears despite support and intervention. For those tenants a more robust response to rent recovery may be required.

9.0 Stages of Rent Recovery

An incremental approach to rent arrears recovery will be implemented by the rents team.

Rent Arrears- Incremental Approach for Secure Tenants

Stage 1 - Reminder

We will notify you that there are arrears on the account. We will try all forms of contact to ensure that you are aware of the debt and to enable you to make a payment plan or pay the debt in full

Stage 2 - Warning

We will continue to attempt to make contact and ensure that you are fully aware of the debt and the consequences if you do not pay the arrears. Support will be offered to you if it is needed.

Stage 3 - Final Warning

We will make a final attempt to contact you before a Notice of Seeking Possession or a Notice of Possession of Introductory Tenancy (NOSP/NOPIT) is served on you. A home visit will be conducted in order to ensure that you have the relevant support in place.

Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP)

You will be issued with a legal document informing you that we will be taking the case to court in 28 days, unless you have agreed a payment plan with the Rents Team.

Legal Action

Court Action

You will be informed that you are being taken to court.

Notification of Court Hearing

You will be notified of a court date that you will need to attend

Court proceedings can commence at any time during the following 12 months after the Notice has been served. Once the 12 months are up, the Notice will lapse, and a new Notice must be served before possession can be sought.

9.1 Preventing Eviction

Eviction remains the last resort for the Council.

In most possession cases, the Rents Team will request a Suspended Possession Order from the Court. This allows the tenant to remain in their home, provided they continue to pay ongoing rent and make regular payments toward their arrears as directed by the Court.

In cases where tenants repeatedly breach the terms of the Court Order or fail to engage with the Rents Team, the Council may seek an Outright Possession Order. In these situations, the Housing Options Team will be informed at the earliest opportunity to offer support and assistance to those facing eviction.

The Council will also signpost tenants to external agencies, such as Citizens Advice, for independent guidance and support.

10.0 Former Tenant Arrears

The Council will seek to recover former tenant arrears for as long as it is economically viable to do so. Where necessary, enforcement actions may be pursued, including:

- Money Judgement Orders
- Attachment of Earnings
- Order to Attend Court for Questioning

Further detail can be found in the Former Tenant Arrears Procedure (see Appendix B).

Responsibility for recovery and monitoring of former tenant debt lies with the Tenancy Management Team.

10.1 Former Tenant Arrears Recovery

Upon termination of a tenancy:

- Tenants will be notified of any outstanding debt.
- The Council may liaise with other internal departments, including Benefits and Council Tax teams, to confirm any outstanding balances.
- Where full repayment is not possible, a repayment arrangement may be offered.

Other recovery actions may include:

- Referring debts to an outsourced collection agency in line with the Council's Corporate Debt Policy.
- Using tracing agents to locate former tenants where contact has been lost, provided this is cost-effective.
- In cases involving a deceased tenant, contact will be made with the next of kin or executor to recover debts from the estate.

Debts may be considered for write-off where:

- Recovery is uneconomical or not possible.
- Financial hardship is demonstrated.
- Such decisions will be reviewed by the ASB and Tenancy Manager or the Head of Housing.

11.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if there is a significant legislative or regulatory change impacting the Council's rent collection or arrears recovery procedures.

12.0 Equality And Diversity Commitment

The Council is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. All officers and partners are expected to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between different groups.

Protected characteristics include:

Age, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Disability (including physical, mental health, and learning disabilities), Race and Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Marital or Civil Partnership Status, Pregnancy and Maternity.

No individual will be discriminated against on the basis of any of these characteristics, or due to personal attributes such as political beliefs or socio-economic background.

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Appendix A

Tenant Rent Workshop Report

Date: 18 June 2025

Location: Atkins Building, Hinckley

Attendees: Tonia, TPAS Senior Consultant. Tenant volunteers: Linda, Jean, Paul, Elizabeth, Pete, Kathy, Graham and Angela.

Organised by: Housing Service, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

Facilitators: Madeline Shellard, Head of Housing and Environmental Services. Kim Fearn, Tenancy Management and Anti-Social Behaviour Manager. Lois Hodgkins, Performance and Service Development Team Leader. Elaine Gernon, Service Development Officer. Victoria Rayment, Housing Support Officer - Tenant Engagement

Purpose of the Workshop

The workshop was convened to engage tenants in shaping the updated Rent Policy. The aim was to ensure the policy is fair, transparent, and supportive, reflecting the real needs and concerns of tenants. TPAS, the tenant engagement experts, supported the session to ensure meaningful participation.

Overview of the Rent Policy Presentation

The presentation covered key aspects of the proposed Rent Policy, including:

- **Purpose of Rent:** Rent supports services for 3,226 homes, including repairs, tenancy support, and older persons' services. It also sustains the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- **Policy Coverage:**
 - How rent is set (aligned with government policy: CPI + 1%)
 - Payment methods and due dates
 - Service charges (actual cost recovery only)
 - Arrears management and support for tenants in hardship
 - Former tenant arrears
 - Monitoring and performance tracking

Breakout Session Feedback Summary

Session 1: What Tenants Value in Rent

- **Repairs:** High priority; tenants want better availability and quality.

- **Security:** Feeling secure in their homes is a key value. Tenants mentioned that they did feel secure as a tenant of HBBC. Stability and predictability was important for financial planning and preparation.
- **Affordability:** Many noted they can afford council rent but not private rent.
- **Transparency:** Clear information on service charges and only charging for actual costs.
- **Communal Services:** Clean and well-maintained shared spaces are important.
-

Session 2: Rent Policy Fairness and Support

- **Concerns:**
 - Sudden, high rent increases (above inflation) were flagged as unacceptable.
 - Weekly rent payments create 52 opportunities for arrears; monthly payments preferred and examples of why 12 months is likely more manageable.
 - Statements showing weekly arrears are daunting. It makes tenants think they are getting into trouble, especially for monthly payers where 4 and 5 week months can cause small fluctuations in balances.
- **Suggestions:**
 - Introduce a handyperson service via the council. This was considered a service that tenants would pay for, it would be a trustworthy service where they do not fear the person coming into their home to carry out work. Types of work suggested were putting up curtain poles, decorating and tackling gardens that may be overwhelming to start on.
 - Clear intervention points for arrears management. The policy should point out what we will do first, second, third etc. It should also point out what the tenant should do, perhaps as a guide.
 - Early, polite reminders and flexible support.
 - Opt-in text notifications for payment reminders and balance checks.
 - Online account access - tenants found this could often be out of date by 2-3 weeks.
 - A comprehensive tenancy handbook.
 - Consideration of the cost-effectiveness and fairness of using collection agencies. Support for using collection agencies where appropriate. Suggest being clear in the policy that we will use them when former

tenants are not engaging with us or have perhaps abandoned their property with no information about forwarding address details.

-

Session 3: Communication and Engagement

- **Communication Preferences:**

- Clear, polite, early notifications about arrears.
- More accessible customer service (current wait times of 20–30 minutes are too long). “We try to get through to the council and either wait too long or get cut off, or the ‘system isn’t working’ so we then get punished for not paying our rent, but we tried”
- Easier access to the rents team, and housing in general, via phone.
- Include information on the work tenants are doing, in the 6monthly tenant newsletters.

- **Support Needs:**

- Early conversations and support before arrears escalate. Making it obvious that we will help and work with tenants.
- Better awareness of available support services to tenants.
- Examples of not engaging early enough and tenants felt let down when we haven’t told them about arrears early enough. Some system issues didn’t help with this process.
- Community champions to oversee shared spaces.

Next Steps

- Feedback from this workshop will be incorporated into the draft Rent Policy.
- The updated policy will be presented to the Council’s Executive Committee for approval.
- A wider tenant consultation will follow to ensure all tenants have the opportunity to contribute.
- Final sign-off is expected by the end of 2025.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all tenants who participated and shared their views. Your input is vital in shaping a rent policy that works for everyone.

Action Items from the Workshop

Action	Description	Status
Rent increase policy	Consider tenant concerns about sudden, above-inflation increases.	
Introduce monthly payment option as default option	Explore offering monthly rent payments to reduce arrears risk as standard.	
Revise arrears communication	Make statements less daunting; clarify weekly vs. monthly amounts.	
Improve repairs service	Address concerns about quality and responsiveness.	
Explore handyperson service	Consider scoping this possibility with tenants, and launching a pilot scheme.	
Enhance customer service access	Reduce wait times and improve access to the rents team. Consider options for housing specific services, as council tenants have different needs to members of the public contacting the council.	
Clarify arrears intervention points	Define when and how support is offered.	
Evaluate use of collection agencies	Assess fairness and cost-effectiveness.	
Launch opt-in text alert system	Provide early, polite reminders for rent payments.	
Develop existing online rent account access	Improve transparency and self-service.	

Action	Description	Status
Create/update tenancy handbook	Provide a clear, accessible guide for tenants.	
Explore community champion role	Investigate feasibility and scope.	

Next Steps

- Incorporate feedback and action items into the draft Rent Policy.
- Present the updated policy to the Council's Executive Committee.
- Conduct wider tenant consultation.
- Final sign-off expected by the end of 2025.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all tenants who participated and shared their insights. Your feedback is instrumental in shaping a rent policy that reflects your needs and priorities.

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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2025 TO DECEMBER 2025

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What is the forward plan?

The forward plan is a list of decisions to be taken by the Executive or Council during the period referred to above. The plan also identifies any key decisions to be taken by the Executive. The Council has a duty to publish notice of key decisions at least 28 days before a decision is taken.

What is a key decision?

The definition of a key decision is contained within the council's constitution and is a decision which:

- Involves expenditure (or reduction of income) of over £50,000 on any particular scheme / project
- Adopts a policy or strategy (which the Executive has the power to adopt)
- Involves the adoption or amendment to the scale of fees and charges

- Is one that affects the whole of the borough and is one of which the residents of Hinckley & Bosworth would normally expect to be notified or consulted;
- Involves a recommendation by the Executive to a partnership organisation which will take the ultimate decision.

Who can make key decisions?

Key decisions can be made by the Executive, the Leader or Executive members, or individual officers acting under delegated powers.

Are only key decisions published on the plan?

Whilst the requirement only covers inclusion of key decisions on the plan, the council has voluntarily decided to list non-key Executive decisions and decisions of Council. Key decisions will be identified on the plan.

What does the plan tell me?

The list gives information about the upcoming decision, whether it will be made in public or private, when the decision is likely to be made, who will make the decision, and who you can contact for further information.

Confidential and exempt information

This list may include items for decision which contain confidential or exempt information, such items will be identified with '(exempt)' next to the report title.

Details of the Decision to be taken (*denotes key decision)	Portfolio/ Service	Decision Maker And Date(s)	Reporting Pathway And Dates(s)	Consultees and Consultation Process	Report Author
Heritage Strategy update	Planning Policy	Executive 24 Sep 2025	Scrutiny Commission 11 Sep 2025		Paul Grundy
Warm Welcome Report 2024-25	Community Safety	Executive 24 Sep 2025			Rachel Burgess
Council Housing Service Rent Policy	Housing	Executive 24 Sep 2025	Scrutiny Commission 11 Sep 2025		Madeline Shellard
Financial Outturn 2024/25	Finance	Council 30 Sep 2025	Finance & Performance Scrutiny 15 Sep 2025		Ashley Wilson
Waste bin and collection policy *	Street Scene Services	Executive 19 Nov 2025			Caroline Roffey
Pesticides review	Street Scene Services	Executive 19 Nov 2025			Caroline Roffey

DETAILS OF COUNCIL DECISION MAKERS

The Executive is made up of the following councillors:

Councillor SL Bray – Leader of the Council and Executive member for external relations, communications, regeneration & town centres, corporate & member services – stuart.bray@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Councillor MC Bools – Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive member for leisure, culture, tourism, arts, equalities, health & well being
Email: mark.bools@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Councillor MB Cartwright – Executive member for climate change, environment & rural affairs
Email: martin.cartwright@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Councillor WJ Crooks – Executive member for planning
Email: bill.crooks@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Councillor L Hodgkins – Executive member for parks, open spaces & neighbourhood services
Email: lynda.hodgkins@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Councillor KWP Lynch – Executive member for finance, ICT & asset management
Email: keith.lynch@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Councillor MT Mullaney – Executive member for housing & community safety
Email: michael.mullaney@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

To find out which officer is responsible for a particular service area, view the [structure chart](#) on the council's website.

Further clarification and representations about any item included in the forward plan can be made to the appropriate Executive Member and senior officer either using the contact details above or in writing to: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Hinckley Hub, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 0FR. Representations should be made before noon on the working day before the date on which the decision is to be taken.

DECISION MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

The views of local people are at the heart of decision making at Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, because major decisions are made by councillors who are elected every four years by local people. Councillors work with the communities that they represent to ensure that local priorities are reflected in the work that the council does.

The Council is made up of 34 councillors representing 16 wards. If you want to know which councillor(s) represents your area or you would like to contact your councillor(s) concerning an issue, you will find contact details on our website (www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact the Council on 01455 238141.

The council is committed to the principle of open government and everyone is welcome to attend meetings (except for confidential business) and to receive details of non-confidential items. Below are further details of the Council's democratic decision making arrangements.

The Council

The Council is responsible for setting the budget and the policy framework. Each year there is an annual meeting, which selects the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (who are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council) and decides the membership of the overview and scrutiny bodies and regulatory committees. There are approximately six ordinary meetings of the Council per year, which make strategic, policy and major budget decisions.

Executive functions

Many day to day policy and operational decisions are taken by the Executive, a group of seven councillors comprising of the Leader, Deputy Leader and five Executive Members each responsible for an area of council policy and activity. The Executive members and their responsibilities are detailed in the previous table.

Overview and scrutiny functions

Decisions of the Executive are subject to scrutiny by the Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny also have a role in policy development. In addition, scrutiny panels are established to undertake ad-hoc reviews. The Scrutiny Commission publishes an annual report and a work programme; this is available on the council's website and from the council on request.

Regulatory functions

In addition the Council has established committees to deal with regulatory issues, these committees are Audit Committee, Ethical Governance & Personnel Committee, Licensing Committee, and Planning Committee.

Further information about the Council's decision making arrangements can be obtained from Democratic Services on 01455 255879.

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