



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission 18 December 2025

Wards affected All wards

Housing Task and Finish Group- Progress on Recommendations

Report of the Director (Community Services)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update Scrutiny on progress in relation to actions set by the Housing Task and Finish Group.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Housing Task and Finish Group was established to examine the increasing pressures on housing within the Borough, including homelessness, the supply of affordable housing, changes in the private rented sector, and the number of empty properties. The Group's remit focused on understanding the causes of housing need across different sectors of the community and identifying practical actions that could support both immediate and longer-term improvements.
- 3.2 During its early meetings, the Group:
- Reviewed trends in homelessness and the impact of reduced availability of private rented accommodation.
 - Examined the extent of housing need among households who do not qualify for the housing register but nevertheless face significant challenges in finding suitable accommodation.

- Considered the number, type, and causes of empty residential properties in the Borough and explored opportunities to bring them back into use.
- Assessed the constraints on delivering affordable housing through Section 106 agreements, noting reductions in viability and delivery.
- Explored the loss of council homes through Right to Buy and the effect on the council's ability to retain housing stock.
- Identified gaps in landlord regulation and discussed opportunities for improved engagement with private landlords.
- Considered the role of the Council's development company and the challenges of applying local connection criteria to homes developed through that route.

3.3 The Group also agreed several actions, including receiving further data from officers regarding private rented sector trends, census information, and empty-homes work, and inviting relevant landlords, letting agents, and officers to contribute to the review. This work informed the final recommendations submitted, which are summarised below with updated progress.

3.4 **Progress on Recommendations**

3.5 **Recommendation 1:**

Information be shared between Revenues and Housing Services, including a list of empty properties, property sizes, and second homes where the owner also lives in the Borough.

Progress:

This information-sharing process has been implemented. Data flows between Revenues and Housing have been strengthened, enabling Housing Services to have more up-to-date information on empty properties and second homes. This supports both monitoring and potential interventions where appropriate.

3.6 **Recommendation 2:**

The Executive be recommended to consider providing additional staffing to investigate empty properties and bring them back into use.

Progress:

At the request of Executive a service budgetary growth bid has been submitted to SLT for initial consideration against other priorities. This is for a grade 6 staffing resource.

3.7 **Recommendation 3:**

The Executive be recommended to consider increasing capacity and expertise within the relevant team to benefit from opportunities to acquire S106 properties.

Progress:

This was considered and it was acknowledged that capacity and expertise is already in place within the planning service. Consideration is given to a number of options around acquisitions, within the funding available, including acquisition of 106 units and gifted units. Capacity and expertise isn't the limiting factor, it is available finance.

3.8 Recommendation 4:

Officers continue dialogue with local landlords and their representatives to explore ways of working together to relieve pressure on homelessness services.

Progress:

Dialogue with local landlords is ongoing with letting agents to identify potential accommodation options, and share information about tenancy support and homelessness prevention. In addition, properties are currently being purchased through the General Fund to help address Temporary Accommodation needs. Plans are progressing to restart landlord forums across South Leicestershire, supported by our new membership with the National Residential Landlords Association to strengthen engagement and best practice. Alongside regional efforts to promote changes under the Renters' Rights Act, we have explored solutions with a local letting agent to ease pressure on homelessness services, though initial options proved unworkable. Engagement with landlords and agents remains ongoing, focusing on improving property standards and preventing retaliatory or illegal evictions to help reduce homelessness.

3.9 Recommendation 5:

Council be recommended to lobby Government in relation to:

- Section 106 delivery (affordable housing, RPs, viability, community infrastructure)
- Right to Buy restrictions to help retain council housing stock
- Funding to assist with bringing empty properties back into use
- Officer capacity and funding to support housing initiatives and the development/acquisition of council housing
- The need for more coordinated housing-related policy across Government departments

Progress:

A letter setting out these issues was sent to Government. A response has been received and is included as an appendix to the report. This fulfils the lobbying action.

Recommendation 6:

A review of actions undertaken following the consideration of the recommendations be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2025/26.

Progress: Addressed by this report.

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

4.1 Open

5. Financial implications [AW]

5.1 A growth bid has been submitted for a grade 6 post to investigate empty properties and bring them back into use. The full year cost of this post is £46,950. This will be added to the growth & savings list going to Council for approval in February.

5.2 This would add a further pressure to the general fund position of £281,700 in 2026/27 and an estimated £292,686 in 2027/28. A total pressure of £574,386 during the MTFD period. According to our council tax system, there were 90 long term (over 1 year) empty properties as at October 2025. Increased premiums have been recommended as the best way to try and bring these back into use. Therefore it is unclear if the additional investment in posts will lead to any further increase in the number of properties brought back into use above and beyond that of the higher premiums recommend.

6. Legal implications [ST]

6.1 None.

7. Corporate Plan implications

7.1 The objectives of this policy align to the following Corporate Plan aims
People- Helping people to stay safe, healthy, active and in employment.

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 these report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks		
Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Limited impact with empty homes work.	Continue monitoring empty property data and trends to ensure any emerging hotspots are quickly identified. Maintain cross departmental information sharing to support early engagement with property owners.	Private Sector Housing Lead
Insufficient housing resources to delivery housing initiatives- funding restraints.	Prioritise housing initiatives that offer the highest impact for available resources.	Director of Community Services
Reliance on Government policy decisions.	Continue to Lobby through regional and national networks.	Members of group/Executive Lead for Housing

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 This workstream has considered both equality and rural issues as part of all the decisions taken.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 The Council strives to consider climate impact of all decisions it takes in accordance with the Council's strategy and Government Policy and Guidance.

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
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Background papers: None

Contact officer: Maddy Shellard/Valerie Bunting

Executive member: Cllr M Mullaney