

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2026

Present:-

Cllr. Nick Brown (Chair)

Cllr. Luke Cousin

Cllr. Antony Moseley

Cllr. Jane Wolfe

Substitutes:-

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam (In place of Cllr. Tracey Shepherd)

Officers present:-

Louisa Horton	- Executive Director - Communities
Caroline Harbour	- Assistant Director - Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services
Rebecca Holcroft	- Community Services Manager
Ian Jones	- Housing Services Manager
Charlie Baylis	- Homelessness Team Leader
Remy Slaney	- Tenancy Relations Officer
Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Avisa Birchenough	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Nicole Evans	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Invitees:-

Councillor Susan Findlay, Homelessness, Housing & Community Safety Portfolio Holder

Apologies:-

Cllr. Neil Wright, Cllr. Royston Bayliss, Cllr. Lee Breckon JP, Cllr. Roy Denney, Cllr. Janet Forey, Cllr. Tracey Shepherd, Cllr. Dillan Shikotra, Cllr. Matt Tomeo and Cllr. Maggie Wright

35. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam - Item 3 – Renters’ Rights Act

Nature of Interest - Non-registerable interest

Extent of Interest - Cllr Aslam is a landlord.

Cllr. Antony Moseley - Item 3 – Renters’ Rights Act

Nature of Interest - Non-registerable interest

Extent of Interest - Cllr Moseley is a landlord.

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026 as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

37. RENTER'S RIGHTS ACT

The Chair, Cllr. Nick Brown welcomed Officers and the portfolio holder, Cllr. Susan Findlay to the meeting.

Officers provided an overview of the Renters' Rights Act 2025, its impact on the Council, local landlords, tenants and how it will be implemented.

When discussing the impacts on the Council, the following key points were made:

- Increased casework and investigations
- Enforce compliance through civil penalties
- Respond to complaints including at tribunal level
- Gather and report statutory data returns (which are increasing from 25 fields to 57)
- Administer the national Private Rented Sector (PRS) database locally
- Training needs for officers
- Changes to business systems and policy reviews

Impacts on landlords are:

- More formal tenancy and documentation requirements
- Clear reasons for gaining possession
- Consistent lettings and rent rise practice across the sector
- Mandatory registration on national database
- Exposure to civil penalties
- Changes to possession and letting practices

Impacts on tenants are:

- Greater security of tenure
- Flexibility to give notice at any time
- Ability to request pets
- Challenge affordability and rent rises above market value
- Fair lettings practices
- Greater confidence in reporting housing conditions and raising concerns about poor landlord or property practice.

Members were updated on next steps that officers need to take to ensure the new regulations are a success, including updating systems, identifying private rented properties of which there is over 5,400 in the District. Members considered the finance model and were informed that it would be partly self-funded, and through the PRS database. Civil penalties were not intended to be the main funding model.

Members considered the risks which included:

- Initial uncertainty and misunderstanding in the landlord community
- High case volumes (though this is not evident yet)
- Debt recovery challenges

It was noted positively that Blaby District did not have the same issues with private sector landlords as larger cities did. Members were informed of the Landlord Forum being hosted by the Council on 23 June to initiate early discussions with local landlords.

Scrutiny Members were keen to consider performance data and look forward to being kept updated on when data is provided.

Members questioned officers on whether they had seen an increase of evictions before the Act came into force. Officers positively responded that they had seen no such increase, instead there were more procedural queries and queries on how to end a tenancy.

Scrutiny were informed of a cabinet report being prepared for consideration on 30 June, which would request extra resource and describe the team structure.

The Chair, Cllr. Nick Brown thanked the Officers for providing a comprehensive overview of the new reforms.

DECISIONS

1. That Scrutiny be provided with an update in 12 months on the implications of the Act and learning from officers.
2. That performance measures be added to the Corporate Action Plan and the Council's performance monitoring system, to allow Scrutiny to consider them.
3. That Scrutiny be provided with further information on the statutory returns once they have been completed.

Reasons:

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 is a major reform with significant implications for the Council, landlords and tenants, and the local housing supply and affordability. Scrutiny will continue to monitor the implementation and outcomes as the scheme is rolled out.

38. **HOMELESSNESS BRIEFING**

The Chair, Cllr. Nick Brown welcomed officers to the meeting, who provided an overview as follows:

- An overview of the national homelessness strategy, which includes:
 1. Long term sustainable change to address the root causes of homelessness
 2. Immediate action to end the use of B&Bs for families and improve temporary accommodation
 3. Transformed accountability – which includes support for councils to have stronger oversight and deliver better outcomes
 4. Shift from crisis to prevention
 5. Halving the number of people experiencing long term rough sleeping
- Members considered the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 key priorities:
 1. Prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation
 2. Increase the supply of affordable housing for both General Needs Households and Vulnerable Groups
 3. Continue to develop partnership work with existing stakeholders and seek to form new innovative partnerships.
 4. Supporting vulnerable households to be independent and self-reliant.

Members considered the initiatives to reduce homelessness costs, which included reducing the use of nightly paid temporary accommodation, increasing the use of council owned/leased accommodation and strengthening prevention and early intervention.

Scrutiny considered the homelessness team resource, where the average caseload was 46 for each case officer, the identified trigger was 40. The households in and cost of temporary accommodation has increased significantly. The pressure on teams had also increased.

Members considered the current owned, leased and temporary accommodation. The current stock includes:

- 12 flats in Glen Parva and 3x2 bed homes in Littlethorpe
- 1x3 bed house, 2x2 bed flat, 1x1 bed flat leased from East Midlands Homes
- 12 units recently leased for singles in Enderby
- Currently in advanced stages to purchase a further 41 units.

The officers provided an overview of current initiatives which included:

- Tenancy Sustainment Officer – providing assistance to households to retain tenancies (through budgeting, applying for welfare benefits, charitable donations, liaison with landlords, and new and existing

- tenants)
- Supported provision for single households with complex needs – e.g. drug/alcohol, mental health needs.
- Pre-tenancy workshops for households in temporary accommodation
- Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) – Countywide Housing First Scheme with the Blaby District as the lead authority.
- Rough Sleepers Initiative – Countywide initiative assisting rough sleepers with support and accommodation.

Due to time constraints of the meeting, the Chair, Cllr. Nick Brown deferred the remaining discussion of the item. The meeting had yet to consider financial implications of homelessness and required more time to do so. It was agreed that the Commissioners would discuss a suitable date at their next meeting.

Members placed on record their thanks to the Housing Services Manager for his dedicated service and valuable contribution to the Council over many years. They acknowledged his commitment to supporting residents and improving housing services and extended their best wishes to him for a long and happy retirement when he leaves the Council in August.

DECISION

That the remaining consideration of the item be deferred to a date to be determined by the Scrutiny Commissioners.

Reason:

To allow the Commissioners to examine the financial costs of homelessness in detail.

39. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair, Cllr Nick Brown deferred the Work Programme item to the next meeting to allow Scrutiny Commissioners to meet and finalise the work topics.

40. CONSIDERATION OF FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

No items were raised for further information or examination.

41. FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY ARISING FROM MEETING

There were no further actions arising from the meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.15 P.M.