

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	18 July 2012
Subject:	Scrutiny review report – private rented sector housing in Harrow
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director Partnership Development and Performance
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Community, Health and Well-being – Councillors Nana Asante and Chris Mote
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	<i>Review group report</i>

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the findings of the review of private rented sector housing in Harrow.

Recommendations:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Agree the report of the review group;
2. Agree that the report be referred to Cabinet on 13 September 2012;
3. Agree that the findings of the private tenant survey be appended to the review report prior to its submission to Cabinet;
4. Accept Recommendation K of the review, made to the Committee, which recommends that the Standing Review of the Budget consider the policy objectives of the Private Sector Strategy as part of its work in reviewing the council's use of capital.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

The attached report outlines the findings of the review of private rented sector housing in Harrow.

This review originally came to the attention of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in summer 2011. The Divisional Director, Housing Services, was keen for scrutiny to consider ways in which the council might work in partnership with the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in future, in the context of the growth of the sector in providing housing for residents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to commission a piece of work to examine quality and standards in the PRS and how these might be improved. The review has proved to be particularly timely as the council is in the process of developing a Private Sector Strategy, for consideration by Cabinet in October 2012. The review group hopes that the report goes some way to helping to inform and shape the emergent policy objectives.

Recommendations for the committee

The Committee is requested to agree the report of the review group and to refer the report to Cabinet in September 2012.

At the time of preparing the report, the results of review group's survey of private tenants were not complete. The review group proposes that these results be appended to the review group's report prior to submission to Cabinet. We would like to offer this information to the housing division as an additional source of evidence to help inform strategy development.

In undertaking this review, the group has been struck by the far-reaching scope of the policy area. Our work has touched on a range of related policy areas including strategy for capital. As such, the review group recommends that the Budget Review consider the policy objectives of the Private Sector Strategy as part of its work in reviewing the council's use of capital.

Financial Implications

There are none specific to agreeing the report.

Performance Issues

There are none specific to agreeing the report.

Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental impacts associated with agreeing this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none specific to agreeing the report.

Corporate Priorities

- United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Heather Smith, Scrutiny Officer, 020 8420 9203,
heather.smith@harrow.gov.uk.

Background Papers:

Details are included within the attached report.