

Cabinet's Response to Scrutiny Review – Private Rented Sector

Recommendation	Cabinet Decision <i>(Accepted/ Rejected/ Deferred)</i>	Cabinet Response <i>(detailing proposed action if accepted, rationale for rejection, and why and when issue will be reconsidered if deferred)</i>	Officer Responsible	Action by (Date)
1. The production of a long term sustainable development and action plan to improve the physical fabric of the Private Rental Sector in the borough, in line with neighbourhood based regeneration initiatives, local priorities and reflecting changes in Government Policy.	Accepted	Draft action plan has been produced and will be used as a reporting framework to identify improvements to physical fabric and management standards in the private rented sector. A working group consisting of officers from Strategic Housing & Investment Service (SHIS), Community Protection Unit (CPU) and Key Choices will be responsible for progressing the action plan. An initial meeting will be held on 16 th March 2012.	Paul Benson	31 st March 2012
2. Ensure that sufficient resources are aligned to the delivery of the action plan and that working practices across relevant teams are co-ordinated to support it.	Deferred	Carry out cost benefit analysis for those initiatives previously funded externally to identify whether it is appropriate to continue to provide the schemes or not.	Paul Benson	30 th June 2012
3. Alongside the Action Plan, the council should seek to engage landlords, tenants and councillors in its work	Accepted	Continue to produce landlord newsletter, subject to identifying available resources. Continue to support through time offered, Rotherham & District Residential Landlords Association and the National Landlords Association who will offer Forum's to local landlords. Refresh PRS web pages to make them more up to date, appropriate and robust. Produce up to date guidance leaflets advising tenants of their responsibilities, subject to identifying available resources. Inform Councillors of PRS related activity being undertaken in their wards.	Paul Benson	Ongoing Ongoing 30 th June 2012 31 st August 2012 Ongoing

<p>4. There should be a re-launch of the Private Landlord Accreditation scheme built on the best of the models developed by other authorities</p>	<p>Deferred</p>	<p>Analysis required on cost benefits of PRS Landlord Accreditation Scheme and availability of resources, prior to decision to progress. A report will be tabled at Overview & Management Scrutiny Board following the outcome of the cost benefit analysis.</p>	<p>Paul Benson Chris Stone</p>	<p>30th June 2012</p>
<p>5. That the Council takes robust enforcement action against those landlords (or tenants) who persistently disregard their responsibilities</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Enforcement staff are currently undertaking an intensive training programme to improve their skills. Existing enforcement resources will be re-diverted towards the 'Deprived Neighbourhoods' initiative. Following a risk based assessment process, additional Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) have been identified than previously recorded. A framework for inspecting those properties with the highest risk will be established and inspections carried out.</p>	<p>Chris Stone</p>	<p>Ongoing 30th June 2012</p>
<p>6. Consideration should be given to the Council's use of its powers to bring properties back into use</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Following a risk based assessment process, problematic empty properties have been identified and consideration will be given towards minimising their impact on the neighbourhood using regulatory powers such as Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) and an Enforced Sales Procedure (ESP). 18 problematic empty properties will be brought back into use, a minimum of six per year, over three years. Enforcement action will be carried out against the owner if they disregard any reasonable offers made to assist in bringing the property back into use.</p>	<p>Chris Stone Paul Benson</p>	<p>30th June 2012 31st March 2015</p>
<p>7. Support is given to local agencies such as RoBond to ensure that vulnerable tenants have access to affordable bond guarantees, assistance and advice</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Continue to support (via negotiated Service Level Agreements, where appropriate);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a paper bond guarantee scheme with monies made available via the 'Homelessness Prevention Fund' to enable tenants facing homelessness access to private rented accommodation • for the next two years a tenancy support scheme offered by Action Housing & Support and funded via a Supporting People grant • utilising recycled loan payments and regional housing board 'carry over' to support the issuing of loans, processed by Laser Credit Union, to enable tenants facing homelessness to remain living in their current private rented property or access alternative private rented 	<p>Sandra Tolley Claire Smith Sandra Tolley</p>	<p>31st March 2013 31st March 2014 31st May 2012</p>

		accommodation. A cost benefit analysis will be undertaken on the viability of the existing rent in advance scheme to identify whether it is appropriate to continue promoting the scheme.		
8. Designating one of the Advisers to the Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods to a watching brief on the role of the private rented sector in Rotherham	Accepted	Establish a communication framework to enable the Adviser to undertake a watching brief on the role of the private rented sector in Rotherham.	Paul Benson	31 st March 2012