

LEEDS PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING STRATEGY 2009 – 2012: ACTION PLAN

	Action	Agency	Lead	Timescale	Progress update
A. PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR TO MEET NEEDS AND PROVIDE CHOICE					
A1	Development and implementation of a private rented housing strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy signed off - Action plan developed - Monitoring of implementation of strategy 	LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group and re'new	AB AB/ HJ AB	July 2009 June 2009 Quarterly	
A2	Ensuring maintenance of a good relationship between landlord, tenant and community representatives and the Council,	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group		Ongoing	
A3	Ensuring various Departments work closely together to co-ordinate actions/decisions in relation to the private rented sector.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group		Ongoing	
A4	Highlighting the key place of private rented housing in the revised Leeds Housing Strategy and within major regeneration and renaissance programmes	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	RM	Summer 2009	
A5	Developing and expanded partnerships with private landlords to provide further housing options for households who are homeless or with other priority needs or general needs applicants on the waiting list unable to access social housing	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods LRPF	MB / LS / RM / BE	Ongoing	Regular information provided to LLAS members and access to advertising in Leeds Homes. Leeds Housing options to provide targets and numbers of tenancies arranged and new LLAS members and targets. Email alerts issued to all LLAS members at relevant request of colleagues and other partners.

A6	Ensuring that routes into private rented housing are prominent within the Housing Solutions approach being developed by Leeds City Council in particular developing intermediate housing options either through private landlords or housing associations	LCC Housing Options Service LRPF re'new	BE / RM	Ongoing	
A7	Engaging landlords in the implementation of interventions outlined in the Back to Back Housing Strategy and in group repair or other physical and environmental improvement programmes	LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group re'new			
A8	Identifying future investment options for council housing using "Redundant PRS" stock including use of Management Orders, PRS leasing scheme and use of long term empty properties in PRS for ALMO stock	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB/ RM	Autumn 09	Finalise procedures/policy for Management Orders and EDMOs. Discuss and explore possibility of PRS Leasing scheme with colleagues in Housing Options.
A9	Consider and respond to the findings of the Government's review of the Use Classes Order	LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group	JC / LP	July 2009	

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B. Ensuring good standards of housing and management					
B1	Leeds City Council to work with landlords representatives to explore the value and feasibility of self-accreditation by landlords.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods LRPF	ARB / MB / LS	Ongoing	Preliminary meetings held with landlord representatives – further details to be provided by landlord groups.
B2	Continuing to enhance and spread Landlord Accreditation to improve standards in the private rented sector through : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage non-accredited landlords into accreditation while tackling landlords appropriately who are operating 'wilfully' outside the law. Increasing resources to accreditation through promoting more resources to the LLAS to complement those input by Unipol; Establishing routine and enhanced inspection levels increasing the spread of Landlord Accreditation in areas outside of Inner North West Leeds. 	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods LRPF UNIPOL	MB / LS	Ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership continues to grow – currently 447 landlords covering 18,904 bedspaces (15.06.09). Continue to promote LLAS and hold quarterly forums and newsletters. Working with colleagues in Housing Options to attract landlords in targeted areas of the city outside of North West Leeds. Property Improvement Plans and compliance inspections undertaken. Target to increase bedspace coverage in identified postcodes of at least 10% per annum.
B3	Seeking to build on developing initiatives to bring managing agents under the umbrella of accreditation and finding resources for such initiatives	LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group UNIPOL LRPF	MB / LS	Ongoing	Initial discussions held with Managing Agent groups in 2008 – further discussions planned regarding details and resource implications.
B4	Increasing the coverage of HMO licensing outside Inner North West Leeds by identifying and licensing relevant properties in other areas of the city.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB / DT	Ongoing	Further proactive projects planned for 2009/10 to target specific areas alongside ongoing awareness campaigns. Ongoing partnership work with the landlord groups to maintain profile of HMO requirements.

B5	Implementing and evaluating the introduction of Selective Licensing in the target area	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB / LS	October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare all policy, procedures and guidance to implement scheme from 1/10/09. - Issue 300+ selective licenses - Ensure staff are recruited and trained. - Develop effective monitoring criteria in accordance with CLG requirements and landlord consultation.
B6	Keep under review all the regulatory tools the Housing Act 2004 makes available (including Additional Licensing) and deploy as appropriate.	LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group	ARB / MB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing enforcement activity in line with enforcement protocol. - Regular meetings with landlord consultative group - Comprehensive co-ordinated enforcement action agreed with other enforcement agencies. - Regular review of other discretionary licensing powers as appropriate.
B7	Keep under review all opportunities under RRO to provide financial support for landlords to bring about property improvements, linked to collaborative working arrangements, nomination rights or other partnership initiatives.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	ARB / MI	Ongoing	
B8	Increasing the supply of private homes that meet the decency standard through reviewing LLAS to include decency and the use of property improvement plans under LLAS; publicising what is required and support available, working with landlords co-operatively to enable them to use the EPC's they have to obtain for their rental portfolios to address excess cold.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB / LS	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review LLAS conditions to consider moving towards the decency standard - Increase number of property inspections and use of Property Improvement Plans to improve standards - Contribute towards target of 600 properties made decent in 2009/10. - Liaison and close working with Fuelsavers to improve thermal efficiency.

B9	Ensuring enforcement of HHSRS and using targeted and proactive enforcement (utilising LHCS info) and ‘worst case first enforcement ‘.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with agreed enforcement protocol - Removal of at least 150 category 1 hazards and 400 combined hazards per annum. - Undertake at least 350 HMO compliance inspections per annum. - Explore ways of using LHCS information to target enforcement activity against properties in worst condition and housing vulnerable tenants. - Enforcement in respect of single occupied and non licensable HMO's in addition to Licensable HMO's. - Close working with Housing Options Service to identify properties in poor condition. - Promote LLAS landlords for all Council contacts.
B10	Seeking means of bringing empty private rented housing into use	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	E&N / JH		Progress initiatives within the Empty Property Strategy, with a particular focus on PRS
B11	Tackling issues of poor repair in private rented back to backs while seeking to re-establish private rented back to backs as good quality ‘starter housing’	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	ARB / MB/ MI	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspection regime and enforcement activity to take action against category 1 & 2 hazards as necessary.
B12	Seeking to improve the standard of accommodation offered to homeless households and asylum seekers through a pre-inspection regime to monitor contracts and standards and closer working with all Council departments	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods LCC Asylum Seekers team	RM / MB	Summer 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership working between HEAS and Housing options staff to ensure good quality of inspections. - Referral system developed to ensure poor properties identified are subject to appropriate enforcement.

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C. Effective advice, information and support:					
C1	Continuing and maintaining constructive partnership working between Leeds City Council and all professional landlord organisations that operate within Leeds.	LHP / Private Rented Sector Strategic Working Group	ARB / MB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue PRS Strategic Working Group. - Continue consultation with landlord groups via the landlord consultative group. - LCC continued membership of the RLA and NLA organisations.
C2	Providing advice and assistance to landlords currently experiencing financial difficulties especially small buy-to-let investors	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	LCC		
C3	Providing support and advice to landlords and tenants to promote and ensure compliance with landlord and tenant law	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	RM / MB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective partnership working between Housing Regulation and Housing Options Service. - Ensure adequate number of trained staff within Housing Option Service to provide appropriate advice.
C4	Encouraging landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their housing stock.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB / LS / AJ	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of advice and information on thermal efficiency measures. - Referral for appropriate grant aid where possible
C5	Helping landlords to contribute to improving and developing disadvantaged neighbourhoods within LLAS service plan postcode targets	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB / LS	Ongoing	- Particular work relating to the Selective Licensing area in Cross Green / East End Park.
C6	Supporting local tenant referencing and considering the potential to support a tenant referencing scheme across West Yorkshire and how to develop collective action on anti-social behaviour and joint working with a range of partners and agencies	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	LS	Ongoing	- Continue to support research being undertaken by West Yorks Housing Partnership (WYHP) regarding resourcing a regional tenant referencing scheme.
C 7	Providing incentives to landlords to achieve decency in PRS including grants/ loans and high profile landlord awards scheme e.g. Green Landlord Award	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	ARB / MB / LS		

C8	Improving the long-term sustainability of private rented housing stock through supporting landlord and tenants via an enhanced Leeds City Council tenancy relation service	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	BE		
C9	Continuing to engage with Central Government on key concerns arising from the Local Housing Allowance including links to stock condition, direct payments to landlords, LHA rates and definitions of vulnerability. LCC to provide advice and support to all private sector tenants who request it, to enable them to access good quality accommodation at a reasonable rent, and to manage their tenancies (including payment of rent) in a responsible manner	Leeds Revenues and Benefits Service. LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	JMcM BE / RM		
C10	Providing advice/information that is accessible to tenants particularly those vulnerable or hard to reach about disrepair and other issues of health and well being;	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	MB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective promotion of HRT services - Distribution of PRS advisory leaflets - Explore ways of improving information for tenants and landlords on the LCC website.
C11	Developing a Central Landlord Service (One Stop Shop),	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods			
C12	Seek to actively develop and resource a Tenant Referencing Scheme with associated tenancy training for those who do not qualify due to past behaviour etc and would otherwise remain impossible to re-house.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	ARB / LS	September 2009	- Initial pilot scheme undertaken regarding pre tenancy training – report due July 09 – to consider and support if appropriate and resources available.
C13	Provision of deposit guarantees for landlords working collaboratively with LCC on a range of initiatives	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods			
C14	Providing advice and assistance to landlords on energy saving measures, including financing measures, design issues and technical advice.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods			

C15	Explore opportunities for accredited landlord incentives, such as providing car parking permits for landlords/tradesmen in residential areas, subject to Residential Parking Zones, or waste disposal charges exemptions	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods	ARB / LS	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing liaison between Departments and Council members to increase concession rights for LLAS members. - Parking permits scheme already produced SMT support still required.
C17	Supporting and maintaining helplines for residents in areas with a large private rented sector	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods			
C18	Developing outreach and support to BME households and vulnerable people living in private rented housing	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods Leeds Tenants Federation Leeds Voice	MB	Ongoing	A series of 3 advisory leaflets developed and to be widely circulated.
C19	Exploring ways of engaging private tenants in local tenant and resident associations and mechanisms, to facilitate customer feedback on perception, experience, and suggestions for improvement in PRS accommodation and local service delivery, from a tenant's perspective.	LCC Environment & Neighbourhoods Leeds Tenants Federation Leeds Voice	MB / LS / BE	December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued partnership working with WYHP to consider a regional tenant referencing scheme – subject to suitable financial resources being identified.