

**Report of Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**Report to Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 25 February 2014**

**Subject: Leeds City Council's response to House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee investigation – The Private Rented Sector - First Report of Session 2013-14**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee undertook an investigation into the Private Rented Sector (PRS). It requested interested parties provide written evidence and took oral evidence from a number of local authorities, tenant associations, interest groups and landlord associations.
2. The Council provided a written response to the initial request for evidence by the Committee in January 2013. Following on from our written response, we were invited to hold a session of the Committee in Leeds. On the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013 the Committee visited the city. As part of that visit they meet with local politicians, tenants and landlords and visited the Cross Green area of the city. In the afternoon they held a session of the Committee in the Town Hall at which the Council gave evidence and was subject to questioning on its approaches to the private rented sector.
3. In July 2013 the Committee produced its report and made a number of recommendations and findings based on the evidence it received. These have been grouped into 6 main headings, namely:
  - Simplifying regulation
  - Raising awareness, maturing the market
  - Raising standards of property and management
  - Letting Agents
  - Tenancies and rents

- Increasing supply
4. Appendix two of this report provides the Council's response to the House of Commons Committee's findings.

## **Recommendations**

5. Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board is requested to note the Council's response to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee's report "The Private Rented Sector First Report of Session 2013-14" published on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

### **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board on the Council's response to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee's report "The Private Rented Sector First report of Sessions 2013-14, published on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

### **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee conducted an investigation into the PRS. It invited interested parties to provide written evidence by January 2013. The Council provided a written response to the Committee and this is attached at Appendix one. Following the submission of our written evidence, the Council was invited to hold a session of the Committee. The Committee visited the city on the 13<sup>th</sup> May and held a session to take oral evidence from stakeholders, including, Head of Housing Partnerships at the Council.

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 On the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 the House of Commons Committee published its findings. These covered a range of issues affecting the sector in 6 main areas.
- 3.2 The areas covered included, simplifying existing legislation, improving awareness, standards, managing agents', a consideration of tenancy arrangements to increase security affordability and the attractiveness of the sector, and increasing the overall supply of homes.
- 3.3 The overall report was comprehensive and covers a wide range of issues which affect the sector as a whole. CLG is now undertaking consultation with stakeholders on a number of the recommendations.
- 3.4 The Council has been requested to be part of the consultation process and officers have already attended a number of meetings. It is anticipated that the consultation process will be on-going during 2014.

### **4 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The Council has been involved in providing evidence to the House of Commons Committee, including hosting a visit session on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration (EDCI)**

4.2.1 This report is a response to the findings of the House of Commons Committee and not services provided by the Council. All services provided by Private Sector Housing Service are subject to separate EDCI reports.

## **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The report supports the Council's policies and processes in relation to the private rented sector.

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 Officers within Housing partnerships have been involved in the initial discussions with DCLG regarding a number of recommendations.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no legal implications to the Council at this stage.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The Council will continue to monitor the review and any likely changes in the legislation which may be introduced.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee have made a number of recommendations in their report. These are now being considered by the Government in a number of forums. Depending upon the review by CLG, there may be legislative changes which affect how the Council deals with the PRS.

5.2 CLG has invited the Council to take part in considering a number of the recommendations made by the Committee. Officers will continue to engage with the process to try to ensure any changes are workable and will have a positive effect on driving up standards within the sector as a whole.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board is requested to The Council's response to the findings made by the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee's report – The Private Rented Sector First Report of Sessions 2013-14 July 2013.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.