

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Report of the scrutiny panel on Private Sector Housing</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>23.03.15</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Assistant Chief Executive</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Karen Amsden</b>	<b>Tel: 29-1084</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that it proved impossible to publish this report on time because the panel Chair had not approved the final draft.

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 On 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 the OSC agreed to establish a scrutiny panel to look at private sector housing in Brighton & Hove. The Panel members were Professor Darren Smith, Professor of Geography, Loughborough University (Chair), Councillor Chaun Wilson and Councillor Phélim MacCafferty.
- 1.2 The scrutiny panel report is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That OSC endorse the scrutiny panel report on the private rented sector (**Appendix 1**) and refer it on for consideration by the appropriate policy committee(s).

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In 2011 a scrutiny panel had looked into the issue of lettings agents in the city. It made six recommendations for the council. In 2014 a request was received from the Citizen's Advice Bureau to look again at this issue using a scrutiny panel, because of the '*...worrying increase in the number of people seeking advice from CAB*<sup>1</sup>' in relation to the private rented sector and letting agents.
- 3.2 This request to set up a Panel was approved at the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The panel set their terms of reference as

<sup>1</sup> [http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000726/M00005368/AI00042816/\\$LettingAgentsPrivateRentalsFINAL.docx.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000726/M00005368/AI00042816/$LettingAgentsPrivateRentalsFINAL.docx.pdf)

To:

- Understand the current private sector housing market in the city and how it has changed since 2011;
- Consider the best ways of managing private sector housing and improving standards in this sector;
- Determine whether the relevant actions identified for private rented housing in the Draft Housing Strategy 2015 tie up to the evidence gathered by the panel. Where possible the panel will suggest how these actions could be practically implemented.

3.3 The Panel held three public evidence gathering sessions in January 2015 and also attended the Strategic Housing Partnership on 21<sup>st</sup> January to seek their views and input. The minutes from the evidence gathering sessions are appended to the scrutiny panel report. The Panel also received verbal and written evidence submitted in confidence to them about the experiences of a number of residents living in the private rented sector.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 The OSC has the option to decline to endorse the scrutiny panel report.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

5.1 The panel members spoke to a wide range of partners and stakeholders; please see the attached panel report for full details.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 In line with normal procedure, we are asking that the OSC endorses this report and refers it on to the appropriate BHCC Policy Committee(s) for consideration.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the report of this scrutiny panel.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Name*

*Date: dd/mm/yy*

##### Legal Implications:

7.2 Once OSC has agreed its recommendation based on the work of the scrutiny panel, it must prepare a formal report and submit it to the council's Chief Executive for consideration at the relevant decision-making body.

- 7.3 If OSC cannot agree on one single final report, up to one minority report may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the relevant policy committee with the majority report.

*Lawyer Consulted:*                      *Name*    *Date: dd/mm/yy*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 An equalities impact assessment was conducted as part of the process of scoping the panel. No significant implications were identified.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There were no direct implications, but sustainability matters are dealt with in the body of the scrutiny report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None identified

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. The report of the Private Sector Housing Scrutiny Panel

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

1. Scrutiny report on Lettings Agents, 2011

