

Housing Select Committee			
Title	Select Committee work programme		
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item	8
Class	Part 1 (open)	11 November 2014	

1. Purpose

To advise Members of the proposed work programme for the municipal year 2014/15, and to decide on the agenda items for the next meeting.

2. Summary

2.1 At the beginning of the new administration, each select committee drew up a draft work programme for submission to the Business Panel for consideration.

2.2 The Business Panel considered the proposed work programmes of each of the select committees on 29 July 2014 and agreed a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme. However, the work programme can be reviewed at each Select Committee meeting so that Members are able to include urgent, high priority items and remove items that are no longer a priority.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the work plan attached at **Appendix B** and discuss any issues arising from the programme;
- specify the information and analysis required in the report for each item on the agenda for the next meeting, based on desired outcomes, so that officers are clear on what they need to provide;
- review all forthcoming key decisions, attached at **Appendix C**, and consider any items for further scrutiny.

4. The work programme

4.1 The work programme for 2014/15 was agreed at the Committee's meeting on 22 July 2014.

4.2 The Committee is asked to consider if any urgent issues have arisen that require scrutiny and if any existing items are no longer a priority and can be removed from the work programme. Before adding additional items, each item should be considered against agreed criteria. The flow chart attached at **Appendix A** may help Members decide if proposed additional items should be added to the work programme. The Committee's work programme needs to be achievable in terms of the amount of meeting time available. If the committee agrees to add additional item(s) because they are urgent and high priority, Members will need to consider

which medium/low priority item(s) should be removed in order to create sufficient capacity for the new item(s).

5. The next meeting

5.1 The following reports are scheduled for the meeting on 17 December 2014:

Agenda item	Review type	Link to Corporate Priority	Priority
Private rented sector update: licensing	Standard review	Decent homes for all	Medium
Proposed rent and service charge increases	Standard item	Decent homes for all	High
Communal heating review: evidence session	In-depth review	Decent homes for all	High

5.2 The Committee is asked to specify the information and analysis it would like to see in the reports for these items, based on the outcomes the Committee would like to achieve, so that officers are clear on what they need to provide for the next meeting.

6. Private rented sector update: licensing

6.1 The Committee has resolved to carry out a single meeting review into private sector licensing in Lewisham. At its meeting on 3 February 2014, the Committee received a report from officers about developments in Lewisham's private rented sector. The Committee also heard from a representative of Newham Council, who provided information about the set up and management of Newham's five year mandatory licensing scheme. The reports and minutes for this meeting can be accessed online here: <http://tinyurl.com/kkejwkt>

6.2 At the meeting in February, the Committee received a report about the work being carried out in Lewisham to deal with rogue landlords. Members heard that there were around 50 rogue landlords operating in Lewisham and that the approach being taken by the Council and its partners was to focus enforcement activity on the worst landlords. The update from officers provided additional information on:

- Lewisham's private sector housing agency;
- Work carried out by Lewisham's environmental health team;
- Plans for rogue landlord funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government;
- The delivery of the London Rental Standard and London Landlord Accreditation Scheme;
- Investment in the private rented sector and;
- Work taking place in other boroughs.

6.3 The Committee also heard from a representative of the London Borough of Newham, who provided an overview of Newham's mandatory private rented sector licensing scheme. The Committee heard that Newham had trialled its approach to licensing and as a result – it had set up a five year mandatory licensing scheme to

tackle anti-social behaviour. The licensing scheme in Newham was brought about due to Newham's specific problems with private rented sector housing, including:

- Significant levels of poor tenancy and property management;
- Demonstrable high levels of nuisance, anti-social behaviour and dangerous housing conditions;
- Increasing numbers of unlawfully converted properties – houses in multiple occupation, flats and beds in sheds;
- Increasing criminal and fraudulent activity of landlords.

6.4 The Committee also heard about the evidence base required to demonstrate the need for the licensing scheme.

6.5 At its meeting on 17 December, the Committee is due to receive a report from officers about developments in the private rented sector and issues relating to the development of PRS licensing in Lewisham. The update is due to report on:

- The Council's strategic objectives;
- Available data on the private rented sector in Lewisham;
- The requirement to gather data and develop a business case for any future licensing scheme;
- Experience of boroughs that have adopted schemes;
- Likely costs and timescales for introducing a scheme.

6.6 The Committee has also requested that a representative from Newham Council be invited to return to the Committee to provide further information about the progress of Newham's licensing scheme. In addition, Members have asked that representatives of Southwark Council be invited to the meeting to share information about the borough's developing approach to PRS licensing.

6.7 Members are asked to specify any additional information or analysis required in order to achieve the desired outcomes for this agenda item.

7. Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. There will be implications from the items being considered as part of the Committee's work programme, these will need to be considered in due course.

8. Legal implications

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must devise and submit a work programme to the Business Panel at the start of each municipal year.

9. Equalities implications

9.1 The Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age,

disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

9.2 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

9.3 There may be equalities implications arising from items on the work programme and all activities undertaken by the Select Committee will need to give due consideration to this.

10. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 17 December 2014

Background Documents

Lewisham Council's Constitution

Centre for Public Scrutiny: the Good Scrutiny Guide

Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process

