

MINUTES OF THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR IN LEWISHAM TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Thursday, 10 October 2024 at 6.30pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Bill Brown (Chair), Jack Lavery and Stephen Penfold

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Councillor Sakina Sheikh

ALSO PRESENT: Nidhi Patil (Scrutiny Manager)

ALSO PRESENT, VIRTUALLY: Gillian Douglas (Executive Director for Housing), Fenella Beckman (Director of Housing Strategy) and Rhona Brown (Head of Private Sector Licensing and Home Improvements)

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972.

1. Minutes of the previous meetings

- 1.1. RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 21 September 2023 and 27 March 2024 be agreed as a true record.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1. None.

3. Draft Report and Recommendations

Nidhi Patil (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report, followed by a discussion by the Task and Finish Group members. The following key points were noted:

- 3.1. Key areas of focus from the report were outlined, and members of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) were invited to provide feedback and agree the report and its recommendations.
- 3.2. The TFG members expressed their gratitude to Councillor Will Cooper for proposing the topic of the private rented sector in Lewisham as the subject for this review. They also thanked Councillor Rosie Parry for chairing the TFG until March 2024, and Councillor Bill Brown for leading the group from March onwards to its conclusion. Additionally, they thanked Nidhi Patil, the Scrutiny Manager for her efforts in compiling the research and evidence presented in the report.
- 3.3. The TFG discussed that the report presented some practical suggestions and solutions that fell within the Council's powers, aiming to improve the lives of residents in the private rented sector (PRS)
- 3.4. A suggestion was made to amend paragraph 4.67 of the draft report, adding the sentence: "The Task and Finish Group believes that it is important for compliant landlords to have evidence that the Council are tackling non-compliant landlords." The TFG agreed on the importance of collaborating with landlords within the PRS in Lewisham.
- 3.5. It was proposed that the Chair of the TFG create a promotional video to share the TFG's findings.

- 3.6. The TFG Chair expressed thanks to all the organisations and individuals who contributed to the Group’s work by sharing their experiences and insights. Special thanks were extended to both landlords and tenants, as well as tenant and landlord advocacy organisations, and other councils that engaged with the TFG. The Chair also thanked the TFG members for their work on the report, which presented practical solutions to support tenants and landlords, ensuring the PRS functions effectively for Lewisham’s residents. In addition, the Chair again thanked Councillor Will Cooper for initiating the TFG and Councillor Rosie Parry for her leadership up to March 2024. He also recognised the Scrutiny Manager’s support in producing the final report. The TFG members expressed eagerness to see the recommendations implemented.
- 3.7. Councillor Sakina Sheikh was joining the meeting virtually and hence could not formally vote but requested that her agreement with the TFG’s report and recommendations for submission to Mayor and Cabinet be recorded in the minutes.
- 3.8. It was noted that the TFG’s final report would be presented at the Mayor and Cabinet meeting on the 23rd of October 2024. Following this, officers would prepare a response to the TFG’s report which would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- the report and recommendations be agreed for submission to Mayor and Cabinet with the addition of the following text at the end of paragraph 4.67- “The Task and Finish Group believes that it is important for compliant landlords to have evidence that the Council are tackling non-compliant landlords”.

The meeting ended at 6.44 pm.

Chair:

Date:
