



Mayor and Cabinet

Response to recommendations of the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task & Finish Group

Date: 29th January 2025

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Fenella Beckman - Director of Housing Strategy, Jeremy Chambers - Director of Law and Corporate Governance and Katherine Nidd - Director of Finance.

Outline and recommendations

In October 2024 the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task & Finish Group published its report and recommendations to improve engagement with residents in the PRS. This report is the response to those recommendations from the Director of Housing Strategy.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

The Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th July 2023.

The scope and key lines of enquiry for the review were agreed by the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group on the 21st of September 2023.

Between October 2023 and August 2024, the Task and Finish Group carried out a range of evidence gathering and engagement sessions.

The final report was presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 23rd October 2024.

1. Summary

- 1.1. In October 2024 the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group published its report and recommendations to improve engagement with residents in the PRS. This report is the response to those recommendations from Director of Housing Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet are asked to note the responses provided by Director of Housing Strategy to the recommendations of the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-26 identifies seven corporate priorities which are the driving force behind what Lewisham Council does as an organisation. It sets out a vision for the borough and the priority outcomes that organisations, communities and individuals can work towards to make this vision a reality.
- 3.2. The Council's Housing Strategy 2020-26 identifies five key themes which define our approach to housing as an organisation. The Housing Strategy 2020-26 sets out our visions that everyone has a safe, stable and genuinely affordable home where they can live an independent and prosperous life and outlines the strategic direction, key priorities and actions that will help us achieve this vision.
- 3.3. The scope and recommendations of the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group align well with the corporate priorities identified in the Corporate Strategy 2022-26, particularly "Quality Housing". These recommendations also resonate with the key themes set out in the Housing Strategy 2020-26, such as improving the quality, standard, and safety of housing, supporting our residents to live safe, independent, and active lives, and strengthening communities while embracing diversity.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th July 2023.
- 4.2. The scope and key lines of enquiry for the review were agreed by the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group on the 21st of September 2023.
- 4.3. Between October 2023 and August 2024, the Task and Finish Group carried out a range of evidence gathering and engagement sessions.
- 4.4. The final report was presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 23rd October 2024.

5. Response to the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group recommendations

- 5.1. The response from officers to the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group is set out in Appendix A.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. This report requests that Mayor and Cabinet note the responses provided by Director of Housing Strategy to the recommendations of the Private Rented Sector in Lewisham Task and Finish Group.
- 6.2. Whilst many of the recommendations are already undertaken by the service, any additional costs that may be incurred such as producing materials to help promote support available for private renters will be covered by licensing income.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1. There are no significant risk implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report as this provides a response to the recommendations. However, each of the areas of work that the

recommendations relate to is aiming to have a positive equalities impact.

10. Climate change and environmental implications

10.1. There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

11. Crime and disorder implications

11.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12. Health and wellbeing implications

12.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

13. Background papers

13.1. <https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s116947/Scrutiny%20-%20PRs%20in%20Lewisham%20TFG%20Final%20Report.pdf>

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
PRS (Private Rented Sector)	The sector of the housing market where properties are owned by private individuals or companies and rented out to tenants.
HMO (House in multiple occupation)	A property rented to three or more tenants who do not form a single household, where facilities are shared.
MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)	A regular meeting where information is shared on high-risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation, and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
Joint Enforcement Group	A regular internal meeting within the Council where different departments collaborate to address enforcement issues and share information.
Shelter	A charity that provides advice, support, and legal services to people experiencing housing issues or homelessness.
NRLA (National Residential Landlords Association)	A membership organisation representing private residential landlords in the UK, providing support, advice, and advocacy.

15. Report author and contact

15.1. Fenella Beckman, Director of Housing Strategy, Fenella.Beckman@lewisham.gov.uk

16. Appendices

16.1. Appendix A – Response to the TFG recommendations