

***AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET***

<b>Report Title:</b>	Developing a Borough Wide Landlord Forum
<b>Name of Committee:</b>	Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	30 January 2023
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	David Burrows, Chief Officer - Regulation and Safety
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The Corporate Strategy 2021 – 2024 adopted by Rugby Borough Council in February 2021 includes actions for improving the private rented sector, the action plan underpinning the delivery of the Housing Strategy 2022-24, as adopted by Council in March 2022, includes an action to consider the potential for creating a borough wide landlord forum, and a Notice of Motion regarding a landlord forum was approved at Council in November 2022. It is now important to move this work forward and for the new forum to consider a number of key issues that are currently nationally and locally important including a review of the Council's Private Rented Sector Charter, and selective or additional licensing of private rented sector properties including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).</p>
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	None currently identified.
<b>Risk Management/Health and Safety Implications:</b>	None currently identified.
<b>Environmental Implications:</b>	None currently identified.
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	None arising directly from this report.
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>	This will form part of the work to identify the initial terms of reference for the forum.

**Scrutiny Committee - 30 January 2023**

**Developing a Borough Wide Landlord Forum**

**Public Report of the Chief Officer – Regulation and Safety**

**Summary**

On 23 November 2022, Council referred a motion to a scrutiny committee in accordance with Council Standing Order 11.

The Committee is asked to consider the Motion and decide how it should be dealt with.

**1. Motion from Council**

1.1 In November 2022 a Notice of Motion was made recommending a landlord forum and a free accreditation scheme for landlords. This was revised and the revised Notice of motion approved.

1.2 The text of the approved Notice of Motion is:

*“Rugby Borough Council and the National Landlords’ Association previously jointly ran a Private Sector Landlords’ Forum. According to the agenda of the Cabinet published on 2 September 2015, the Forum met quarterly and its aims were to: “Improve relationships between private-sector landlords and the council; provide training opportunities for landlords – particularly in terms of keeping them up to date on legislative changes that may affect them; provide an arena in which landlords, agents and the council can share information and concerns; and encourage networking amongst landlords, the council and other relevant partners.”*

*This motion asks the Council to continue its existing work, building on the conversations which have been taking place with private landlords, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and other stakeholders, to reconstitute the Private Sector Landlords’ Forum with its previous objectives, in order that all relevant stakeholders, including councillors, can work together in a collaborative, constructive manner. It is hoped that the proper functioning of this Forum will help stakeholders work together to undertake their respective responsibilities towards each other in full and encourage good neighbourly behaviour. It will consider issues and concerns that affect landlords, tenants and the wider community, including:*

- *Supply, quality and cost of rental properties;*
- *Improving relations between tenants and landlords;*
- *Enhancing relations between the private rented sector and the wider community;*
- *Tackling anti-social behaviour that can sometimes arise from rented accommodation, such as fly-tipping, noise and lack of parking.*

*This motion further proposes that early consideration is given by the Forum to reviewing the existing voluntary Private Sector Housing Charter with a view to identifying options to support the improvement of the condition and management of the private rented sector in Rugby Borough. Considerations should include the introduction of a licensing scheme for all rented properties in the Borough.”*

On 23 November 2022, Council referred the motion to Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Council Standing Order 11.2(d).

- 1.3 The Constitution requires the Scrutiny Committee to decide whether to consider the motion itself or refer it for consideration by a task group. Any task group so appointed will report back to the Committee. Once the Committee has considered the motion, or received a report back from a task group, it will report to the next available meeting of Cabinet.
- 1.4 Consideration of a motion might take the form of simply dealing with the motion without further scrutiny and reporting to Cabinet accordingly. If, however, the committee were to decide to consider the motion itself in more detail, any scrutiny would need to gather and process further evidence.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Corporate Strategy 2021 – 2024 outcome 3 is ‘Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected’. The Corporate Strategy Delivery Plan includes a number of private rented sector actions officers are progressing. This includes the following;
  - area action (multiagency coordinated action in wards to cover community concerns with the Benn Ward being the pilot) linked to the levelling up agenda
  - supporting energy efficiency improvements
  - reviewing the Council’s Private Rented Sector Charter
  - ensuring that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are of an appropriate standard through licensing and inspections,
  - reviewing council use of private rented properties including HMOs,
- 2.2 The action plan underpinning the delivery of the Housing Strategy 2022-24, was adopted by Council in March 2022. This includes action 3.11 to consider the potential for creating a borough wide landlord forum.

2.3 The Council has previously operated a Rugby Landlord Forum. It was organised by the National Landlords Association supported by the council. However, due to reducing numbers of attendees it ceased in 2015.

### **3. Proposed next steps**

3.1 Scrutiny Committee are asked to determine the next steps.

3.2 It is proposed that a task and finish group is set up to undertake research in order to explore the reasons behind successful landlord forums elsewhere. The learning and findings to be reported back to Scrutiny in order to help inform the potential next steps to setting up a local landlords forum in Rugby and it's terms of reference.

**Name of Meeting:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 30 January 2023

**Subject Matter:** Developing a borough wide Landlord Forum

**Originating Department:** Regulation and Safety

**DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY**       YES       NO

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

<b>Doc No</b>	<b>Title of Document and Hyperlink</b>