

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
SUBJECT:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL – HOW CAN WE GET A BETTER DEAL FOR PRIVATE SECTOR RENTERS IN SOUTHAMPTON?		
DATE OF DECISION:	20 JUNE 2024		
REPORT OF:	CLLR WINDLE CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - 2023/24		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Author:	Title	Scrutiny Manager	
	Name:	Mark Pirnie	Tel: 023 8083 3886
	E-mail	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
None			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
<p>From November 2023 to February 2024 the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook evidence gathering sessions as they conducted the inquiry focussing on getting a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton. The final report, approved by the Inquiry Panel in April 2024, is attached as Appendix 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) are requested to consider, and approve, the final report of the Inquiry Panel and forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action.</p>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is recommended to consider and approve the final report of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel and forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action.	
	(ii)	To delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to approve any minor amendments arising from considerations raised at the Committee's meeting on 20 June 2024.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	In accordance with the Council's constitution, this Committee must approve the final report of a scrutiny inquiry before it is referred to the Executive for consideration and further action.		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
2.	Not applicable.		
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)			
3.	The OSMC, at its meeting in September 2023, requested that the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertake an inquiry focussing on the private rented sector in Southampton.		
4.	The set objectives of the inquiry were:		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To identify the challenges and concerns of private sector renters in Southampton. b. To understand existing plans and opportunities to address the identified challenges. c. To identify good practice being employed to get a better deal for private sector renters in the UK and beyond. d. To identify what initiatives and approaches could work well in Southampton to improve outcomes for private sector renters.
5.	The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook the inquiry over 4 evidence gathering meetings and received information from a wide variety of organisations. This included Generation Rent, Southampton Tenants Union, iHOWZ Landlords Association, The National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA), Bristol City Council, London Borough of Newham, the Environment Centre, Citizen's Advice Southampton, the University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University and officers from Southampton City Council.
6.	The final report contains a number of recommendations designed to get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton. The conclusions and recommendations are summarised in Appendix 2.
7.	The Committee needs to consider whether the report adequately responds to the inquiry objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference shown within the attached report.
8.	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee procedure rules within the constitution require that within two months of the date of this committee approving a final inquiry report, the Executive will consider the report and submit a formal response to the recommendations contained within them. If this Committee is minded to accept the final report, then the document will be presented to the Executive on 25 June 2024 for further action.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u>	
9.	In practice any future resource implications arising from this review will be dependent upon whether, and how, each individual recommendation within the Inquiry report is progressed by the Executive. More detailed work will need to be undertaken by the Executive in considering its response to each of the recommendations set out in the Inquiry report.
10.	During the inquiry a number of potential sources of funding were identified that could help to resource certain recommendations. These include income from employing the full range of enforcement powers available to the Council and new burdens funding if the Renters (Reform) Bill, or its successor, is prioritised by the incoming government, receives Royal Assent.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
11.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	

12.	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
13.	If the OSMC decide that the Inquiry report has not met the terms of reference set by the Committee then this may require the Panel to reconvene to address the concerns raised. This would result in a delay in the Executive's response to the recommendations, and, potentially in implementing agreed actions.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
14.	Southampton City Council's Corporate Plan (2024 update) includes the following strategic objective – Safe and stable home environments. Implementing the recommendations within the attached inquiry final report would help to deliver this objective.
KEY DECISION	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None directly as a result of this report
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton Inquiry – Final report
2.	How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton Inquiry – Conclusions and recommendations
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
Other Background Documents	
Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None