

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL – HOW CAN WE GET A BETTER DEAL FOR PRIVATE SECTOR RENTERS IN SOUTHAMPTON?		
DATE OF DECISION:	25 JUNE 2024		
REPORT OF:	CLLR WINDLE CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - 2023/24		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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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 was approved by the Inquiry Panel on 18 April 2024.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel final report, attached as Appendix 1, contains a number of recommendations. The report is to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) on 20 June 2024. If OSMC approve the report at their June meeting, Cabinet needs to formally respond to these recommendations, summarised in Appendix 2, within two months to meet the requirements in the Council's constitution.</p>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	Subject to the report being approved by the OSMC on 20 June, Cabinet is recommended to receive the attached Scrutiny Inquiry Panel report to enable the Executive to formulate its response to the recommendations contained within it, in order to comply with the requirements set out in the Council's Constitution.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	The overview and scrutiny procedure rules in part 4 of the Council's Constitution requires the Executive to consider all inquiry reports that have been endorsed by the OSMC, and to submit a formal response to the recommendations contained within them within two months of their receipt.		
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, attached as Appendix 1, will be considered by the OSMC on 20 June 2024. The report contains a number of recommendations which, if implemented, the Panel believe will result in a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton. The conclusions and recommendations are summarised in Appendix 2.
7.	Subject to approval by the OSMC, the Executive needs to consider the inquiry recommendations and to formally respond within two months of the date of receiving this report in order to meet the requirements set out in the Council's constitution.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u>	
8.	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.
9.	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>	
10.	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>	
11.	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	

12.	The requirements with regards to receiving and responding to scrutiny inquiry reports are set out in the constitution and have been explained to those who contributed to the inquiry.	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
13.	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	