

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2018

Present:

Councillor Haines (Chairman)

Councillors Clarence, Connett, Cox, Dennis, Evans, Hockin, G Hook, J Hook (was Brodie), Jeffery, Jones, Kerswell, Mayne, Morgan, Orme, Peart, Prowse, Smith, Thorne, Winsor and Wrigley

Members in Attendance:

Councillors Bullivant, Clemens, Christophers, Golder, Goodey, Lake, Russell

Apologies:

Councillors Colclough, Dewhurst, Eden, Ford, Gribble, Hocking, Matthews and Nutley

Officers in Attendance:

Alison Dolley, Private Housing Team Leader

Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

206. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Dennis, and seconded by Councillor Mayne that Councillor Prowse be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year. There were no other nominations.

Resolved

Councillor Prowse is elected Vice Chairman for the remainder of the current Municipal Year.

207. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

208. MINUTES OF THE STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 25 September, 2018 were received and noted.

209. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

210. HOMELESS REDUCTION ACT

This item was deferred to the next meeting on 19 November 2018.

211. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN UPDATE

This item was deferred to the next meeting on 19 November, 2018.

212. CHANGES IN HOUSING ENFORCEMENT

The Private Housing team Leader (PHTL) reported on recent changes in legislation in relation to the private rented sector, and advised Members on the Council's recently launched Property Agents Rating Scheme (PARS). With reference to the report circulated with the agenda, the PHTL advised there are over 9,000 (16%) homes in the private rented sector within Teignbridge. The social housing stock of 9% is low compared to England's 18%, so it is important to work with private landlords, letting agents and developers to increase the supply of rental accommodation.

There has been an increase in the regulation of private rented sector in recent years. The Teignbridge Housing enforcement policy (approved by members on 3rd October 2017) introduced civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution for certain specified offences. In accordance with the policy, the Council initially works informally with a landlord to secure improvements to a property. However where a landlord is unwilling to carry out the necessary identified works, a formal approach is taken with the serving of an appropriate notice.

Legislation changes have recently been introduced for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and energy efficiency standards. The Housing Act 2004 introduced licensing of HMOs that were 3 or more storeys and occupied by 5 or more persons forming at least 2 separate households, with some sharing of facilities. From October 2018 the number of storeys is removed so that smaller properties used as HMOs will require a license.

In relation to energy efficiency, from April 2018, The Energy Efficiency (Private rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 has made it unlawful to let a residential property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'F' or 'G'. This will only initially apply to new tenancies but from April 2020 it will apply to all tenancies even when there has been no changes in tenancy arrangements. However there are exemptions that can be registered.

In September 2018, the Council launched the Property Agent Rating Scheme (PARS), this scheme is a means of ensuring that all letting agents and property managers comply with letting related legislation. The Council was working with neighbouring Council's to extend this scheme.

In response to questions from Councillors the PHTL advised that the changes to HMO legislation may reduce the available accommodation for single people or couples who can only afford house share accommodation, and the health and safety accommodation assessment involves a 29 hazard check.

Resolved

The report and actions being taken to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector in Teignbridge is noted.

213. PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q1 DATA

The Committee received and noted the performance monitoring Q1 data circulated with the agenda.

214. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the Executive forward plan circulated with the agenda.

215. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme circulated with the agenda, and noted updates to the programme.

MIKE HAINES
Chairman