

MEMBERS POLICY SEMINAR PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an overview of content from the Members Policy Seminar in December 2014 that included a presentation on Private Sector Housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council are recommended to:

1. Receive this report and note its contents.

BACKGROUND

1. Members Policy Seminars are an important vehicle for both informing and consulting with Members on a variety of topics from Policy and Legislative changes, contributions to Government consultations, and providing an update on local service provision from partner organisations. They have been in place since January 2009 and are particularly useful for those issues which are of importance to the Council or partners but are in the early stages of development, or those which will be of interest to Members, out with the usual reporting arrangements.
2. A programme of seminars is set annually with events planned on a monthly basis. Topics are reviewed monthly by the Corporate Management Team to ensure issues are current and discussions and information provision is timely. Special, additional seminars are arranged as required.

SUMMARY OF THE TOPIC COVERED IN DECEMBER 2014

3. The Housing Regeneration Manager provided an update for members on the work of the Private Sector Housing team, covering the background to the team, the work they get involved in, statutory and legal obligations required by Private Sector Landlords, provided an outline of the process adopted by the team in dealing with Private Sector landlords and a 10 point plan which comes in to effect from January 2015, to action this new approach to dealing with this growing housing sector.
4. Key topic covered in the presentation included:
 - Team deal with housing conditions and housing improvement work
 - Enforcement of housing conditions and management of houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO)
 - Mandatory Licencing of HMO.
 - Enforcement of the prevention of statutory nuisances
 - Manage the Landlord Accreditation Scheme
 - Return empty properties back into use
5. There are a number of key issues affecting the Private Rented Sector namely :
 - A fast growing sector

- Varied stock conditions
- Varied ownership
- Cultural shift to rental rather than ownership
- Lack of awareness of rights
- The introduction of the new code of practice.

6. The presentation covered the legal and statutory obligations required for Private Sector Landlords and detailed 29 categories of standards landlords are required to comply with. Members were provided with a clear outline of the process operated by the council in dealing with Private Sector Landlords and our move to one of being more proactive and targeted.
7. All slides and materials used in the presentations are available on the Members section of the Intranet. A regular update report on members seminar events held will be provided to Council at each meeting going forward.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

8. There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

Legal

9. There are no legal implications arising as a direct result from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

10. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11. This report is not subject to Equality Impact Assessment as it makes no proposals for service development or policy change.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

12. Members Policy Seminars help the Council achieve all its objectives as outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

13. No external consultation has taken place on this report.

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Background Papers

Slides/ Presentation from the member seminar programmes.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Members Policy Seminars affect all wards in the Borough.

Property

This report has no implications for the Council's Capital Programme and Asset Management Plan.