

	<p align="center"><b>London Borough of Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b></p> <p align="center"><b>CABINET MEMBER DECISION</b></p> <p align="center"><b>OCTOBER 2014</b></p>
<p><b>SIGNING THE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR SHELTER CAMPAIGN EVICTING ROGUE LANDLORDS</b></p>	
<p><b>Report of the Leader of the Council – Councillor Stephen Cowan and Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Lisa Homan</b></p>	
<p><b>Open Report</b></p>	
<p><b>Classification - For Decision</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision: No</b></p>	
<p><b>Wards Affected: "All"</b></p>	
<p><b>Accountable Executive Director:</b> Nigel Pallace, Transport and Technical Services</p>	
<p><b>Report Author:</b> Richard Buckley</p>	<p><b>Contact Details:</b>  Tel: 020 8753 3971  E-mail: richard.buckley@lbhf.gov.uk</p>

AUTHORISED BY: .....

The Leader has signed this report.

DATE: 30 October 2014..

AUTHORISED BY: .....

The Cabinet Member has signed this report.

DATE: 30 October 2014..

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. Shelter introduced its tackle 'rogue landlords' campaign back in 2013 and since then over a 100 Councils have signed up.
- 1.2. By signing the statement of support the council is agreeing to;
  - enforce the laws that already exist to stamp out rogue landlords
  - prosecute rogue landlords when they do not comply with the law
  - publicise our tough stance on rogue landlords in the local press
  - give renters the support they need to bring complaints to the council

- proactively inspect properties to make sure that they are appropriate homes for renters.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That the council signs the statement of support for the Shelter Evict Rogue Landlords Campaign.
- 2.2. The council issues an appropriate press release confirming it has signed up to the campaign.

## **3. REASONS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1. The council tackles unsafe accommodation through robust enforcement. It supports Shelter's campaign to protect tenants from rogue Landlords and raise awareness.

## **4. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 4.1. The private rented sector in Hammersmith and Fulham is a substantial proportion of our available accommodation. The 2011 census indicates there are over 25,500 privately rented dwellings within the borough representing 31.7% of our available dwellings and in some wards it can be over 40%.
- 4.2. The stock and tenure has changed significantly over the last decade with an approximate 9% increase in the size of the private rented sector between the 2001 and 2011 Census.
- 4.3. The number of people renting in the borough continues to rise and whilst the majority of landlords provide satisfactory accommodation the number of substandard premises that have serious hazards is also growing. This includes basement flats that have no natural light or ventilation, the subdividing of premises, overcrowding and inadequate fire safety protection.
- 4.4. The Council's Private Housing Team tackles residents' substandard premises and poor management by landlords in accordance with the Housing Act 2004. The Housing Options service has the role of investigating harassment and illegal eviction. The Act defines 29 hazard types ranging from damp to fire safety. A hazard classed as Category 1 requires compulsory enforcement. Last year the team licensed 43 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) with a total of 320 habitable rooms each room providing the main home for a household (normally between one and two people).

- 4.5. In addition, the team undertook over 50 proactive Category 1 inspections of licensed HMOs and 248 risk based inspections of other HMOs identifying and remedying 139 Category 1 hazards.
- 4.6. Shelter is the principle charity for housing and homelessness. Shelter gives practical housing advice and support online, in person and by phone, 365 days a year, helping with everything from mortgage arrears to finding a place to sleep.
- 4.7. Shelter campaigns to tackle the root causes of housing problems. The Evict Rogue Landlords campaign promotes that Local Authorities who have signed up will:
- Proactively manage and proactively inspect properties to make sure that they are appropriate homes for renters.
  - Adequately resource and support their local enforcement teams.
  - Take tough enforcement action against rogue landlords and publicise their tough stance in the local press.
  - Advise renters and give them the support they need to bring complaints to the council.
  - Implement a clear complaints procedure and harness the skills of other agencies.
  - Proactively manage their local private rented sector through accreditation and licensing schemes.
  - Work to educate tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities.

## **5. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES**

- 5.1. It is proposed that the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham support the Shelter Campaign to Evict Rogue Landlords by making a commitment to:
- enforce the laws that already exist to stamp out rogue landlords
  - prosecute rogue landlords when they do not comply with the law
  - publicise their tough stance on rogue landlords in the local press
  - give renters the support they need to bring complaints to the council
  - proactively inspect properties to make sure that they are appropriate homes for renters.
- 5.2. In return, Shelter will promote examples of good practice that the council shares and use social media to publically celebrate tough action and successful prosecutions. And they will follow up with joint press and media work where appropriate.
- 5.3. Shelter will provide a range of resources, including:

- The 'Rogue Landlords Media Tool Kit', a guide to making the most out of your promise to stamp out rogue landlords. This includes a template press release and a quote from their Chief Executive Campbell Robb.
- A guide to emerging good practice.

5.4. To sign up to the campaign all the council has to do is complete the details in this web page:  
[http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/fixing\\_private\\_renting/evict\\_rogue\\_landlords/sign\\_shelters\\_statement\\_of\\_support](http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/fixing_private_renting/evict_rogue_landlords/sign_shelters_statement_of_support). There is an opportunity here for the Council to outline the steps that it is already taking.

## **6. OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 6.1. Over a hundred other local authorities across the country have signed up to this campaign. The campaign raises awareness across the private rented sector that the council's is committed to ensuring homes are safe and well-managed.
- 6.2. The campaign is in line with the administration manifesto and council's enforcement policy.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

8. Shelter has been consulted and is fully supportive of the proposal. Housing Options, Mike England, Director, Housing Options, Skills and Economic Development.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. No detrimental equality impacts arise from this campaign to residents.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are no legal issues arising from the Report or the recommendations
- 10.2. Implications verified/completed by: Piero Ionta, SENIOR SOLICITOR (LITIGATION), 020 8753 2724

## **11. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. The proposal is a continuation of the council's policy to address rogue landlords whilst utilising the third sector to raise awareness of the issues.
- 11.2. Implications verified/completed by: Mark Jones Director, Finance and Resources TTS and ELRS, 020 8753 6700

## **12. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 12.1. The Council's Private Housing Team tackles residents' substandard premises and poor management by landlords in accordance with the Housing Act 2004 and as such is noted on the Council's strategic risk register; risk number 5, managing statutory duty. Supporting the Shelter Campaign also contributes positively to the reputation of the Council, risk number 8 on the strategic risk register.
- 12.2. Implications completed by Michael Sloniowski, Bi-borough Risk Manager ext 2587.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000** **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Description of Background Papers</b>	<b>Name/Ext of holder of file/copy</b>	<b>Department/ Location</b>
1.	N/A		