



To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 11th September 2013

Subject: Houses in Multiple Occupation – Recommendations from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny Co-ordination of the outcomes of the task and finish group on Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- 1.2 To request that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee agree the recommendations for Scrutiny Co-ordination and Cabinet.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:
 - a) Establish a task and finish group to further investigate issues related to the private rented sector, in particular to look at additional and selective licencing, landlords and letting agents.
 - b) Encourage the public to report issues in their communities using Coventry Direct.
 - c) Asks Cabinet to accept the recommendations below.

That Cabinet refers the following recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Members, with oversight provided by the Cabinet Member (Housing and Heritage).

- 1) That the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) investigates further detailed evidence, notably concerning projected costs, before approving the use of an Article 4 Direction to support sustainable, contented and healthy communities as part of the wider housing strategy.
- 2) That the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) investigates further establishing 'clearaway' days to manage waste in communities heavily populated by HiMOs, in partnership with the Universities and third sector.
- 3) That the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) use existing enforcement powers more effectively to manage issues caused by HiMOs and private rented sector houses, including waste and noise issues.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 In March 2013, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee (SCRUCO) set up a task and finish group, comprising of Councillors Bigham, Blundell, Fletcher, Maton and M.Mutton to look at options for addressing residents' concerns about Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMO). This issue was chosen for review work due to an increasing number of complaints received about these properties, particularly from residents in certain areas of the city. For this reason two representatives from residents associations were co-opted onto the task and finish group to represent the concerns from communities.

- 3.2 HiMO's are officially defined by either a planning (7 bedrooms or more) or licensing definition (three or more storeys (including occupied basements, attics, flats above shops and in converted buildings) AND occupied by five or more people living as two or more households AND includes shared amenities such as kitchens, bathrooms and toilets). However, many of the properties which are causing concern for residents do not fit into these definitions as they consist of 4 to 6 people. These smaller, unregulated HiMO's have been considered to be part of the HiMO's issue by the group, as residents were concerned that the unregulated nature of these properties was causing additional pressures within communities. It is also not obvious from the outside which properties are subject to regulation and which are not.
- 3.3 Consultation took place through an on-line questionnaire, as well as Neighbourhood Forums. Representatives from Coventry and Warwick University provided evidence at task and finish groups as well as a representative from the National Landlords Association.
- 3.4 The proposed report to the Cabinet along with the report from the task and finish group can be found in the Appendix.

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