

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**28 November 2016**

### **Update on Private Rented HMO Survey**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 This has come to scrutiny to update members on the progress of the private rented sector HMO survey which was subject of a report taken to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

#### **2. Summary of the Issue**

- 2.1 In June 2014 Cabinet approved the recruitment of a new permanent post to be responsible for the ongoing identification and survey of HMO's, initially within the St Pauls and All Saints wards. The post is to be funded from the Housing Survey Reserve and then by HMO licensing fees and supported by existing enforcement staff.
- 2.2 Following detailed desk top analysis to identify possible HMO's and the development of a survey form, the survey work commenced in early September 2016. It was estimated that the survey of St Pauls would take approximately 9 months to complete depending on the extent of substandard accommodation discovered during the survey work.

#### **3. Summary of evidence/information**

- 3.1 The desk top analysis involved the scrutiny of council tax records, the electoral register and enforcement records including officer knowledge of the area. This analysis identified approximately 450 possible HMO's within the St Pauls Ward.
- 3.2 As of the 15<sup>th</sup> November, 225 HMO's have been fully inspected and additionally 72 properties have been visited and found not to be HMO's following interview with the occupants.
- 3.3 During the survey 10 HMO's have been referred through to the enforcement team for further investigation resulting from identification of poor management, poor standards of accommodation or where a licensable HMO was not licensed.
- 3.4 Of the HMO's inspected so far, less than 5% have been found to have unsatisfactory management standards that would result in formal enforcement action and although further analysis of the results is required, the level of category 1 hazards found is extremely low for this type of accommodation. A full report will be produced at the end of the survey, but evidence to date may reflect the proactive work undertaken by enforcement officers in St Pauls over the last five years, including the licensing of 130 HMOs under the Governments Mandatory HMO Licensing Scheme.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1** The survey of St Pauls should be completed by February 2017 and at this stage a full report will be drawn up showing survey results.
- 4.2** The permanent survey post has been advertised and we are looking to recruit into the position in the near future. This post will continue the HMO survey work in the All Saints ward and other wards in due course.

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| <b>Background Papers</b> | Cabinet report – 14 June 2016  |
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