

## Part A

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** Wednesday, 19 July 2023

**Report author:** Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Title:** New scrutiny task group - Housing

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Housing has a significant impact on quality of life and wellbeing. Watford Borough Council maintains the housing register but does not own any housing; social housing is owned and managed by registered social providers. In Watford, approximately 15% of households live in the social rented sector.
- 1.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed issues related to maintenance and tenant experiences in the social rented sector at their meeting on 22 February 2023. At that meeting, the committee recommended that a task group be established in the new municipal year to review a number of areas in relation to the sector.

### 2.0 Risks

#### 2.1

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	<b>Risk Rating</b> (combination of severity and likelihood)
The scrutiny committee does not agree to the proposal.	Non-executive members will have less opportunity to review tenants' experiences.	None	Tolerate	2

### 3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the scrutiny proposal to review tenant experiences in social housing.
- 3.2 If the scrutiny proposal is approved, that Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the task group's membership and chair.

**Further information:**

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**Report approved by: Carol Chen, Group Head of Democracy and Governance**

**4.0 Task group focus**

- 4.1 The scrutiny task group will focus on the experiences of tenants in the social rented sector. This will include responsiveness to maintenance and other issues, how well tenants' voices are heard and review of any existing data.
- 4.2 One impetus for this review was the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale due to damp and mould issues in his home and the response to the renewed focus on ensuring that homes remain healthy and safe for tenants.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the task group consider the following questions as set out in the draft scope, which is attached to this report:
- How well are tenants' views understood and acted upon?
  - How successful are the tenant-engagement structures and processes?
  - How effectively are complaints dealt with?
  - How robust are the measures in place to respond to issues with damp and mould and other maintenance requests?
- 4.4 The scrutiny function has the right to review any issue affecting residents in their area; even if the service is not delivered by the local authority.

**5.0 Implications****5.1 Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report. Whilst any task group can ask registered social providers to attend and give evidence registered social providers cannot be compelled to participate in the review.

### **5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that any task group would need to take equalities obligations into account when making recommendations.

5.3.2 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

### **5.4 Staffing**

5.4.1 The task group will be managed by Democratic Services with any required support provided by relevant services.

### **5.5 Accommodation**

5.5.1 There are no accommodation implications as a result of this report.

### **5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no community safety or crime and disorder implications as a result of this report.

### **5.7 Sustainability**

5.7.1 The task group should take into account sustainability implications when making recommendations.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – draft scope
- Appendix 2 – List of councillors interested in participating and supporting statement for the role of Chair

## **Background papers**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

- Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 22 February 2023
- Emails from those councillors interested in taking part in the proposed task group.