

Private Rented Sector Workshop Notes

Wednesday 7th December 5pm – Face to Face

Present: Cllr Bunney, Cllr Clews, Cllr Young, Cllr Boles, Cllr Bierley, Cllr Howitt-Cowan, Cllr Devine

Apologies: Cllr M Snee, Cllr J Snee, Cllr Ellis

“Having seen the data and proposals for reform what do you believe the Council’s priorities to address are?”

- Support for tenants to improve tenant behaviour and reduce ASB.
- Ensuring that homes are as economical as possible for tenants.
- Communication to landlords around responsibilities as some won’t know.
- Improvement of the E-rated properties.
- Some additional feedback on this was that a targeted approach to a particular area could move the problem from one area to another rather than solve it.
- Standards are clearly an issue throughout the district, they should be the focus.
- Affordability issues, how we can we help tenants to address these?
- Also need to think about home owners and the standards within their properties.
- This is a key statutory obligation and should be resourced so that standards can be addressed.

“What 1 thing do you think we could do differently to improve our approach in the PRS?”

- Targeted inspections in rural areas to find out more data.
- Provide additional advice and support to landlords and tenants to educate
- Carry out more inspections.

“What would be your preferred approach or approaches?”

- Enforcing landlord obligations.
- MEES approach for E rated properties.
- Targeted rogue landlord scheme.
- Utilising existing tools available on a greater scale.
- Wait to see the impact that the Renters Reform Bill has.
- Increased presence and levels of inspections.
- Deal better with tenancy management and ASB.
- Work to make quality of life better, housing has a key role to play in this.
- Have to focus on the worst properties.
- Don’t believe that SL is workable given the constraints that the scheme have.

Friday 2nd December 2022 via MS Teams

Present: Cllr Bunney, Cllr White, Cllr Welburn, Cllr Regis , Cllr Milne, Cllr McNeill, Cllr Young, Cllr Fleetwood, Cllr Rainsforth,

Apologies: Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Summers, Cllr Grimble, Cllr Rodgers, Cllr Morris, Cllr Coulson.

The workshops posed three questions for feedback and a summary of those responses is below:

“Having seen the data and proposals for reform what do you believe the Council’s priorities to address are?”

- Are there any incentive to carry out improvements to the property, incentives to keep properties in good condition? Need incentives, not to be punitive.
- Felt that selective licensing is a sledge hammer for landlords. Impossible to get to an A/B graded EPC. Also recognised issues with access to properties for landlords and that landlords can be feel as though they are seen as the enemy.
- A feeling that the council vision is looking at it from a perspective that Landlords are the villains.
- Feel that we need to reiterate and revisit why was SL implemented in the first place? i.e. deprivation, improvement of PRS standards and improvement of ASB.
- Also, a feeling that Landlords should be held to account for standards, which a scheme like SL does.
- Concerns that trying to make improvements to standards may have a knock-on impact to price people out of the market, tenants shouldn’t get these costs added to them
- If there is a license scheme, suggestion that £250 would be a more suitable fee (suggested that this is the fee in Nottingham). If we are looking at SL then it needs to be reasonable costing for landlords and tenants.
- A serious look at the pricing structure is needed if any scheme is going to work. It needs to be an equitable system for tenants and landlords.
- Priority needs to be how tenants can make an impact at their own property, concerns that if tenants keep pressing onto landlords re works, fear of eviction. Need to support tenants so that they feel safe to report these things.
- LLs should be held to account and tenants need support on how to feedback and escalate to LLs without fear of increased rent and eviction.
- Concern about role letting agents play in regards to escalation of issues and resolving them.
- Landlords who have management agents, there’s a lack of communication between the two.
- Think about ways we can identify the problems and support landlords and tenants.
- Opportunities re the renter’s reform bill, increase in homelessness presentation in neighbouring districts.
- How can we make the PRS as good as we can so that we can discharge duties around homelessness?
- If tenants are priced out of rural areas what do we do with not having enough properties, concerns there may be limited access to the PRS.
- More support needed for tenants
- Licence fee could cause properties to become unaffordable for tenants, increasing risk of homelessness

- Questions asked about available financial assistance for Landlords to improve their properties
- Stated that there are more concerns with the people rather than the properties.

“What 1 thing do you think we could do differently to improve our approach in the PRS?”

- Not about standard, it's about tenant management. Tenants are the problem in these properties.
- How Landlords are communicated with, user friendly to Landlords, hopefully LL will be more selective with tenants. Council need to not be seen to be banging an enforcement drum
- Engage with landlords and reduce the “us and them” need a forum or portal etc. Cannot see SL working in areas like Market Rasen or rural areas. More resources need to go into existing rogue landlords' approaches.
- Should be more of lighter approach to addressing issues, not being heavy handed.
- There are landlords who want to do good, tenants who don't allow this
- Licence fee could be reduced for multiple properties

“What would be your preferred approach or approaches?”

- Targeted schemes, the last SL scheme proposal needs to be a different format as the last geographical proposal. Not Keen on SL overall
- Licensing in some areas and not others would be complicated and problematic
- Think SL can be a good tool, discount over several licences for landlords. Needs to be an incentive for landlords to do it.
- Will not be supporting SL, can agree on Rogue landlords and MEES project.
- Need more opportunities to engage with landlords.
- SL has not worked, won't be supporting it. Do not feel safe within my own area.
- Selective Licensing wouldn't be supported by a number of members no matter the area or cost.