

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SURVEY – FINAL REPORT

1.	INTRODUCTION
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the final report and findings of the private sector housing survey, which was completed at the end of March 2016.
2.	BACKGROUND
2.1	In November 2015, Cabinet approved for a private sector housing survey to be carried out by an appointed surveyor for this specific purpose, over a period of twelve-months.
2.2	The purpose of the survey was to identify poor housing conditions, overcrowding, disrepair and houses in multiple occupation.
2.3	A surveyor was recruited on a twelve-month contract in March 2016.
2.4	An update on the progress of the survey was first reported to Panel in June 2016. Regular updates have also been provided to the housing portfolio holder, Councillor Barbara Hurst.
3.	DETAILS OF THE SURVEY
3.1	The survey was concluded at the end of February 2017. See Appendix 1 for a map of the areas visited.
3.2	The remaining month was used to carry out return visits in the Aldershot area. This resulted in the identification of further poor quality accommodation that required immediate action by the private sector housing team.
3.3	In the final month of the survey, visits were made to residential accommodation above commercial properties that had been identified by the Immigration Service.
4.	KEY FINDINGS
4.1	The main issues identified through the survey were dampness, excess cold, and fire safety in houses in multiple occupation, with some properties having

	multiple hazards.
4.2.	The private sector housing survey report gives details of the methodology and findings in Appendix 2.
4.3	The findings have been manageable and were dealt with as they arose.
4.4	The findings show that properties in Aldershot have disrepair issues and there are some smaller HMOs. In Farnborough, smaller two storey HMOs were identified, which supports the existing knowledge.
4.5	The survey identified 161 hazards, showing that 2.3% of the properties inspected had hazards, as determined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System – Housing Act 2004. For example, electrical safety, fire safety and excess cold hazards.
5.	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
5.1	The cost of employing the surveyor for 2016/17 was £33,132, including on-costs.
6.	CONCLUSION
6.1	The purpose of the survey was to identify and act on poor housing conditions, overcrowding and more accurate figures on houses in multiple occupation, this has been achieved.
6.2	The survey did not identify any additional large licensable HMOs, but did uncover some smaller HMOs that do not currently require a property license. These properties do need remedial works to make them safe for the occupants. This is especially the case in areas, 7 and 8, which covers Mayfield Road and Caswell Close (ex GLC estate). This was expected, as these properties are large with 3 or 4 bedrooms and are cheap to purchase as buy to let properties.
6.3	The data gathered from the survey is being used to determine action in relation to improving overall housing standards in the borough by rectifying the hazards identified. The government is introducing a mandatory licensing scheme under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 for smaller HMOs, occupied by 5 or more people, living as 2 or more households. The Council will be required to administer this scheme, which is due to come in to force in October 2017, and we are currently awaiting guidance. The information that has been gathered during the survey is valuable in determining exactly where these properties are situated.
6.4	There may still be some hidden households within ethnic groups where access was not gained. Further work is required to inspect these properties, with the assistance of an interpretation service.

7.0	RECOMMENDATIONS
7.1	That Community Policy and Review Panel note that the survey work is complete, providing its findings in the report attached in Appendix 2.
7.2	The survey has provided valuable data to the Council and has prompted action to improve housing conditions and make properties safe.
7.3	The Community Policy and Review Panel should note that the legislation requiring mandatory licensing of smaller HMOs is due to come in to force in October 2017 and that further resources will be required to administer the scheme.
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Background papers: Appendix 1 – Area Map Appendix 2 – Private Sector Housing Survey Report	