

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

20 July 2009

**Joint Report of the Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for
Housing**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 THE RUGG REVIEW OF THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

Summary

This report informs Members of the Government's proposals following the recent Rugg review and officer comments on these.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Government commissioned an independent review of the private rented sector by Julie Rugg and David Rhodes, known as the 'Rugg Review'. The findings from the review were published on 23 October 2008.

1.1.2 As a result of the Rugg Review and the work done by the Law Commission on proposals for changes in the private rented sector, Government has formulated a response 'The private rented sector: professionalism and quality, the Government response to the Rugg Review'. This is a consultation document, on which the Council has been invited to comment. The comments to the consultation are due by Friday 7 August 2009.

1.2 Findings from the Rugg review

1.2.1 A report detailing the findings of the Rugg review was presented to the Board on the 23 February 2009.

1.2.2 The review identified six key policy directions, namely:

- to develop a sound evidence base by improving the data that is held on the private rented sector;
- to promote housing management by regulating letting and managing agents, including improving training opportunities and making training more readily available;

- growing the business of letting by focusing on measures which acknowledges landlords as professionals and business persons, rather than just passive investors;
- equalising the rental choices by establishing 'social letting agencies' with the aim to reduce the risks of private renting for low income households;
- light touch licensing with effective re-dress, which will require landlords to register their rented property and receive a licence number that would be required for any kind of landlord activity; and
- tenancy frameworks, which includes extending the upper limit for an assured tenancy from £25,000 and making it a mandatory requirement to have a written tenancy agreement.

1.3 Government proposals

- 1.3.1 The proposals contained in the response are designed to support the private rented sector, encourage good existing landlords to grow and minimise barriers to entry in the private rented sector. They are also looking to tackle the need to increase professionalism, drive out bad landlords and secure improvement in the quality of the worst stock.
- 1.3.2 The questions asked in the consultation document and my officer's draft responses are detailed in **[Annex 1]**.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None arising from this report.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 None arising from this report.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 None arising from this report.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 **CABINET** is **RECOMMENDED** to **ENDORSE** the comments in the document at **Annex 1** which will form the basis of the Council's response to the consultation; together with any further comments members may wish to make.

The Director of Health and Housing confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Cabinet Member for Housing