

South Essex Private Sector Housing Sub Group

Tuesday 14 January 2020
Rochford DC offices

Minutes

Attendance:

Louisa Moss (Chair) / Tara Miller – Rochford DC, Janet Donnelly – Thurrock BC, Martin Howlett / Amy Desmond – Basildon BC, Carla Okikiade – Castle Point BC, David Carter – Brentwood BC, Joanne Drone – National Landlords Association, Brett Ashby – Eastern Landlords Association & Alastair Pollock – EDG & SEHG.

Apologies: Rachel Glover – Basildon BC, Dulal Ahmed – Thurrock BC.

1. Review minutes & actions from 18 September

Selective Licensing, awaiting information from Southend.

All other items on the agenda.

2. Landlords Forum feedback including Ready to Rent Offer

Reported that over 70 landlords attended the recent event which was run jointly between the SEHG and the National Landlords Association with support from Birketts.

Ready for Rent – no enquiries at present, although it is on local websites. Focus is still vacant properties coming onto the rental market. Option to offer discount on Council Tax as an incentive might be worth exploring? See Cotswold example.

Action:

- Agreed to operate another South Essex wide Forum this autumn in partnership with NLA. Focus and themes to be agreed by at next meet in July. **All**
- To explore success of similar local authority models. **RDC lead + task and finish group.**
- Members to update the group on local forums which are held during the course of the year, to monitor topics covered and to inform the annual SE forum. **All**

For note: Next local forum run by Basildon BC is on Wednesday 18 March 2020 – check [Basildon BC website](#) for further details.

3. Eastern Landlords Association (ELA) update

Information update for the group. ELA looking to develop a landlord accreditation service for its members. Currently looking at partnership working with Decent Safe Homes (DASH) Further details to follow.

For note: No current local landlord schemes in place, except for Thurrock which is a member of the London Landlord's Accreditation Scheme. This scheme is to be reviewed pending introduction of Selective Licensing across the Borough. Noted that NLA offer ongoing support to its members.

The wider SE group are not currently looking at introducing a landlord scheme but continue to monitor the government 'thinking' on regulating landlords and the possibility of the introduction of any new national 'MOT' process. To keep as a standard agenda item.

Discussion as to a possible new project to introduce a new South Essex 'tenant' accreditation scheme, to support local housing option clients to access the private rental sector.

Action:

- ELA Presentation to be circulated. **AP**
- Landlord scheme details to be forwarded by ELA once available. **ELA**
- Thurrock to share details of draft tenant accreditation scheme. **JD**
- RDC lead/Basildon to explore new tenant scheme – contents. **TM/LM/Basildon**

4. National Landlords Association (NLA) update

For note: NLA, currently in the process of merging with Residential Landlord Association (RLA). New body, to be known as the National Residential Landlord Association (NRLA).

Local authorities were encouraged to provide links to the newly merged body, once complete.

Action

- NLA to provide update on merger once completed. **JD**
- All members to signpost on web sites. **All**

5. HMO and Selective Licensing update

Limited details available at meeting. Noted that Thurrock BC is in the process of developing a Selective Licensing scheme. Early stages of gathering evidence, including working with BRE on Stock Condition Modelling. Members reinforced the need to engage with landlords from an early stage to build trust.

Action: Further information be brought back to the next meeting from Southend and Thurrock on their schemes.

6. Stock Condition Modelling

Five South Essex LAs expressed an interest (Thurrock, Basildon, Brentwood, Rochford and Southend) and a further two authorities from the rest of Essex also showed interest (Harlow and Tendring).

Action:

- AP to contact BRE and request a proforma to be sent to each LAs to complete so they can produce a more accurate estimate. An indicative budget to be requested from South Essex Housing Group to support the work. **AP/All**

7. South Essex workplan vs (recently reconvened) Essex private housing group workplan

Agreed that the South Essex group would continue to meet and focus more strategically on joint projects. NLA/ELA were continued valued members of the SE group and were not currently represented on the Essex group.

Workplan for SE group over the next 12 months included:

- Joint BRE Stock Condition Modelling
- Ongoing sharing best practice with NLA/ELA
- Developing software to assist with HMO applications via the Planning Portal.
- Scoping a new SE tenant accreditation scheme
- Annual SE landlord forums

8. Review Housing Essex Private Rented Sector Housing topic page

Action:

- Private Rented sector topic page, all to provide links to local authority local housing strategies and related public private housing policy documents to AP for inclusion on the page e.g. private housing web site links/policies. **All**

9. Authority update: current consultations (standing item to note)

No new consultations since last meeting but ongoing gov. interventions noted i.e. landlord and agent regulation/ environmental bill.

Noted: Essex Housing Group will be holding a development Seminar on 12 March.

South Essex Domestic Abuse Hub are bidding to MHCLG to continue the service and expand its reach within local authorities. Action for all members to continue to signpost to service.

'No Use Empty' bid being submitted to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Growing Places Fund for Essex. Includes a £1m bid with £300k match which would be administered by Kent. Further information about the Kent Scheme can be found here: <https://www.no-use-empty.org.uk/>