



Report To:	Corporate and Community Committee
Date:	23 rd January 2025
Subject:	South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Private Sector Housing Strategy
Purpose:	To set the context as to how the Council intends to meet the private sector housing challenges and opportunities confronting the service and to set out the key priorities for action and delivery.
Key Decision:	Yes
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor John Baxter, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Report Of:	Emily Spicer, Assistant Director for Wellbeing & Community Leadership
Report Author:	Jonathan Challen – Service Manager for Safer Communities
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This strategy sets out the strategic direction for Private Sector Housing within the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership sub region. Our priorities will focus on:

- Raising standards in the private sector, paying particular attention to ensuring fire safety in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and removing or reducing serious hazards across both single and multiple households.
- Working with private landlords to encourage and support them to improve standards and increase the supply of affordable accommodation.
- Taking robust action against landlords who fail to remedy hazards, licence HMOs or comply with property management regulations.
- Maximise existing housing stock by focused interventions to return empty homes to use with the development of an Empty Homes Policy.

Recommendations

To consider the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Private Sector Housing Strategy prior to adoption at Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Strategy is an overarching document which gives a framework and objectives to use to further develop consistent approach to private sector housing across the Partnership. It demonstrates a clear commitment to shared objectives to improving housing standards for our residents.

Other Options Considered

To continue with individual strategies for each Council

1. Background

- 1.1 The quality of the homes we live in can have a significant impact on every aspect of our lives. Poor housing conditions, overcrowding and lack of affordability will all have an adverse effect on our residents.
- 1.2 This strategy sets out the key priorities to review housing conditions, improve standards, tackle rogue landlords and outline the approach the service will take to overcome these challenges.

2. Report

2.1 The Private Sector Housing Strategy sets out 4 key priorities, which are:

- Raising standards in the private sector,
- Maximising use of existing private sector stock,
- Regulating the private sector,
- Collaborative working.

2.1.1 Raising standards in the private sector – The overriding aim of our Housing Standards Team is to secure the best possible standards in the private sector. The team's core function is to ensure that statutory standards are met using enforcement powers as and when necessary. However, its work goes beyond that, advising and intervening to help tenants, owner occupiers and landlords with a wide range of housing issues.

- 2.1.2 Maximising use of existing private sector stock – Bringing empty homes back in to use will support our communities by improving the local environment and the quality of life of local residents. It will provide much needed accommodation for the private sector, easing the pressure for local residents wishing to remain in the area.
- 2.1.3 Regulating the private sector – Use of a wide range of options, including formal enforcement action, to ensure compliance is being met.
- 2.1.4 Collaborative working – Working with colleagues from other internal services and external agencies to improve resident’s quality of life across a wider spectrum.

2.2 To develop this strategy we considered a number of key areas in the private housing sector, on both a national and local scale, as well as the needs of the service. From this we have developed four outcome-based commitments:

- 2.2.1 Commitment 1: We proactively and effectively tackle poor conditions across the private housing sector.
- 2.2.2 Commitment 2: We will continue to work with partners, Landlords and Registered Providers to ensure that homes meet required standards so that residents can thrive in a safe home.
- 2.2.3 Commitment 3: We will work effectively to reduce the number of empty homes across the sub-region.
- 2.2.4 Commitment 4: We will tackle unlicensed HMOs across the sub-region.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The strategy provides a single corporate document that outlines the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership’s vision and ensures a point of reference, accountability and governance to shared approach to private sector housing.
- 3.2. If the Strategy is adopted there will follow further operational policies and procedures to support its delivery across the sub-region.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

If adopted by each Council, the Private Sector Housing Strategy will provide a clear and consistent approach to Customer Experience across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership. By working together services can drive efficiency and value for money for each Council.

Corporate Priorities

The development of this strategy supports the following priorities outlined in the Council's Corporate Strategy:

- Growth and Prosperity
- Safe and Resilient Communities

Staffing

Oversight and delivery of this strategy will be managed within existing staff and service resources. Any further developments of the service, to achieve future ambitions of the Council, could be subject to the requirement for additional resources, which would be incorporated within the relevant policy documents.

Workforce Capacity Implications

Oversight and delivery of this strategy will be managed within existing staff and service resources. Any further developments of the service, to achieve future ambitions of the Council, could be subject to the requirement for additional resources, which would be incorporated within the relevant policy documents.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

All constitutional and legal implications will be duly considered as part of the delivery of this strategy.

Data Protection

Whilst this strategy has no implications for data protection, any future policies that it supports will give due consideration to ensure that compliance is met.

Financial

There are no direct budget implications from adopting this strategic framework. Any decisions required for funding for actions or projects that arise as it is developed will be formally requested as appropriate.

Risk Management

The risk of a strategy not driving change at a pace that matches the ambition of South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership will be mitigated through managed delivery and oversight of the Annual Delivery Plan.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Relevant Portfolio Holder's across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership have been engaged in developing this strategy. Wider stakeholders will be consulted on future policy documents as appropriate.

Reputation

Adopting this strategy will benefit the reputation of the Council as it will demonstrate a consistent approach that will drive efficiency and standards across the private rented sector.

Contracts

There are no direct contract implications from adopting this strategy. Any decisions required for to deliver future actions or projects that arise as it is developed will be formally requested as appropriate.

Crime and Disorder

Adopting this strategy will provide opportunities to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

The strategy has been developed to ensure equal opportunities are provided for everyone and the diversity of our residents is recognised, respected and valued. Supporting vulnerable residents is a preventative approach to safeguarding.

Health and Wellbeing

Providing good quality housing conditions positively supports the wellbeing of our residents.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Improving the equality of energy performance in the private sector will positively impact on the Council's commitment to climate change.

Acronyms

HMO – House in Multiple Occupation
HHSRS – Housing Health and Safety Rating System
MEES – Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards
CPN – Civil Penalty Notice

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1	South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Private Sector Housing Strategy.
Appendix 2	Guidance and definitions

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

Report Approval

Report author: Jonathan Challen – Service Manager for Safer Communities
jonathan.challen@e-lindsey.gov.uk

Signed off by: Emily Spicer, Assistant Director – Wellbeing & Community
Leadership
emily.spicer@sholland.gov.uk

Approved for publication: Councillor John Baxter, Portfolio Holder for Housing
john.baxter@boston.gov.uk