

**WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT
Working Group Lead Member**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress achieved to date by the Working Group of the Panel reviewing houses in multiple occupation (HMO).

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the progress achieved to date by its Working Group reviewing HMO.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To keep the Panel up to date regarding the activities of its Working Group reviewing HMO in the Borough.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 A review of all current Working Groups was carried out by the Overview & Scrutiny Team with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of all Overview & Scrutiny Panels. This was completed and approval for the continuation of this Working Group is included in the 'Development of Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 A Working Group of the Panel, comprising Councillors Brossard (Lead Member), Angell, Finnie, Mrs Ingham and Mrs McKenzie- Boyle, was established to review HMOs in the Borough in October 2016.
- 5.2 The Working Group had met on three occasions during 2016 & 2017 but, due to lack of Officer Support, no meetings had taken place since 25 September 2017. At its first meeting it scoped the review and discussed the environmental health functions concerning HMO and the Council's responsibilities relating to them under housing legislation. During its second meeting the Working Group explored housing functions and any related anti-social behaviour issues associated with HMO. The Working Group's third meeting focused on discussing the rating and Council Tax arrangements and related issues concerning HMO and receiving a briefing in respect of HMO from the town planning perspective.
- 5.3 Following a review of all Working Groups by the new Overview & Scrutiny Team a fourth meeting took place on 8 June 2018. Tregear Thomas, Temporary Group Manager, Prevention and Protection Policy, attended and gave a useful update on Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) work to assess high rise buildings following the Grenfell Tower incident, as well as the work they intend to undertake in relation to HMOs in the future.

5.4 Two further meetings of the Working Group will be set up including meeting with a local specialist estate agent and a visit to an HMO.

**6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

6.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

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