



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

11 September 2013

Report Title	Approval to submit bid for “Tackling Rogue Landlord” funding	
Classification	Public	
Cabinet Member with Lead Responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
Key Decision	No	
In Forward Plan	No	
Wards Affected	All	
Accountable Strategic Director	Tim Johnson, Education and Enterprise	
Originating service	Regeneration/Housing	
Accountable officer(s)	Lesley Williams	Service Manager Private Sector Housing
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Authorise the submission of a bid for funding to the Department for Communities and Local Government to help tackle rogue landlord issues in Wolverhampton.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The DCLG invited local authorities to bid for a share of £3m which is being made available to assist local housing authorities to tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector. The deadline for submission is 20 September 2013.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Government has allocated specific funding to assist local housing authorities to crack down on the “small minority of rogue landlords in the sector who place tenants in overcrowded or poorly maintained accommodation.” Shelters Campaign “Evict Rogue Landlords” which the City Council is a supporting organisation outlines some key health impacts affecting residents living in substandard private rented properties:-

- One million renters say their health has been affected by rogue landlords not doing repairs or dealing with poor conditions in their home.
- Almost 300,000 parents who rent have reported adverse impacts on their children's health. Damp, mould, and bad ventilation are causing asthma, allergies, breathing problems and worse.
- Over a third (35%) of renting families have problems with damp in their homes, while nearly one in five (17%) have a leaky roof or windows.
- More than 700,000 renters are living in a home with electrical hazards.

2.2 Wolverhampton Council already adopts an approach of effective enforcement where engagement with the private rented sector providers to drive up standards is not effective, and also works with the Police, UK Border Agency and the Fire Service to help to identify where poor standards and overcrowding exist.

2.3 The partnership working approach has highlighted a growing problem associated with illegal working, anti-social behaviour, illegal immigration and dangerous property conditions in some neighbourhoods where private renting is much higher than the city average; the current focus for operations is predominantly in and around the Blakenhall area.

2.4 A report to Cabinet in April 2013 gave approval for employees to consider options to tackle overcrowding (amongst other housing issues) in illegal Houses in Multiple Occupation through the implementation of an Additional Licensing scheme for the city. The bid for funding would be used to strengthen the support that the Council can give to existing partnership working arrangements and target other areas of concern such as Whitmore Reans and Pennfields. The funding could also be used to carry out consultation and development of an Additional Licensing scheme or other area based Selective Licensing schemes.

2.5 Additional Licensing would require all multi-occupied properties to be registered with the Council and meet minimum standards, as opposed to those requiring mandatory licenses (three storey five or more occupants).

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 There are no direct financial implications in submitting the bid.

[JR/15082013/C]

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 There are no direct legal implications in submitting the bid.

[RB/19082013/A]

5.0 Equalities implications

5.1 There are no direct equalities implications in submitting the bid, however many residents occupying substandard and poorly managed houses in multiple occupation often suffer multiple deprivation

6.0 Environmental implications

6.1 The environmental problems associated with poor property conditions and overcrowding; improvements in the visual amenity of property and neighbourhoods will positively enhance the Council's strategic objectives of reinvigorating the city.

7.0 Schedule of background papers

7.1 Cabinet Report 10/04/13 – Houses in Multiple Occupation and Planning Controls
Green Decision Report May 2013 – Shelter Campaign to Evict Rogue Landlords;
Statement of Support