



Glasgow City Council
Neighbourhood, Housing and Public Realm
City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and
Sustainability

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Item 6

27th September 2022

GLASGOW TENANT-LED HOUSING COMMISSION (PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR)

Purpose of Report:

To inform members on the key findings and recommendations of Glasgow Tenant-Led Housing Commission (Private Rented Sector) and that the proposals will inform the development of Glasgow's new Housing Strategy 2023-28.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider the Glasgow Tenant-Led Glasgow Housing Commission (Private Rented Sector) report and the 16 recommendations and
- b) Note the key role of Tenants Information Service (TIS) who were engaged as an external partner to set up and support the Commission; and
- c) Note the extensive work undertaken by the Commission Board to investigate, gather evidence and deliberate on reform recommendations; and
- d) Invite the Commission members to present the Glasgow Tenant-Led Glasgow Housing Commission (Private Rented Sector) report in a targeted engagement session; and
- e) Note that the 16 recommendations will inform development of Glasgow's Housing Strategy 2023-28.

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes No

Consulted: Yes No

1. Background

- 1.1.** In December 2020, Glasgow City Council passed a motion which stated that “Glasgow has a rent crisis for many in the private rented sector”. The motion resolved “to set up a tenant-led Commission to make recommendations on reforms needed to address this crisis, including action to limit rent increases in the private rented sector.”
- 1.2.** Local authorities are required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to prepare a local housing strategy (LHS) supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. LHS provide direction for tackling housing issues and inform future investment in housing and related services. Glasgow’s Housing Strategy (GHS) is Glasgow City Council’s main, five-year statutory plan for housing, which sets out strategic priorities and objectives. The GHS which will cover the period 2023-2028 is currently being developed.

2. Glasgow’s Tenant-Led Housing Commission (Private Rented Sector)

- 2.1.** This Commission was a unique undertaking. To be tenant-led it required appropriate representation, participation and direction from people with lived experience as private rented tenants (current and former tenants) as well as from representative organisations with experience of engaging with tenants and residents.
- 2.2.** A principal requirement was that the Commission was inclusive, accountable and fair, in both its functions and its deliberations. To ensure inclusion and independence from the Council, Tenants Information Service (TIS), under the scope of the Engage Influence Change (EIC) project, were engaged as a partner for establishing the Commission and provided support throughout.
- 2.3.** Following an open invitation process, a Commission Board was set up comprising of 11 current and former PRS tenants, and 6 representatives from organisations with experience and expertise in engaging with private sector tenants. The Board had two Co-Chairs’ that were elected by and from the 11 current and former PRS tenants.
- 2.4.** Based on the Council’s motion, the Commission Terms of Reference were agreed as follows:
 - i.** To investigate the nature and extent of private rented sector housing across the Glasgow City Council area and how it functions to meet different housing needs and demand including consideration of housing supply options, conditions and repairs, energy efficiency, rents and affordability;
 - ii.** To agree an inclusive methodology for collating essential data and information regarding private rented housing;
 - iii.** To engage with key stakeholder groups, organisations, community groups and the public, through a comprehensive ‘Evidence Gathering’ approach;
 - iv.** To establish a robust and credible evidence monitoring and evaluation framework for private rented sector housing across Glasgow which

addresses issues of housing supply options, conditions and repairs, energy efficiency, rents and affordability; and

- v. To produce a report and recommendations for reforms, including developments and improvement that address issues of housing supply options, conditions and repairs, energy efficiency, rents and affordability, which will inform Glasgow’s Housing Strategy and feed into national policy development where appropriate.

2.5. The Commission first met in September 2021 and agreed the terms of reference as well as a code of conduct. Thereafter, the Board met on a monthly basis. It invited presentations and deliberated on evidence covering the full scope of investigation set out in the terms of reference.

3. Commission Recommendations

3.1. The Commission report which is in Appendix: “Private Rented Sector Glasgow Tenant-Led Housing Commission Report: August 2022” sets out key findings and 16 reform recommendations.

Focus	Commission Recommendations
Affordable Housing	1. Glasgow City Council to prioritise affordable social housing development across all sites through a review and reform of local planning policy and/or guidance.
Landlords	2. Glasgow City Council to utilise the landlord registration database to communicate and upskills landlords (for example training opportunities) whilst exploring other means to provide guidance and support to landlords not accessing the landlord advice service.
Landlord enforcement	3. Glasgow City Council to increase resources and staffing to introduce a proactive approach to property inspections, and subsequent enforcement action, to increase the quality of PRS housing and standards of management.
	4. Glasgow City Council to establish a joint network of partnership organisations to maximise property inspections and means of identifying properties that fall below minimum standards.
Tenants	5. Glasgow City Council to establish a tenant-led forum/platform for meaningful engagement with Glasgow’s private rented sector tenants.
	6. Glasgow City Council to work with stakeholder organisations to identify opportunities to support and upskill tenants to communicate confidently and influence the housing services they receive.
Tenancy deposits, disputes and evictions	7. Glasgow City Council to develop and deliver a training programme for stakeholder agencies, focused on identifying and dealing with illegal evictions to encourage intervention and support when required.
Accessibility and adaptations	8. Glasgow City Council to work with stakeholder agencies to assess existing PRS stock, to determine how many tenants are living in unsuitable accommodation. Thereafter, tenants should be supported, in partnership with stakeholder agencies, to access properties that meet their needs, creating more sustainable tenancies.

Focus	Commission Recommendations
	9. Glasgow City Council to develop an intermediary register of landlords with adapted, accessible and approved PRS properties to reduce the number of tenants in unsuitable accommodation.
Housing and Welfare PRS Hub	10. Glasgow City Council to recognise the increasing demand for the integral Housing and Welfare PRS Hub and continue to appropriately resource this essential service.
	11. Glasgow City Council to expand the current scope of this service to the wider PRS sector to ensure referrals are open to everyone.
Quality of Housing and Standards of management	12. Glasgow City Council to utilise Enhanced Enforcement Area status and powers in similar areas of high density PRS households as a means of addressing and improving poor quality housing and standards of management.
	13. Glasgow City Council to commit resources to the development and establishment of tenants' and residents' groups / associations within mixed tenure (for example tenement) housing stock, to proactively communicate and address cyclical maintenance and repairs, as well as nurturing a sense of community.
Rents and affordability	14. Glasgow City Council to work in partnership with Scottish Government to introduce a robust and measured approach to a points-based system of rent controls, based on property standard and/or condition, to incentivise landlords to invest in their properties, as a means of justifying rent levels. Subsequently, improving the quality of PRS housing and standards of management.
Students	15. Glasgow City Council to work in partnership with stakeholder organisations to safeguard students' welfare and ensure students are not "priced out" of education due to a lack of affordable housing options.
Discrimination	16. Glasgow City Council to work in partnership with stakeholder organisations to proactively identify and eradicate discriminatory practices across Glasgow's PRS.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The model developed to engage private rented tenants and draw on the lived experience of private rented tenants through the independent Commission is an innovative and new model. It would be good practice to gather the views of Commission Board members concerning their experience of serving on the Commission and to present their recommendations to Members of the Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm City Policy Committee in a targeted engagement session.

4.2 The 16 recommendations cover a wide range of issues that require further consideration from a strategic, policy and financial perspective at a local and national level. The Council will continue to liaise with key stakeholders and take account of the TIS report when developing the updated Housing Strategy for 2023 – 2028.

5. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource

Implications:

Financial: No direct financial issues.

Legal: No direct legal issues

Personnel: No direct personnel issues

Procurement: No direct personnel issues

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25 Yes, specifically: Tackling Poverty; Reducing Health Inequality; and Empowering Communities

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? The recommendations are positive in terms of more accessible, affordable housing for all groups in the Private Rented Sector.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage. The recommendations include meeting the housing and wider needs of Glasgow's growing and diverse population.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: Yes. The recommendations in relation to housing standards and conditions will contribute towards a Just Transition.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? The recommendations to address housing standards and conditions in the private rented sector will contribute towards a reduction in domestic CO2 emissions.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? The recommendations include a fabric first approach to improvements in the Private Rented Sector.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts: No Privacy and Data Protection impacts identified as a result of this report.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is asked to:

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