

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2015

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 9 July 2015. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Perminder Purewal, Democratic Services Officer.

1. PRIVATE RENTED LETTINGS

The Council Noted

1. The number of households renting privately in the borough has increased from 15,500 to 26,100 between 2001 and 2011¹
2. In 2012 a total of 31,810 privately rented properties were identified in the area and estimated that the PRS now makes up 32% of borough's housing stock/residential dwellings.²
3. With approximately 66% of all tenancies being arranged through the letting market³
4. The average letting agent fee is £355 in England and Wales⁴
5. The average costs of moving into private rented accommodation are around £2000 in London⁵
6. One in four people have been charged what they felt were unfair letting agency fees⁶

This Council Believed

1. High letting agency fees place an unfair burden on prospective renters who are unable to plan for unpredictable and arbitrary costs
2. That as the private rented sector grows and the use of Letting Agencies increase it is vital to improve the security and conditions for the increasing number of tenants in Waltham Forest

¹ ONS Census Data, 2011

² Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2012

³ Which? Renting roulette, Consumer experience of the lettings market, November 2012

⁴ YouGov Survey, 2012

⁵ Resolution Foundation, Renting in the Dark, 2011

⁶ YouGov Survey for Shelter, December 2011

3. A lack of transparency allows Letting Agencies to double charge landlords and tenants for the same service
4. That some agents in the letting market charge high fees, which do not reflect the service they provide, simply because they can

This Council Resolved

1. To require letting agents to undertake comprehensive publication of their fees and charges
2. To utilise powers granted in the 2015 Consumer Rights Act that allow the imposition of sanctions following non-publication of fees
3. To call on the government to introduce primary legislation that will end upfront fees paid by tenants to letting agents

2. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2014-15

The Council **agreed** the Annual Treasury Management report 2014/15.

3. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION - EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES

The Council:

- (a) **adopted** the amended Employment Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix A of the report;
- (b) **agreed** the establishment of an Independent Panel as an advisory committee of the Council with the terms of reference set out in Appendix B of the report;
- (c) **delegated** to the Chief Operating Officer (or her nominee) the authority to make arrangements for the appointment of independent panel members and to appoint those members and to amend any HR policies as appropriate to reflect these changes and to provide training to the new independent panel members; and
- (d) **amended** the Members Allowance Scheme so that independent panel members are paid at the same rate as the current independent member appointed for the purposes of the Code of Conduct.

4. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Council **adopted** the revised Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee at Appendix 1 of the report.

5. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT

The Council **noted** the Audit and Governance Committee's 2014/15 Annual Report.

6. APPOINTMENTS

The Council agreed the following appointments:

Other Committees and Outside bodies

Mobility Forum

Cllr Paul Braham be appointed to replace Cllr Alan Siggers

Transport Liaison Consultative Group

Cllr Paul Braham be appointed to replace Cllr Alan Siggers

Cllr Shameem Highfield be appointed to replace Cllr Marie Pye

Waltham Forest Race Equality Council: Management Board

Cllr Peter Herrington be appointed to replace Cllr Bernadette Mill

Waltham Forest Race Equality Council: Executive Committee

Cllr Peter Herrington be appointed to replace Cllr Bernadette Mill