

To: Cabinet

Date: 11 October 2023

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Scrutiny Feedback to Cabinet – Preparing for Regulatory Change (Housing)

SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED	
Report Title:	Preparing for Regulatory Change (Housing)
Purpose/Description of Report:	The report provides information about the work being undertaken to prepare Melton Borough Council for the introduction of the new regulatory arrangements.
Key Decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Cllr M Brown, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Cllr P Allnatt, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

1. Introduction and Overview

The Scrutiny Committee met on 21 September 2023 to consider a report on preparing for regulatory change (housing).

The Housing White Paper published in November 2017 suggested wide ranging changes to the way Social Housing is regulated, including moving from a reactive to a proactive regulatory approach. Work to develop and implement a new regulatory regime has taken place since, leading to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 receiving royal assent in July 2023.

The new regulation regime will apply to all social housing landlords with more than 1000 properties and will be enforced by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). With a stock of approximately 1800 homes, this applies to Melton Borough Council. This report provides information about the work being undertaken to prepare Melton Borough Council for the introduction of these new arrangements.

2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration

- The comment was made that rent arrears remains high, however Members were assured that steps are being taken, with further action proposed to ensure a significant and sustainable improvement.
- A concern was raised regarding the ability of the Council to evict tenants who damage property but are covered by statutory obligations to house them. The Committee were assured that Officers have sufficient tools to resolve these problems, but that eviction can take place, although in certain circumstance it would not be an easy process.
- Concerns were raised in the respect that 48 hours' notice for an inspection of regulatory compliance does seem like short notice and wasn't reasonable. Officers advised that considered the notice to be reasonable and would provide a realistic insight for and ability for the Regulator to check the council's landlord service at any given time.
- Members expect that the budgets are spent and were pleased to hear that budgetary spend is on target.
- Members committed to reviewing progress on preparing for regulatory change at their meeting in April 2024, and that this meeting would be hosted in a community location, and managed in a way that enables scrutiny committee members to hear directly from tenants.

Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee