

Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council

Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021: Action Plan 2016-17

Actions	Related Priorities	Progress/Update
<p>Provide advice and information to landlords and tenants on standards in private rented dwellings and landlord/tenant responsibilities.</p> <p>We will provide up to date advice and information about standards in the private rented sector on the councils’ websites, for both landlords and tenants.</p> <p>We will publicise the powers of local authorities to investigate and enforce unsatisfactory conditions in private rented housing on the websites and through partner agencies such as CAB.</p> <p>The Council will endeavour to hold a joint Landlord Forum at least once year to provide advice and information to private landlords and letting agents on legal requirements and good practice.</p> <p>We will circulate information to private landlords and letting agents where there are changes in the law or new good practice guidance.</p> <p>Investigate the development of a landlord training package and associated certification process.</p> <p>Investigate the development of a local scoring system for Houses in Multiple Occupation (similar to food hygiene approach) and consider how this may be publicised.</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of setting up a ‘trip advisor’ type scheme for tenants to feedback on conditions in the private rented sector.</p>	<p>1, 3 and 4</p>	

<p>Provide financial assistance to priority groups, in the form of grants and loans for essential repairs, adaptations and energy efficiency improvements.</p> <p>The full policy for giving financial assistance is contained in the Housing Financial Assistance Policy. Grants and loans will only be approved where financial resources permit.</p> <p>Investigate introduction of ‘preferred contractors’ list or bulk contractors to reduce costs.</p> <p>Explore alternative sources of funding such as charities and Credit Unions and advice services which can assist residents in making applications for funding.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3 and 4</p>	
<p>Use its enforcement and licensing powers where appropriate to ensure that minimum standards are met.</p> <p>The Councils have adopted a Housing Enforcement Policy and a House in Multiple Occupation Policy. Inspections and enforcement decisions will be taken in accordance with these policies.</p> <p>We will also abide by the government’s concordat of Good Enforcement.</p> <p>We will consider actions necessary to identify unlicensed HMO accommodation and ‘beds in sheds’ and how these may best be tackled.</p>	<p>1 and 3</p>	
<p>We will investigate options and actions to increase the supply of accommodation, particularly affordable private rented accommodation and homes suitable for the needs of people with disabilities.</p> <p>We will provide advice and assistance to owner of long term empty homes to help them return them to use. Chiltern District Council has an Empty Homes Strategy which sets out how it aims to work with owners of empty dwellings to bring them back into use. This approach will be considered in South Bucks,</p>	<p>1 and 3</p>	

<p>subject to available resources.</p> <p>We will offer a Flexible Home Improvement Loan for owners of empty homes in both the Chiltern and South Bucks Districts.</p> <p>We will investigate whether local Registered Providers are interested in developing and managing good quality HMO accommodation.</p> <p>We will investigate opportunities for ensuring conversions and developments of residential property meet the needs of people with disabilities.</p>		
<p>Support services and schemes which seek to tackle fuel poverty</p> <p>We will continue to be members of the Bucks Affordable Warmth Network, which operates a free telephone helpline for residents, provides outreach events and training to front line workers.</p> <p>We will publicise the Affordable Warmth Helpline.</p> <p>We will publicise and support schemes which offer grants for energy efficiency improvements and other assistance for people at risk of fuel poverty.</p> <p>We will contribute to the preparation and implementation of a Bucks wide Affordable Warmth Action Plan.</p> <p>We will seek to work with Age UK to develop a pilot scheme to improve the energy efficiency of mobile homes.</p> <p>We will consider offering an 'Energy Efficiency Grant' to provide financial assistance to target groups, in conjunction with wider projects and where resources permit.</p>	<p>1, 2 and 4</p>	

Provide advice and information to all residents on home maintenance and home energy efficiency.

The Councils have prepared a joint Action Plan under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1996, which sets out how we will seek to improve home energy efficiency across the districts. This plan will be reviewed and updated in line with statutory requirements.

We will promote the Trading Standards 'Buy With Confidence' scheme and also update the websites with general advice on choosing a builder and undertaking home maintenance tasks.

We will work with Age UK Bucks to promote its Handy Person and local builder schemes.

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