

Delivering the Plan for Private Rented Housing

The following actions will be overseen by the Charter Steering Group in order to deliver improvements to:

- Quality and management of properties in the private rented sector including fair trading by business
- Health and wellbeing of tenants
- Choice of and access to private rented housing
- Tenants ability to sustain tenancies in the long term

Key:

- To be done
- Ongoing/in progress
- ✓ Done

	Aims	Actions	Who	When	Resources	Targets
I	Promote the Plymouth Charter for the Private Rented Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secure publicity on launch ✓ Article on Staff Room ✓ Place on PCC website • Take to Private Rented Forum ✓ Include in email newsletter to landlords/agents ✓ Wider distribution across stakeholders in PRS. ✓ Article in Chamber of commerce newsletter ○ Develop Logo for the work of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Team • Private Sector Housing Manager (PSHM) ✓ All Steering Group Members ✓ SAMS 	<p>March 2015 and ongoing</p> <p>December 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p> <p>May 2015</p> <p>Spring 2016</p>	<p>Within existing staff resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Initial landlord/agent audience of 1000. ✓ Initial tenant support agency audience of 50 Logo to be used on

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		the steering group/Charter – currently liaising with West of England Authorities on a SW wide mark of quality	✓ PCC			member stationery, websites.
2	Support the delivery of training and accreditation of landlords and agents working in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotion of available courses and benefits of attending. ✓ Promotion of 50 discounted places to mark launch of Charter/Plan in e newsletter ✓ Provide talks and presentations through Private Rented Forum • Consider feasibility of making training a condition of HMO licensing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All Steering Group members • PSHM 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sept 2016</p>	<p>Within existing staff resources</p> <p>Within existing staff resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of trained landlords by 20% each year • Increase the number of accredited landlords by 20% each year. • Option appraisal produced
3	Promote best practice in contracts for private renting and the standards required to manage the tenancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review model tenancy agreement at PRF. ○ Articles in e newsletter promoting code of practice, training and model tenancy agreement ✓ Signpost tenants and landlords to Redress Schemes where poor quality of service from letting/managing agents. ✓ Improve information on website to emphasise good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PRF ✓ PSHM ✓ All Steering Group Members ✓ PSHM 	<p>April 2016</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April/May 2015</p>	<p>Within existing staff resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on pros and cons of the document with recommendations • Information sent to all known agents operating in city. • Information to all known agents operating in City.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Publicise requirements of Consumer Rights Act 2015 (requirement on letting agents to display all fees) ✓ Undertake visits to main agents and carry out mini audit on fees, EPCs, good practice. ○ Provide comparison of fees for tenants/landlords ✓ See also section 10 – investment in EasyLet with a view to improving management of scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TS/PRT ○ TS/PRT ○ TS/PRT/HO 	<p>May 2015</p> <p>Summer 2015</p> <p>Nov 2015</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1500 on mailing list • At least 20 agents visited • Information on website and in hand out.
4	Explore the viability of a 'virtual' Tenants' forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examine pros and cons of proposed scheme ○ Identify best model or scheme ○ Determine costs to implement and run proposed scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSHM, CAB, Shelter, University of Plymouth and Students Union, PCH. 	April 2016	Additional resource is likely to be needed to implement and manage such a project.	Costed plan with recommendations to implement or not
5	Develop a 'Plymouth Healthy Homes Guide'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Research best practice ✓ Consult on content ✓ Agree final version and promote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSHM 	May 2015	Within existing staff resource	Guide on website and distributed to approximately 1500 recipients of newsletter
6	Explore the best way of tackling substandard houses in multiple occupation across the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review options available including costs, benefits and risks. ✓ Produce report with recommendations for best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Private Sector Housing Officer 	May 2015	Resources needed for best option will be identified.	Production of report showing costs/benefits of different options and recommendation for optimal strategy

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		option				
7	Helping tenants understand energy costs and how to achieve a healthy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Production of short video showing how to manage indoor environment and prevent damp and mould • Produce/promote information about SAP ratings and their implications for energy costs • Target information on need to improve energy efficiency on landlords/tenants in properties known to be rated F – G • Visit Estate Agents to advise on upcoming restrictions so that they can advise purchasers ○ Promotion of energy efficiency grant funding to landlords/tenants ○ Where necessary, take enforcement action to provide affordable heating and prevent damp/mould ✓ Signpost tenants to Advice Plymouth for energy advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT/PEC/LCT • PRT/PEC/LCT • PRT/PEC/LCT • PRT/LCT/TS • PRT/PEC/LCT • PRT/PEC/LCT • PRT • HO/PRT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2015 Dec 2015 From Jan 2016 – 2018 From Jan 2016 - 2018 When opportunity arises As necessary As necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded through successful bid to DEC Within existing staff resource Within existing staff resource Within existing staff resource Reliant on successful funding bids Within existing staff resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Initial landlord/agent audience of 1000. ✓ Initial tenant support agency audience of 50 ✓ Offer use of video to members of Plymouth Housing Services Partnership ✓ Place video on website and run at NGS • Target audience as above • All landlords contacted at least once before new regulations in place • At least 20 estate agents visited. • Removal of at least 50 instances of Cat I hazard for Excess Cold

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8	Ensure tenants understand rights, responsibilities and how to manage their tenancies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage landlords and agents to provide 'How to Rent' leaflet when setting up tenancies ✓ Encourage tenant support groups to provide 'How to Rent' leaflet ✓ Promote 'How to Rent' leaflet on correspondence with landlords, tenants, agents etc. • Establish workshops for students about to move to private rented housing – this to be pilot for wider delivery ✓ Develop 'Housing Fayre' for University. • Development of housing pack/App for private renting advice and information. ✓ Delivery of a credible, accredited pre-tenancy training package, accessible throughout the single homeless pathway ✓ Hold focus group to explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All • All • All <p>LJ/SW/VB</p> <p>UoP/UPSO/PRT</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>DC</p>	<p>tbd</p> <p>6/7 October</p> <p>September 2015 - August 2016</p>	<p>Within existing staff resource</p> <p>Approximately £20k earmarked from single homelessness project funding. Within existing staff resource.</p>	<p>It is now a statutory requirement to provide this leaflet at the commencement of new tenancies.</p> <p>200 single people receive pre-tenancy training.</p>

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		landlord perspectives regarding further development of pre tenancy training into an accredited tenant scheme.	DC/LJ	October 2015		
9	Respond quickly to complaints about housing standards, poor management, harassment, illegal eviction and unfair or aggressive practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review existing policies and procedures including target response/resolution times ○ Produce clear guidance on service standards to be delivered ○ Update team procedure guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSHM 	Sept 2015	Within existing staff resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear service standards on website and other literature. • Clear guidance for staff on intervention in range of situations. • Quarterly reports on performance and outputs.
10	Investing in the development of HouseLet and EasyLet Schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Transfer of management of EasyLet to PATH ○ Review options for management of HouseLet following ending of existing contract • Develop model for using private rented property to discharge homelessness duty including decisions on 'fit and proper' landlords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ PCC Accommodation Team/PATH/PRT • Accommodation Manager • Housing Casework Manager/PSHM 	<p>April 2015</p> <p>Feb 2016</p> <p>April 2016</p>	Within existing staff resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced delivery costs, voids and more flexible accommodation for homeless families • Sustainable model and procedure guide for use of private rented housing.
11	Supporting the Plan for Empty Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer empty properties to Housing Delivery Team as need arises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT 	Ongoing	Within existing staff resource	Complaints about condition of empty properties to be dealt

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take enforcement action to reduce nuisance from problem empty properties ✓ Investment in development of HouseLet and EasyLet as a means of bringing empty properties back into use. See Section 10. 				with within target timescale of 90 days.
12	Opportunities for institutional investment to create new private rented accommodation in the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Plan for Homes, which aims to work with institutional investors to attract new investment for housing including new private rented accommodation. The Council is currently working with QSH to deliver 10 new rented apartments at the site of the former SHIP hostel. • We are also exploring the Opt-to-Buy scheme, which enables people to rent whilst improving their credit histories and save for a deposit. • Support applications to the Homes and Communities Agency for Build-to-Rent applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RPs • Developers • PCC • Institutional investors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan for Homes covers the five year period up to March 2019. • As and when funding is available. 	<p>Within existing team resource</p> <p>Resources will need to be reviewed if PCC is to take a more proactive approach to identifying opportunities for new build private rented housing.</p>	To deliver the first 10 private rented units on PCC land at the former SHIP hostel, during 2016/17.