

DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
SUBJECT:	INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND
DATE OF DECISION:	16 NOVEMBER 2023
REPORT OF:	SCRUTINY MANAGER

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY
<p>For the opening meeting of the inquiry focussing on getting a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton, the Panel will, in accordance with the Inquiry Plan, be considering the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shape of the private rental sector in Southampton • Understanding tenants needs and concerns • National legislation and policy • How the Council and partners seek to manage and oversee the private rental sector in Southampton.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
(i) The Panel is recommended to consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS
1. To enable the Panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the review process.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
2. None.

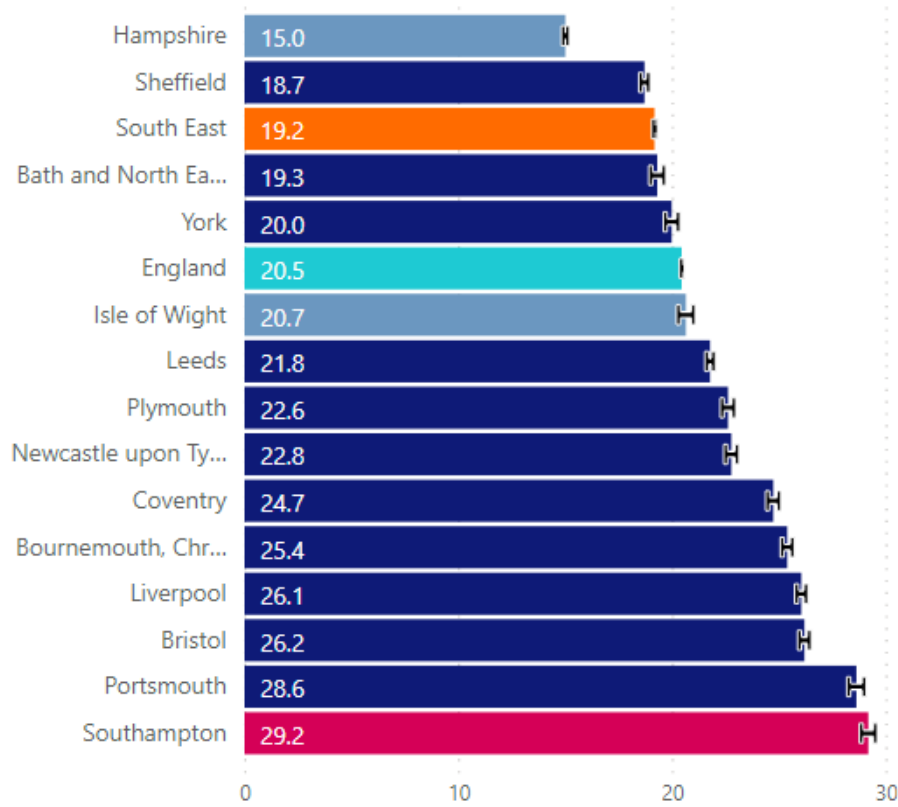
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)
3. In 2021 29.2% of Southampton’s households lived in private rented sector accommodation (approximately 30,000). This is the highest out of Southampton’s comparator cities ¹ and has increased from 24.9% in 2011. ²

¹ Census 2021 - [Microsoft Power BI](#)

² [How life has changed in Southampton: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

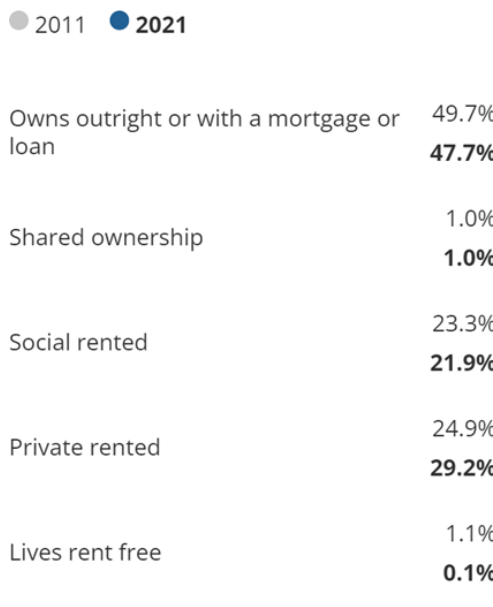
4.

Figure 1 - Tenure of household – Private rented percentage of households, Southampton and ONS Comparators: Census 2021



5.

Figure 2 – Percentage of households by housing tenure, Southampton

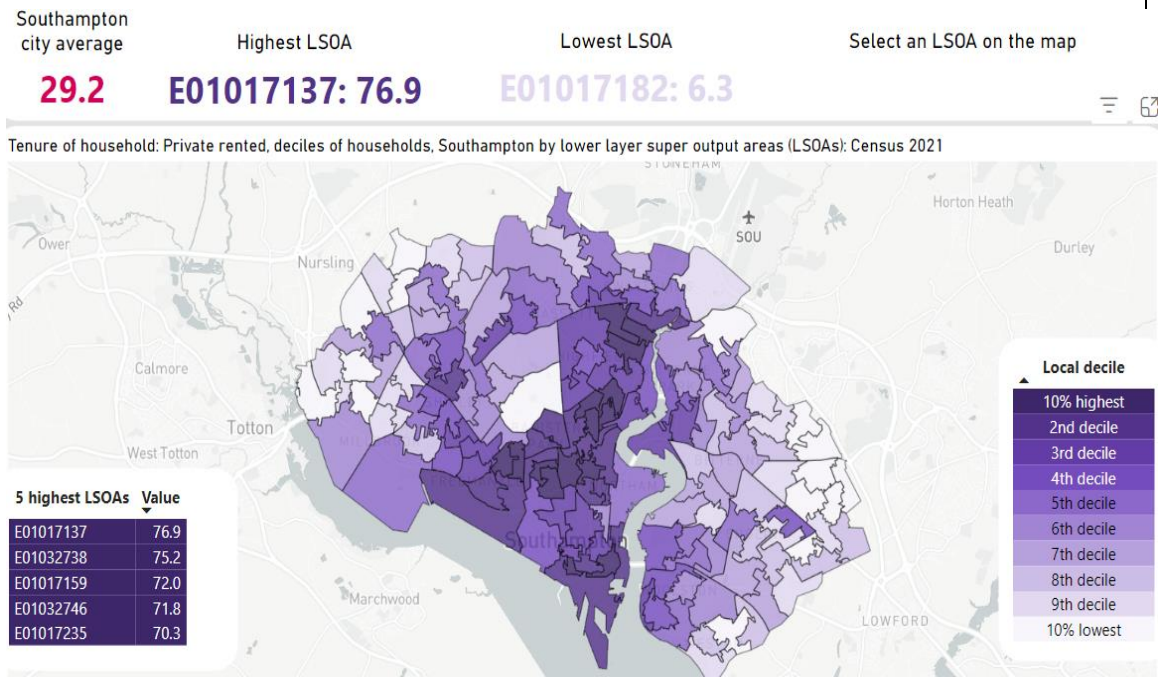


Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

6.

As identified in Figure 3, the areas of Southampton with the highest percentage of households that are occupied by private renters are located in the central wards of the city, clustered around the inner city and the universities. The highest identified value is 76.9% in the Banister and Polygon Ward.

7. **Figure 3 – Tenure of household: Private rented in Southampton**



The cost of renting

8. The ONS Private rental market summary statistics in England from April 2022 to March 2023 identified that the median monthly rent in Southampton was £875³. This is £50 higher than the national median but £123 lower than the South-East median.

2022/2023	Room	Studio	One Bedroom	Two Bedrooms	Three Bedrooms	Four or more Bedrooms	All categories
England Median Rent	£460	£625	£725	£800	£900	£1500	£825
Southampton Median Rent	£420	£600	£700	£900	£1100	£1450	£875

[Private rental market summary statistics in England - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Condition

9. A recent private sector stock condition survey has not been undertaken in Southampton. The 2008 Southampton City Council Private Sector House Condition Survey found that over 28,000 (38%) of privately owned and rented homes in the city do not meet the Decent Homes Standard.⁴

Invited Guests

10. To provide context to the information above, and to ensure that the Inquiry Panel have an overview of national and local issues relating to the private rented sector in Southampton, a number of guests have been invited to present at the inaugural meeting of the inquiry:

³ [Private rental market summary statistics in England - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁴ [Housing and Homelessness \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://southampton.gov.uk)

- **Conor O'Shea – Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Generation Rent**

[Generation Rent](#) is a campaigning organisation whose mission is for every home in the private rented sector to be safe, secure and affordable. Through their campaigns Generation Rent make sure that the voices of private renters are heard by landlords, by policymakers, and by politicians.

Conor has been asked to provide the inaugural presentation and to outline:

- The key challenges that Private Renters are experiencing in England
- A brief insight outlining the underlying reasons behind the challenges
- Opportunities and potential solutions to the challenges.

Following Conor's presentation, the initial findings from Southampton City Council's Private Renters Survey, attached as Appendix 1, will be discussed.

- **Southampton Tenants Union**

Southampton Tenants Union has been formed to fight for better housing and to reduce the exploitation of tenants in Southampton. The organisation will be present at each meeting of the inquiry and will ensure that the voice of the private renter in the city is heard.

At the 16 November meeting the Tenants Union have been asked to provide a brief overview on the key issues / challenges that have been raised by private sector renters in Southampton. This information can then be compared with the findings from the Private Renters Survey.

- **Representatives from Landlord Organisations**

In addition to the Tenants Union being in attendance at each meeting, representatives from the [National Residential Landlords Organisation](#) (NRLA) and [iHOWZ](#) have been invited to be in attendance to ensure that the voice of the landlord is represented throughout the inquiry.

Liz Mackenzie, Regional Representative from the NRLA, Sam Watkins, Senior Policy Officer at the NRLA and Peter Littlewood, Chief Executive Officer at iHOWZ have been asked to provide an insight into what it is like being a landlord in Southampton.

- **Professor Helen Carr and Dr Mark Jordan from the [People, Property and Community Research Centre, Southampton Law School, University of Southampton](#)**

Professor Carr and Dr Jordan will be expert advisers to the Inquiry Panel and will provide insights at each meeting relating to legislation and alternative practice and approaches. At the inaugural meeting Professor Carr and Dr Jordan will provide an overview of the legislative/policy landscape relating to Private Rented Housing. A briefing paper providing a synopsis of Local Authority regulation of the private rented sector in England is attached as Appendix 2.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Hayes-Arter, Service Manager for Private Sector Housing & Port Health at Southampton City Council <p>Finally, the City Council's Private Sector Housing Manager will summarise how the Council and partners seek to manage and oversee the private rental sector in Southampton.</p>
11.	<p>The invited guests will take questions from the Panel relating to the evidence provided. Copies of any presentations will be made available to the Panel and will be published on the Inquiry Panel's pages on the Council website:</p> <p>Browse meetings - Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton? Southampton City Council.</p>

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue/Property/Other

12. Resources to support the scrutiny review will come from existing budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

13. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Other Legal Implications:

14. None

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

16. None

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Southampton Private Rented Sector – Scrutiny Inquiry Panel Survey Report
2.	Briefing paper: Local authority regulation of the private rented sector in England

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out? No

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential	
1.	None	