Law Commission
Reforming the law

Conquest House 37-38 John Street
Theobalds Road, London, WC1N 2BQ
t: 020 7453 1235 f: 020 7453 1297
e: communications@lawcommission.gsi.gov.uk

**Press Release**
**Embargoed until 00.01 13 July 2007**

## How can we ensure better management of the private rented sector?

Too much privately rented property is in a poor condition and is poorly managed. Although enacted with the best of intentions, the law does not operate as Parliament hoped.

The Law Commission, in a consultation paper "Encouraging Responsible Letting" published today, asks how can the existing law, intended to regulate the private rented sector, be made more effective? Can new ways of regulating the sector be developed that will encourage better management of rented property?

Martin Partington, the Commission's Special Consultant on Housing Law, said

> "One consequence of poor housing management and standards is that the private rented sector continues to suffer from a poor reputation which prevents it from playing as full a role in the housing market as it should. Much is happening: local authorities are increasingly engaging with private landlords, offering a range of services and both letting agents' and landlords' representative bodies have developed codes of good practice. But the majority of private landlords do not belong to such bodies so enforcement is a real issue. We believe enforced self- regulation is the key to effecting real change. We very much welcome views on our proposals".

The Commission takes the view that a partnership approach to regulation, with engagement by both the regulated community and the regulator, is the best approach. It proposes that the industry should take responsibility for ensuring the key standards, which are already set out in legislation, are met.

The central proposal is that all private landlords should either join a local authority accreditation scheme; become a member of one of the associations of private landlords; or let their premises through an accredited letting agent. The Government would give a central body powers to approve industry schemes and to ensure they worked effectively. It would also, as a power of last resort, be able to prevent a landlord or agent not signed up to one of the approved schemes from letting residential property.

The consultation closes on 12 October 2007.

### Notes for Editors

1. The Law Commission is a non-political independent body, set up by Parliament in 1965 to keep all the law of England and Wales under review, and to recommend reform where it is needed.
2. For further details on this project visit http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/housing_renting.htm.
3. To respond to the consultation email public@lawcommission.gsi.gov.uk
4. For all press queries please contact:
   Correna Callender, Communications Manager 020 7453 1273
   or Dan Leighton 020 7453 1235
   e-mail: communications@lawcommission.gsi.gov.uk