

Housing Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Ashley Yeates, Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, Housing & Wellbeing

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Key Decision? **YES NO (delete as appropriate)**

Local Ward Members Affects all Wards



REGULATORY AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced mandatory licensing of higher risk houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and a new system of assessing the condition of housing known as the "Housing Health and Safety Rating System" (HHSRS). These both cover a range of potential risks to the health and safety of occupiers and visitors to these dwellings.
- 1.2 Recent changes to HMO Licensing regime have led to an increased number of properties now requiring a licence. This in turn has prompted the need for guidance to landlords to ensure their Licensed HMOs meet minimum criteria. This report relates to the approval of the proposed standards.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Amenity Standards at Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018 introduced a new definition for a licensable HMO, effectively removing the requirement for the property to be three storeys.
- 3.2 The law changed on 1st October 2018 and as a result the Council has received a number of applications for HMOs which are newly captured by the change.
- 3.3 Many local authorities adopt HMO standards to guide landlords in relation to what is required to get an HMO licenced. Such standards assist landlords, owners, managing agents, tenants and other interested parties in determining what work they might need to carry out to be able to gain a licence and therefore operate legally.
- 3.4 Our own draft standards are attached at Appendix 1.

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| Alternative Options | 1. Provide no amenity standards. Discounted due to the need to assist landlords in determining what works they may have to carry out to bring their property up to standard. This also assists the Housing Officer who can simply direct enquirers to the standards in many cases. |
| Consultation | 1. None. The guidance is designed to assist landlords in understanding the requirements for being licenced. |
| Financial Implications | 1. None. |
| Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan | 1. The proposals impact upon the District Council's Strategic Plan 2016 -20 objectives of Healthy and Safe Communities. |
| Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications | 1. No implications. |
| Crime & Safety Issues | 1. No implications. |