

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Public Protection Streetscene and Community (Introduced by the Executive Member for Public Protection)	Executive Cabinet	27 August 2015

## **HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION – ADOPTION OF STANDARDS**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To seek adoption of standards for the provision of accommodation in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. Members adopt the standards for accommodation in HMO's as set out in Appendix A to this report.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

3. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) can be defined as premises where there are at last 3 tenants being accommodated who form more than one household and there is a sharing of facilities such as toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities.
4. A household is defined as either a single person or members of the same family living together.
5. There are certain requirements over and above the general housing standards in the private rented sector that must be met for HMOs and in some cases HMOs of a particular size can only be operated if licenced by the Council.
6. Currently there are estimated to be around 15 HMO's in Chorley, 2 of which are of a size requiring a licence to operate.
7. Historically standards in HMO's have been maintained through periodic inspection by Council officers and liaison with landlords to ensure satisfactory standards in relation to property repair, provision of shared facilities and fire protection measures.
8. However this sector of the housing market is becoming increasingly popular and property developers are increasingly seeking to procure large premises for conversion to HMO type accommodation as it fills a market gap between hostel/lodging type accommodation and fully self-contained housing accommodation.
9. In order to promote consistency of provision in this type of accommodation the Council should adopt a set of standards against which HMO landlords can be advised to provide and where the HMO is licensable the standards can be conditional on the HMO licence being granted.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

#### **(If the recommendations are accepted)**

10. To ensure the Council has appropriate and consistent standards against which providers of houses in multiple occupation can be assessed.
11. The adoption of these standards will provide useful guidance to landlords who provide HMO accommodation that does not require a licence to operate and clear licence conditions applicable to HMO's that do require a licence.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

12. Having no adopted standards is rejected on the basis that these standards provide a useful benchmark against which this HMO type of accommodation can be measured.

### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

13. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	√	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	√

### **BACKGROUND**

14. Chorley currently has fifteen Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) premises that are known to the Councils Regulatory Services Team and two of these are of a size that requires an HMO licence under Housing Act legislation in order to operate.
15. An HMO is defined as a house that accommodates more than one household and there is a sharing of facilities such as toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities.
16. A household is defined as either a single person or members of the same family living together.

17. HMO's are of particular concern in terms of applying standards due to the nature of the shared facilities, the use of common parts by tenants and fire safety measures at the property.
18. To date, and because of the relatively low numbers of HMO's in Chorley the application of standards have be regulated on a case by case basis.
19. However there is an increasing market interest in providing more of this type of accommodation as it bridges a gap between hostel/lodging type accommodation and more expensive self-contained units.
20. Given this interest and potential increased demand for HMO type accommodation it is appropriate for the Council to adopt a set of standards specific to HMO's.
21. The proposed standards for HMO's are appended to this report at Appendix A and are based on national standards approved by the Local Authorities Coordinating Body on Regulatory Services (LACORS) – now a part of the Local Government Association.
22. Members will note that the standards are limited to the provision of shared facilities in terms of ratios of provision to occupant numbers, level of provision in shared kitchens, room sizes to prevent overcrowding, heating, ventilation and lighting provision and the disposal of refuse.
23. In terms of fire safety provision the standards to be adopted reference the necessary requirements and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) exists between the Council and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service which applies the LACORS Fire Safety Standards to this type of accommodation.
24. The MoU (including associated fire safety standards) was the subject of a report to Executive Cabinet in November 2012.
25. Following adoption the HMO standards will be mandatory for HMO's of a size that require an HMO licence and it will be a condition of the licence that the standards are applied.
26. Failing to meet the standard would mean the revoking of an HMO licence and operating an unlicensed HMO is an offence
27. Members should note that the standards will be advisory for landlords operating HMOs that are of a size that do not require licensing.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT**

28. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	√	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	√
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

### **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

29. As the sector grows, costs may arise in terms of enforcement action, but this is not easy to predict. I anticipate any such costs could be contained within current cash resources.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

30. No comments – the salient legal points are addressed in the main body of the report.

JAMIE CASON

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROTECTION STREETSCENE AND COMMUNITY

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
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