

THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**REVISED STANDARDS FOR HOUSING IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOS)****EXEMPT INFORMATION**

NONE

PURPOSE

To agree to the adoption and implementation of revised standards for Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) including Category D Lodgings and Hostels for the purpose of temporary accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **That Cabinet agree to the adoption and implementation of revised standards for HMOs**
- **That Cabinet agree to the inclusion of Category D Lodgings and Hostels used for temporary accommodation.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing Act 2004 introduced licensing for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) The Act provides a detailed definition of HMOs and sets out standards of management for this type of property. The majority of this act came into force in 2006. TBCs current standards were implemented in 2011. The revision in 2015 is to bring the standards up to date and extend their implementation to category D Hostels and Lodgings.

The current standards provide a sound base for inspection and enforcement in HMOs. However, during their use issues of clarification have arisen regarding space standards and amenities. The new standards are intended to clarify these points and make it clearer to HMO owners what is expected of them, contributing to our aim to raise standards in this area. The number of HMOs used for housing vulnerable households is increasing under pressure for accommodation and benefit reform. The Government recognises this and is consulting on measures to improve the standards of HMOs. This revision of TBCs standards puts us in a strong position to adopt further government recommendations on this issue.

The new standards explain in detail the different type of HMOs and the requirements for each. This includes detailed requirements for category D HMOs Hostels and lodgings which will encompass accommodation TBC are currently using to accommodate vulnerable homeless applicants. The extended standards follow best practice guidance and are a contributing factor in raising the quality of accommodation used for temporary accommodation. This will assist TBC in achieving gold standard in Homelessness services.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option	Benefit	Risk
Do nothing	No extra resource required	Opportunities to improve standards are missed.

		Temporary accommodation standards are not improved and this is detrimental to our ambition to achieve gold standard.
Update Standards	Standards are clear and fit for purpose to improve living the standard of HMO accommodation	Resource required to implement higher standards impacts on other areas of service provision. Providers will exit the market following implementation of standards to category D lodgings and Hostels.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Tamworth currently has 29 licensable HMOs and an estimated 100 non licensable HMOs. The revised standards will be enforced as re-licensing, proactive inspection and reactive inspection following complaint occurs. As a result, no further resources will be required to implement the new standards.

TBCs Housing Solutions team currently utilise up to four hostel or B&B establishments within the Tamworth district for the purpose of temporary accommodation. The inclusion of category D HMOs in the revised standards will mean they will now be subject to the standards and will require inspection, and if over two storey, licensing. At present, this would mean the licensing of 3 additional properties. This additional work will be absorbed with existing resources. If a license is required TBC currently charge a standard fee of £574.80 for a five person HMO with an additional £37.90 for each extra bed space.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

The revised standards will not pose any legal or risk implications to TBC.

Elements of these standards, including breaches of the 2006 Management Regulations by a landlord are prosecutable offences and failure to co-operate with this standards will lead to enforcement action by TBC against a landlord in line with enforcement policy.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are significant beneficial implications of raising and extending the HMO standards for sustainable homes

1. contributing to healthier outcomes for occupants
2. contributing to a sustainable and good quality private rented sector
3. encouraging improvements to private sector stock

These and other associated outcomes would contribute towards the delivery of key priorities identified by the Tamworth Strategic Partnership and adopted by Tamworth Borough Council.

CONCLUSION

Revising the standards will assist TBC in raising the standards of accommodation for people residing in HMOs or those who are placed in temporary accommodation by TBC whilst awaiting a homeless decision.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

HMO standards 2015

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