



<b>Subject:</b>	Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme Workshop
<b>Date:</b>	4 February 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services Valerie Brown, City Services Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Members are reminded that the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Act NI 2016 received Royal Assent on 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016 and was commenced on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019. This transferred responsibility for regulating HMOs from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to local district councils. Staff from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive transferred to BCC on 1 <sup>st</sup> April, and since then the HMO Unit has been administering and delivering the new HMO Licencing Scheme function for all councils in Northern Ireland.
1.2	The purpose of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 is to enable better regulation of HMOs, by introducing a system of licensing and new provisions about standards of housing. This revised system of HMO regulation means that this important

1.3	<p>function now sits with other critical local government functions such as planning, building control and environmental health.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to hold a workshop late February/early March to consider the HMO licensing scheme in the context of planning controls, policy issues in terms of the draft Local Development Plan, and the impact of the operation of the scheme on local communities, particularly in areas where there are significant numbers of HMOs. All Members would be invited to participate in the workshop, which would be supported by presentations and information from Place and Economy and City and Neighbourhood Services.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite all Members to a workshop to consider the HMO licensing scheme in the context of planning controls, regulation and the impact of the operation of the scheme on local communities.</li> <li>• Agree that officers can send out an invitation to attend the workshop to all council elected members in advance of ratification of the minutes of this Committee by Council.</li> <li>• A further report to be brought back to this Committee clarifying the existing controls and identifying a course of action to address any policy or legislative gaps that might exist.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The purpose in bringing forward this new HMO regime is to properly and effectively regulate HMOs to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the occupants and at the same time minimise any negative impacts on the neighbourhood and surrounding area. While some aspects remain similar to the previous registration scheme, there are notable differences such as additional enforcement powers for Councils and increased penalties for criminal offences. An overview of the new regime, and specific guidance on enforcement powers, is provided within guidance to councils issued by the Department for Communities. Members will be provided with a copy of this document in advance of the workshop.</p>
3.2	<p>Following a report to January People and Communities Committee regarding operational and monitoring arrangements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Members</p>

	<p>requested a further report be brought to the Committee, with the Director of Planning and Building Control in attendance, to explain in more detail how the HMO legislative framework operates in relation to the issuing of licenses, planning controls, regulation and enforcement.</p>
3.3	<p>A similar request was made by Members at the January Licensing Committee following presentation of a number of reports on licence applications where objections had been received. These objections raised general concerns about the overprovision of HMOs, the anti-social behaviour associated with HMOs, their effect on communities and issues around planning permission.</p>
3.4	<p>The proposed workshop will provide Members with an opportunity to consider the relevant legislative and policy issues associated with the new HMO licensing scheme.</p>
	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.5	<p>Not at this time.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessments</u></p>
3.6	<p>None.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None.</p>