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DATE:

PLEASE QUOTE OUR REF:

YOUR REF:

8th January 2021

PMACD/LMcC/MISC

F.A.O. Mr Kevin Bloomfield

NI Houses in Multiple Occupation Unit
Belfast City Council
The Cecil Ward Building,
4-10 Linenhall Street,
Belfast
BT2 8BP

Dear Sir,

We write in relation to the upcoming meeting of the Belfast City Council Licensing Committee which we understand is to be convened on 16th January 2021.

We understand that at that meeting the "*Proposed process for dealing with new licence applications for premises which previously operated as an HMO*" will be discussed and two recommendations moved for agreement by the Committee.

Following our consideration of the Licensing Committee Report dated 16th December 2020, we would request confirmation as to the circumstances in which an application would be considered a "new application for a HMO licence" by the Council, and distinctly, the circumstances an application would be considered a "renewal application for a HMO licence" by the Council.

The Licensing Committee Report includes several references to premises "previously operated as an HMO": see the 'Subject' heading of the report, and paras 2.1 and 3.9. We would be grateful if further definition could be given to this phrase. When it will be concluded that premises have previously operated as a HMO?

We would further submit that the proposed deadline by which applications must be lodged, where the premises have previously operated as an HMO, should be extended by 3 months until 30th June 2021. The deferral of consideration of the Licensing Committee Report from December 2020 means that one month of the proposed period of benefit to landlords has already been lost. The extension we propose would also be an appropriate recognition that the circumstances in which the proposed process is intended to operate will require to accommodate the unprecedented, and as yet unknown consequences of the present phase of the COVID-19 crisis, and in particular the recent restrictions imposed by the Northern Ireland Executive.



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