

Eco Impact Checklist

Title of report: Proposal to introduce an additional licencing (of HMOs) scheme to 12 central Bristol wards.
Report author: Tom Gilchrist
Anticipated date of key decision 6.11.18
<p>Summary of proposals: To designate an additional (for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)) licensing scheme to 12 wards namely Central, Cotham, Clifton, Clifton Down, Hotwells & Harbourside, Redland, Ashley, Bishopston & Ashley Down, Easton, Lawrence Hill, Southville and Windmill Hill in order to improve housing conditions and property management.</p> <p>This would apply to all privately rented properties where there are 3 or 4 unrelated people living together and sharing some facilities like a bathroom or kitchen. There is already a national mandatory scheme that covers HMOs with 5 or more people. Licensing will not cover local authority owned or leased property or properties owned by Registered Providers.</p> <p>The council has recognised the increasing need for good quality private rented accommodation in the city and the positive impact it has for those who choose this option. However, there are also those who are not in a position of choice and private rented accommodation is the only option they have available to them. With the reduction in council owned housing stock and the limited number of units available from social lettings the demand for housing in this sector is growing and the supply of private rented housing is at a premium. Therefore, we must be mindful of those who are vulnerable or with limited or no choice, accepting sub-standard accommodation. Many of these vulnerable people live in HMOs as this is the cheapest option for them.</p> <p>The Building Research Establishment (BRE) undertook a report for us on the stock condition of the private housing sector in Bristol. They reported that “HMOs in the private rented sector in Bristol are generally in poorer condition than non-HMOs. The levels of category 1 hazards are notably higher for HMOs (22% compared to 13% for non-HMOs), especially for fall hazards (15% compared to 5%). Levels of disrepair are also higher for HMOs (9% compared to 6% for non-HMOs)”. The report also highlighted the wards with the highest concentration of HMOs and levels of disrepair and/or poor management.</p> <p>Licensing has a number of significant advantages compared with other initiatives to deal with issues of unsatisfactory property condition and poor management and other activities directly attributed to the private rented sector.</p> <p>The additional powers of licensing declaration gives local authorities more practical options to work proactively with landlords and agents, rather than just responding to tenant complaints. By declaring these areas, tenants also have</p>

more security if they complain about their accommodation. Many tenants do not know their rights, what conditions they should expect or realise that they can make a complaint about their property or landlord so a great number of properties in this sector do not come to the attention of the local authority.

Under a licensing scheme a number of conditions will be set for both the property standard and also for good management practice. We will provide advice on the necessary improvements required to bring the property up to standard and enforce when the landlords do not comply with the licensing standards or apply for a licence.

Once a scheme has been declared it is illegal for a landlord or agent to let a property without a licence or to evict tenants under section 21.

Will the proposal impact on...	Yes/ No	+ive or -ive	If Yes...	
			Briefly describe impact	Briefly describe Mitigation measures
Emission of Climate Changing Gases?	Yes	+ive	HMO comply to minimum standard for energy efficiency. Thus improving fuel efficiency for the city's housing stock.	Landlords must comply with minimum standard of energy efficiency for private rented property as part of the HMO licensing agreement. More efficient homes will reduce over fuel consumption the grid and reduce fuel poverty within the city.
Bristol's resilience to the effects of climate change?	NO			
Consumption of non-renewable resources?	NO			
Production, recycling or disposal of waste	NO			
The appearance of the city?	NO			
Pollution to land, water, or air?	Yes	+ive	HMO licensing agreement ensures that landlords must provide suitable waste storage areas, reducing risk of fly tipping.	
Wildlife and habitats?	NO			
Consulted with:				
Summary of impacts and Mitigation - <u>to go into the main Cabinet/ Council Report</u>				

The environmental impacts of this proposal are small, but through enforcing minimum energy efficiency standards in HMOs and enforcing a provision for waste storage the proposal allows for more efficient homes within the city and less risk of fly tipped waste. The net effects of the proposals are positive.

Checklist completed by:

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