

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration (Councillor Heather Acton)**

### **1.0 Housing Act 2004 – Part 2 Section 2 Designation of Additional Licensing Areas**

- 1.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration has considered the Additional Licensing Scheme documents for consultation and consultation responses to both the Private Rented Sector Strategy and Draft Additional Licensing Scheme attached to the Cabinet Member Report (Appendix 1) and recommends the HMO Additional Licensing Scheme to Full Council.
- 1.2 We want all Westminster housing to meet suitable living standards and to be run professionally and to a high standard. Under current laws, the council can only license around 340 of the 9000+ Houses in Multiple Occupation (shall hereafter be referred to as HMOs) in Westminster.
- 1.3 By introducing an additional HMO licensing scheme, we believe we can increase this number significantly. Additional licensing allows the council to designate that the whole borough or part of its area should be subject to additional licensing controls. It may also choose to license many different types of HMO including purpose-built flats and buildings which have been poorly converted in the past.
- 1.4 Licensing enables the council to set a common policy across licensable HMOs so that all landlords work to the same standards and that poorer properties are improved over a five year time frame.

### **2.0 The aim of this project is to design and implement an additional licensing scheme:**

- To protect private rented tenants and vulnerable groups from the social and health effects of poorly managed and maintained properties within the private rented sector and in doing so, reduce inequality of housing
- To create sustainable private rented sector tenancies that are attractive to good tenants
- To make Westminster safer and a desirable place to live and work by reducing the detrimental effects of poor tenancy management
- To encourage good landlords to operate within the area and make it easier to involve all landlords in wider strategies including crime reduction initiatives, local spatial strategies and other initiatives.

- 3.0 The implementation of the scheme is subject to a statutory 10 week consultation period and the Council consulted on the draft scheme between 19 November 2020 and 18 February 2021. Results from this consultation are attached to the Cabinet Member Report. The results from the Private Rented Sector strategy consultation (which included proposals for introduction of the Additional Licensing Scheme) and the consultation on the Draft Additional Licensing scheme indicate support for the introduction of HMO Additional licensing in Westminster.

4.0 The Council is being recommended to designate the area of their district as subject to additional licensing in relation to a description of HMOs specified in the designation (Attached as an Appendix to the CMB) – Housing Act 2004 - Part 2 Section 2 Designation of Additional Licensing Areas to meet the aims of the additional licensing scheme as set out above as of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021. The scheme to last for a duration of 5 years at which point it will be reviewed.

**5.0 The Council is recommended:**

- To approve the designation attached to the Cabinet Member Report which sets out HMOs that will be subject to additional licensing under section 56(1)(a) of the Housing Act 2004.
- That the designation is made on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 and comes into force on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and lasts for a period of 5 years from that date.
- To approve the licensing conditions and amenity standards proposed at “Draft Additional Licensing Scheme” attached to the Cabinet Member Report.
- To approve the proposed licence fee structure attached to the Cabinet Member Report.

Councillor Heather Acton, Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration

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Appendix 1 – **Cabinet Member Report to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration**, ‘HMO Additional Licensing Scheme Recommendation to Full Council’ and appendices.

<https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=20316&Opt=0>

**An EIA for the introduction of Additional Licensing in Westminster has been completed and can be made available on request to [hmo@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:hmo@westminster.gov.uk).**