



**Licensing and
Regulatory Committee**

**Thursday, 07 April
2016**

**Matter for Information
and Decision**

Title: Fire and Amenity Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a property occupied by 3 or more unrelated persons living in 2 or more households where there is sharing of facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom. HMO's are a lucrative, fast growing area of the private rented sector and generally offer the cheapest accommodation with tenants renting a single room or bedsit with some sharing of facilities.
- 1.1. There are particular risks associated with HMO accommodation, chiefly fire, overcrowding and poor management. Occupiers are sixteen times more likely to die from fire in a three storey property of this type than an ordinary single family dwelling. Occupiers of HMOs also tend to have the least ability to choose their housing and hence it is appropriate that the standards at least meet the legal minimum.
- 1.1. The attached documents look to act as a guide to assist landlords in complying with the minimum acceptable standards that are applicable to HMOs and refer to recommended standards for fire protection, room sizes, management and amenity provision. The standards are based on local needs and HMO's within the area will be assessed against these locally adopted standards. It is intended that the adoption of the standards will support future enforcement action by providing a framework in which landlords, agents and managers must operate.

2. Recommendations

That Members:

- 2.1. Approve the adoption of the attached 'Amenity Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation' (Appendix 1) and 'Guide to Fire Safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation' (Appendix 2).

3. Information

- 3.1. The Housing Act 2004 introduced a risk based assessment of dwellings for disrepair, fire safety and other health and safety risks in the home named the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The documents in Appendix 1 and 2 aims to give guidelines which need to be achieved to ensure properties are brought up to and maintained at an acceptable standard within the recommendations of the HHSRS guidance.
- 3.2. These standards are, therefore, intended to be flexible, to allow for the variation of risk between individual properties. Oadby and Wigston has two HMOs requiring a licence and approximately 25 HMO's that do not require a licence, the standards are to apply to both licensable and non-licensable HMO's. It is likely that there are numerous other

HMO's which has yet to be found.

- 3.3. The Government has prescribed certain standards that must be met in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that are Licensable under the Housing Act 2004. These Prescribed standards are for deciding the suitability for occupation of an HMO by a particular maximum number of households or persons. The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 and The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other Houses (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 also apply and have been taken into account in the setting of the local standards
- 3.4. Local authorities also have discretion to introduce 'additional or selective' licensing schemes for different types of HMO and other accommodation, if local needs support it. HMO accommodation is not considered to present problems locally which would support the need to introduce additional or selective licensing schemes within Oadby and Wigston.

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Implications	
Financial	There are no financial implications relating directly to this report. The cost associated with compliance with these Standards is not likely to cause undue financial hardship to landlords.
Legal	The adoption of these Standards ensures that future enforcement action is supported by locally agreed standards to provide clear guidance.
Risk	If the standards are not implemented there is a risk of damage to the health of residents and reputational risk in not implementing enforceable standards.
Equalities	The policy will be applied openly and consistently to all owners of HMO's and protect the rights of the tenants.