



CABINET WORKING PARTY HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

20th October 2025 at 10.00am

Present: Councillors Aisthorpe (Chair)
Councillors, Bonner, Jackson, Patrick and S Swinburn.

Officers in attendance:

- Carolina Borgstrom (Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure)
- Katie Brown (Director of Adult Social Care, Communities and Housing)
- Zoe Campbell (Senior Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)

Also in attendance

There was one member of the public and one member of the press in attendance at the meeting.

CWP.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received for this meeting.

CWP.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests made from members with regard to items on the agenda for this meeting.

CWP.03 HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY

The working group recognised that the issue was not just locally but nationally especially with the rapid growth in 3-4 bedroom properties being converted into houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's).

Members main concerns when it came to HMO's was poor quality housing ,overcrowding, impact on neighbours and parking.

There was an acknowledgement that there was a demand for more single room accommodation such as flats whilst appreciating that the cost of living in a HMO could be a lot cheaper. Ms Brown confirmed that there were conversations taking place with developers and local housing providers to look at providing this type of housing whilst being mindful that their return on investment could be an issue.

A member queried if the Council could make it easier for those types of accommodation to be built. Ms Borgstrom explained that when the local plan was being drafted and consulted it could recognise the need for one bedroom units and this would show through the evidence. Once the local plan was implemented it would make it easier for developers to get planning permission for this type of accommodation.

A member raised the concern over potential overlap with this Cabinet working group and the Select Committee being established to look that the motion agreed by full Council to look into the Article 4 direction that could allow the council to introduce an additional licensing to assist in regulating HMO's and that the working group should respect the mandate from full Council. Councillor Jackson clarified that the Cabinet working group agreed to look at HMO's as part of its terms of reference with a mandate to continue.

There was a question raised about why the Council did not hold or collect much data around HMO's or pursue it? Ms Borgstrom explained that there was no statutory requirement for the Council to hold the data but where the data could be collected in the future through the council tax system, this was something officers were looking into. She highlighted the Council needed to be clear on how, why and where this data would be held and how it would be used to comply with GDPR.

Members appreciated there was a lot ground work to do without the data and queried what the timescales would be to gather what was required. Ms Borgstrom felt it could take up to six months but she would need to seek clarification from the relevant teams.

A member felt there needed to be evidence to show that there was an issue around 3-4 bedroom HMO's and queried if there was evidence at this time of there being an issue. Ms Borgstrom confirmed that we do not separate these type of properties from the single let properties, there was no evidence to reject or confirm that there was problems with these types of properties and that officers would need to look at data to establish this.

Referring to the data in the report that identified there were 55 HMO's known to the authority requiring investigation, a member queried if there

was a pattern to these complaints. Ms Borgstrom confirmed that she would be able to bring this data back to a future meeting. She explained that the data could currently establish if the complaint was about a private rented property but not if this was occupied by a family or a smaller HMO. She explained that as part of the transformation plan was to increase resources within the Housing Enforcement Team to carry out more proactive inspections.

The working group discussed and agreed the recommendations as laid out in the report.

RESOLVED -

- a) That further analysis of Census and HEDNA data is conducted to report back on estimated current number of HMOs, wider availability of 1-bed housing stock and the projected future need of smaller unit to establish if supply is balanced with housing demand.
- b) That officers were tasked with establishing the resources and system requirements needed across Council Tax and Regulatory Services, to improve data gathering around smaller HMOs, both in relation to numbers, locations and local impact.
- c) That the continued transformation of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement , which was already in progress following the end of the Equans contract, be endorsed. This includes recruitment of enhanced officer resource to ensure all complaints received regarding unsafe or illegal HMOs can be investigated and actioned.
- d) That a report be brought to a future meeting to establish if there was a pattern to the 55 HMO's known to the authority requiring investigation,

CWP.04 NEXT STEPS

The working groups discussed the next steps including the timetable for future meetings.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting towards the end of November/Early December 2025.

A following meeting to be held towards the middle of January 2026 to include an update on selective licensing.

RESOLVED

1. That the next meeting of the HMO Cabinet working group be held late November 2025.
2. That a following meeting to be held towards the middle of January 2026 to include an update on the selective licensing scheme that was approved by Cabinet on the 8th October 2025.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.45 am