

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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| Name of activity: | Additional HMO Licensing Scheme | Date Completed: | 19 September 2023 | | |
| Directorate / Division responsible for activity: | Growth/Technical Services | Lead Officer: | Nat Slade | | |
| Existing Activity | N | New / Proposed Activity | Y | Changing / Updated Activity | N |

What are the aims / main purposes of the activity?

To introduce an additional Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing scheme in the three wards of River in Littlehampton and Marine and Hotham in Bognor Regis. This will apply to HMOs that contain three or four occupiers making up two or more households, irrespective of the number of storeys, and those properties defined as Section 257 Houses in Multiple Occupation under the Housing Act 2004.

What are the main actions and processes involved?

Implementation of additional HMO licensing, which would require licences to be obtained for HMOs that contain three or four occupiers making up two or more households, irrespective of the number of storeys, and those properties defined as Section 257 Houses in Multiple Occupation under the Housing Act 2004 and within the wards of River, Hotham and Marine. This would be managed and enforced by the Private Sector Housing and Public Health Team. A fee is required as part of the application and the fees are set on a cost recovery basis.

Who is intended to benefit & who are the main stakeholders?

The intended outcomes are to ensure all HMOs comply with minimum standards of safety, quality and management. This will benefit the tenants of the properties, the residents and the neighbourhood.

Key stakeholders

Internal: Private Sector Housing and Public Health Team, Environmental Health, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Housing, Revenue and Benefits, Planning, Building Control, Legal

External: Sussex Police, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Landlords, Letting Agents, National Residential Landlords Association, University of Chichester, West Sussex County Council, Citizens Advice.

Have you already consulted on / researched the activity?

In 2022 the Building Research Establishment (BRE) were commissioned to provide data on key private rented sector housing variables for the Council in order to establish whether there was evidence to consider the introduction of additional HMO licensing scheme, Article 4 Directive or selective licensing for either the entire district or specific wards.

A public statutory 10 week consultation took place between 12 June and 20 August 2023, regarding a proposed additional HMO licensing scheme in the wards of River, Hotham and Marine.

The Council's website was used to detail the proposals and provide information and a copy of the consultation document was available.

The Consultation was advertised in local media and social media posts to advise that was taking place and how to participate.

Paper copies of the consultation document and posters showing the details of the proposed scheme were available in the Arun Civic centre and Bognor Regis Town Hall. Paper copies of the consultation document were also available at a number of local libraries within the district.

Students enrolled at the University of Chichester were able to view the consultation document at the University's accommodation office.

Feedback could be provided via an online survey form which was accessible from the Council's website.

Letters/leaflets advertising the consultation were sent to all residents and businesses within the wards of River, Hotham and Marine.

Two landlords forum events took place:

- In person Landlords Forum meeting held at Arun Civic Centre 26 July 2023
- Remote meeting via Zoom, hosted and organised by National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) 18 August 2023.

A wide portfolio of stakeholders and other people affected by the proposal, as well as internal stakeholders and department have been contacted regarding the consultation, including ward members, Councillors at both district and parish level, local MPs, landlord/property owners in the proposed ward areas and neighbouring ward areas tenants in the proposed ward areas, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Sussex Police, letting and managing agents, the University of Chichester and Bognor Regis College, landlords on the Chichester and Arun Accreditation Scheme, landlord representatives such as the NRLA, local resident associations, Citizens Advice, West Sussex County Council, neighbouring local authorities and general public.

Impact on people with a protected characteristic (What is the potential impact of the activity? Are the impacts high, medium or low?)

| Protected characteristics / groups | Is there an impact (Yes / No) | If Yes, what is it and identify whether it is positive or negative |
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| Age (older / younger people, children) | No | Between the 2011 and 2021 census the average (median) age of Arun residents increased by two years from 47 to 49 years of age. This is a higher than the Southeast whole figure which is 41 and for England which is 40 years. The number of people aged 50 to 64 years rose by around 15.2%, whilst the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by 5.8%. The impact of licensing is neutral in terms of age. The licensing scheme provides advice and guidance as well as an enforcement element |

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| | | <p>this should be of value to landlords of all ages, especially those who may be concerned about complying with the requirements of the new scheme.</p> <p>Assistance is available by phone and email from Council Officers for those having difficulty using online application or payment systems.</p> |
| Disability (people with physical / sensory impairment or mental disability) | No | <p>Property licensing is intended to raise the standards of condition and management by landlords of rented properties. Therefore, tenants with a disability should benefit from the licensing regime as there are minimum standards set for amenities and licence conditions relating to the property which landlords must comply with.</p> <p>There is no known impact on landlords who have a disability, except in as much as assistance is available by phone and email from council officer for those having difficulty using on line application and payment systems.</p> |
| Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one gender to another.) | No | <p>There is no known impact on landlords or tenants who have gender re-assignment.</p> <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> |
| Marriage & civil partnership (Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Civil partnerships are legally recognized for same-sex couples) | No | <p>There is no known impact on landlords or tenants due to marriage or civil partnership.</p> <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> |
| Pregnancy & maternity (Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant & maternity refers to the period after the birth) | No | <p>There is no known impact on landlords or tenants due to pregnancy or maternity.</p> <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> |

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| <p>Race (ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins & including gypsies, travellers, refugees & asylum seekers)</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>There is no known impact on tenants due to race. Landlords in providing a service are not allowed to discriminate against tenants or prospective tenants for any protected characteristic including race.</p> <p>There is no known impact on landlords due to race. The licensing scheme provides advice and guidance as well as an enforcement element, and the advice and guidance should be of value to all landlords irrespective of their race.</p> |
| <p>Religion & belief (religious faith or other group with a recognised belief system)</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>There is no known impact on landlords or tenants due to religion or belief.</p> <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> <p>Certain buildings occupied by a religious community are exempt from additional licensing.</p> |
| <p>Sex (male / female)</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>There is no known impact on landlords or tenants due to sex.</p> <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> |
| <p>Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual)</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>There is no known impact on landlords or tenants due to sexual orientation</p> <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> |
| <p>Whilst Socio economic disadvantage that people may face is not a protected characteristic; the potential impact</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>The additional licensing scheme applies to the wards of River, Marine and Hotham these are the most deprived areas within the district therefore the scheme will have a positive impact on those tenants who are socio economically disadvantaged. Good quality housing is important for people to achieve their educational and professional potential.</p> |

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| on this group should be also considered | | <p>The process of requiring a licence will mean that action will be taken to raise the quality of private rented accommodation, resolve hazards and ensure higher standards. The improved standards will be particularly beneficial for the most vulnerable tenants, who perhaps currently live in sub-standard accommodation. These more vulnerable residents often fall into one or more equality groups.</p> <p>Properties managed by a social landlord are exempt.</p> |
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| What evidence has been used to assess the likely impacts? |
| <p>Building Research Establishment report 14 January 2022 and Public Consultation 12 June – 20 August 2023.</p> <p>In addition experience of administering the mandatory licensing scheme which has been in place since 2006 and applies to the whole district and properties occupied by 5 or more, forming 2 or more households and sharing of facilities.</p> |

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| Decision following initial assessment | | | |
| Continue with existing or introduce new / planned activity | Y | Amend activity based on identified actions | N |

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| Action Plan | | | |
| Impact identified | Action required | Lead Officer | Deadline |
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| Monitoring & Review | |
| Date of last review or Impact Assessment: | |

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| Date of next 12 month review: | |
| Date of next 3 year Impact Assessment (from the date of this EIA): | |
| Date EIA completed: | 19 September 2023 |
| Signed by Person Completing: | Louise Crane |