
Houses In Multiple Occupation : Technical Guidance

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to address issues related to Houses in Multiple Occupation, which are cross cutting in nature and require an integrated approach by Environmental Health, Building Standards and Planning. The report recommends that the Technical Note (Appendix 1) is put out for consultation with a view to adopting it as non-statutory planning guidance, giving advice to help with the assessment of applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) across Argyll and Bute (excluding Loch Lomond and the Trossachs).
- 1.2 The purpose of the Technical Note is to support high quality HMO accommodation in appropriate locations and to prevent the creation or intensification of concentrations in particular areas, which could adversely impact on amenity value for communities. However, it is noted that clustering may have wider benefits in the case of student and military personnel accommodation. The Technical Note allows for the specific circumstances, requirements and mitigation measures to be assessed against defined principles and criteria. Once adopted the Technical Note would be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications for HMO.
- 1.3 The report highlights the on-going demand for shared accommodation, including HMO, across Argyll and Bute. Areas with higher levels of HMO in Taynuilt, Oban and Helensburgh. The report also takes into consideration the potential for an increase in applications for HMO in Oban/Dunbeg related to growing the further education offer (including University Town and Scottish Association for Marine Science) and in the wider Helensburgh and Lomond area related to the maritime change project.
- 1.4 The aim of the Technical Note is to provide clarity and certainty on what issues will be considered when assessing planning applications for HMO across Argyll and Bute. These assessments will consider the cumulative impact on the character of the area, parking, the potential for increase in noise and disturbance, as well as impacts on residential and/or business amenity taking into account the circumstances of the proposal. It also makes a clear linkage between the licensing and planning process to provide a consistent and coordinated approach from the Council.
- 1.5 This proposed approach to HMO will be monitored and reviewed after 1 year to assess if any revision is required. The potential for purpose built shared accommodation for students in Oban and for service personnel in Helensburgh will be investigated as part of the Strategic Development Framework projects for these areas.
- 1.6 It is recommended that Members:
- i) Note the content of this report
 - ii) Approve the Draft non-statutory planning guidance "Technical Note 3: Houses in Multiple Occupation", as set out in Appendix 1 for consultation on line.

Houses In Multiple Occupation : Technical Note

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in terms of planning is where over 5 unrelated people live together in a house or where 3 or more unrelated people from 3 or more families live together in a flat. A planning application is required for a change of use to an HMO because this change may have an adverse impact on residential amenity.
- 2.2 There has been a general increase in the number of HMO across Argyll and Bute and a particular concentration within Taynuilt. In the near future there are liable to be further increases in the wider Oban and Helensburgh areas related to the growth of further education, worker accommodation linked to Cruachan Dam National Planning Framework Project and the Maritime Change Project. It is therefore useful to provide non-statutory planning guidance in the form of a Technical Note to help with the determination of planning applications for HMO. This Technical Note will provide clarity and certainty on what issues will be considered when assessing planning applications for HMO.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members:
- i) Note the content of this report
 - ii) Approve the Draft Non-statutory Planning Guidance "Technical Note 3: Houses in Multiple Occupation", as set out in Appendix 1 for consultation on line.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Issues can arise related to Houses in Multiple Occupation, which are cross cutting in nature and require an integrated approach by Environmental Health, Building Standards and Planning. The aim is to support the delivery of high quality HMO accommodation in appropriate locations e.g. that minimise potential adverse impacts. To create mixed and balanced communities it is important to prevent the creation or intensification of high levels or clusters of HMO in particular areas, where the impacts cannot be appropriately managed. The assessment criteria for overprovision and policy response are set out in the Technical Note. These take account of wider benefits and the control of adverse impacts through management mechanisms, for example in the case of purpose built student and military personnel accommodation. In these cases the

Technical Note allows for the specific circumstances, requirements and mitigation measures to be assessed against defined principles and criteria.

4.2 There is on-going demand for shared accommodation, including HMO, across Argyll and Bute. This has been increasing in recent times with the highest demand for shared flats and houses. Analysis has shown that the areas with concentrations/higher levels of HMO are Taynuilt, Oban and Helensburgh. Even where the levels are not particularly high in relation to the number of households within a settlement a cluster of HMO within a street may cause amenity issues dependent on the circumstances. This increase is liable to continue into the future. There is the potential for an increase in applications for HMO in Oban/Dunbeg related to growing the further education offer (including University Town and Scottish Association for Marine Science) and also workers accommodation in relation to the proposed National Planning Framework Project at Cruachan Dam and in the wider Helensburgh and Lomond area related to the Maritime Change Project.

4.3 The aim of the Technical Guidance is to provide clarity and certainty on what issues will be considered when assessing planning applications for houses in multiple occupation across Argyll and Bute. It sets guiding principles under HMO1. Applications are assessed against HMO2. These assessments will consider:-

- the cumulative impact on the character of the area,
- parking – sufficiency of both off and on road within the immediate neighbourhood,
- the potential for increase in noise and disturbance, on an individual case and cumulative impact basis
- impacts on residential and/or business amenity
- the circumstances and requirements related to student and military personnel accommodation.
- Management and control mechanisms of the wider impacts

Overprovision is considered under HMO3. Licensing issues are set out in the licensing section 3.

4.4 This proposed approach to HMO will be monitored reviewed after 1 year. Dependent on the findings the Technical Note may require to be revised. The potential for purpose built shared accommodation for students in Oban and for service personnel in Helensburgh will be investigated as part of the Strategic Development Framework projects for these areas.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 There has been a growth in the number of HMO, in particular within Taynuilt and the wider Oban and Helensburgh areas. There is anticipated to be a continued increase in the wider Oban and Helensburgh area related to the agenda for growth, student accommodation and the maritime change project.

5.2 It is appropriate to seek to manage the impacts of a growth in HMO through non

statutory planning guidance in the form of a Technical Note giving guidance to be used in the determination of planning applications for HMO. The growth of HMO should be monitored and a review of the guidance in the technical note undertaken after 1 year. The particular needs and circumstances of students and military personnel should be taken into consideration in the Technical Note and also further investigated as part of the Strategic Development Frameworks for the areas.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy The Technical Note once adopted would act as non-statutory planning guidance for use in the determination of planning applications related to Houses in Multiple Occupation and provide guidance for licensing applications to give a coordinated approach by the Local Authority on this issue.
- 6.2 Financial None as a result of this paper
- 6.3 Legal Non-statutory planning guidance
- 6.4 HR none as a result of this paper
- 6.5 Equalities / Fairer Scotland Duty
 None as a result of this paper. The LDP is subject to EqIA/FSD
- 6.6 Risk Failure to provide clear guidance related to these issues will hinder an integrated approach to handling applications related to HMO, which seeks to minimize impacts on amenity in residential areas.
- 6.7 Customer Service Providing clear guidance informs our customers how the issues related to HMO will be dealt with.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Technical Note 3 : Houses in Multiple Occupation