



Subject:	Update on Transfer of Houses in Multiple Occupation/HMO Bill
Date:	7 th June 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services.
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Lead Operations Officer Stephen Leonard, Environmental Health Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At its April meeting the Committee considered the following motion laid at the meeting of the Council on 4 th April, which had been proposed by Councillor Lyons and seconded by Councillor Attwood.
1.2	This Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Welcomes the recent passing of the final stage of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill in the NI Assembly;(ii) Notes that this Bill will confer a duty on this Council to administer an HMO licensing scheme and, through such a scheme, enable the Council to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour, overcrowding and HMO density; and(iii) Strongly encourages the Minister for Social Development/Communities to ensure that a commencement date is set as soon as possible.
1.3	After a representation from Mr D Laird and some discussion, the Committee agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee.
1.4	The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Bill completed Final Stage on 15 th March 2016 and is awaiting Royal Assent. Meanwhile Department officials have commenced work on

	the Secondary legislation, Code of Practice and guidance required to help meet the requirements of the regulations.
1.5	A Regional project board involving representatives from the Department, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and representatives from Belfast, Causeway Coast & Glens and Derry & Strabane Councils has been set up to work through the work programme and complete preparations necessary to put in place requirements for the delivery of the new licensing scheme.
1.6	The City Council has recently held a number of meetings with Departmental officials. This report provides members with an overview of the proposed work programme and an update of the City Council's role in the transfer process.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.
3.0	Key Issues
3.1	<p>Project Management:</p> <p>The Regional Board have agreed the following workstreams and the Department are currently preparing a project plan to oversee and manage this work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Legislation/Regulations II. Guidance and Code of Practice III. Staff/Human Resources IV. Finance and Set up Costs- ICT Support requirements V. Communications/Activity Plan VI. Councils delivery Model VII. Preparation for Transfer of Business
3.2	The Council will require its own project plan to manage the transfer and to support the Joint Project Board. An internal working group has been established to take forward the key areas highlighted within the above work streams.
3.3	An additional work area will be the need to link in with the current organisational development programme for the City and Neighbourhood Services department. This work will include an assessment of synergies between the HMO regulation and the existing housing regulation function, accommodation for Transferring staff and other staff related

	issues.
3.4	<p>Due Diligence</p> <p>As the Bill has now passed through the Assembly it is now necessary to begin the process to identify the total funding required to administer the new regime. It is essential that an accurate financial appraisal is provided to Councils in order to ensure that sufficient resources transfer with the function.</p>
3.5	<p>The Department will be making a bid to DFP to engage consultants to carry out this assessment. This assessment will include a review of potential delivery models to administer the licensing scheme and provide a preferred value for money option.</p>
3.6	<p>Timeframe</p> <p>No timeframe for the transfer has been agreed. This will be informed by the financial assessment that is likely to be completed later in the year. In the meantime work on the other project areas will commence and will occur in parallel with the financial assessment. A decision on a commencement date will be taken once all partners are content that sufficient resources are in place and councils are in a state of readiness to deliver this new function. The committee will receive update reports as works progress.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.7	<p>The introduction of HMO Licensing will result in additional responsibilities for Councils. The Department are in the process of making a bid for an independent financial assessment to be carried out to ensure an adequate resource is made available to councils for this new function.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the delivery of the strategy</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	None