

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	16 January 2018
REPORT TITLE	Facilitating Mixed and Balanced Communities
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/292
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	David Dunne

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

This report is a result of a committee decision at the Council meeting on the 23rd of August 2017. At that meeting Council received a report on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Overprovision (HMO Overprovision Policy – Report on Public Consultation – CHI/17/113). At that meeting Council resolved to:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations: and
- (ii) to instruct the Interim Director of Communities, Housing and Infrastructure in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to work with the Convener of the Planning Development Management Committee and the Convener of the Licensing Committee to review the options available to facilitate mixed/balanced communities and report back to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in January 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the committee:

Instruct the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development to include the topics of HMO Overprovision and Student Accommodation Overprovision within the Main Issues Report for the Next Local Development Plan, to facilitate mixed/balanced communities.

3. BACKGROUND/ MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Background

There was been ongoing concerns raised by communities in and around University of Aberdeen and further afield, about the impact of certain types of development, in particularly Houses in Multiple Occupation and Student

Accommodation, on those communities. The concerns raised by groups within these communities are broad but relate largely to the perceived loss of family housing due to their conversion to HMO's or Student Accommodation. It is felt that the loss of this housing to more specialist forms undermines the traditional nature of these communities by preventing or discouraging families from living in these areas. By extension it is suggested that this impacts on local business and the availability of services creating unsustainable communities.

3.2 To look to address these concerns Council officers in housing, planning, legal and licensing, as well as elected members, have all been involved in an ongoing dialogue with different stakeholders on this topic. Several reports have been presented to committee trying to first assess the concerns being raised and then look at possible solutions to address these concerns.

3.3 The culmination of this process was the reporting of, CHI/17/113 HMO Overprovision Policy, to Council on the 23rd of August 2017. The recommendations within this report highlighted the legal difficulty with adopting a licensing policy. While Council accepted those recommendations, as noted above, they also instructed a review of the options available to facilitate mixed/balanced communities asking that this be reported back to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in January 2018.

3.4 On this basis, the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Head of Communities and Housing, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Conveners of the Planning Development Management Committee and Licensing Committee agreed to hold an officer workshop to discuss other options which could be explored. The outcome of that workshop was agreement that the next option available to the Council would be to examine the issue through planning policy to reflect the instruction from Council on the 23rd of August.

3.5 **Planning**

One of the cornerstones of the planning process is supporting and facilitating the development of sustainable mixed communities. To do this polices are required to both support and restrict certain types of development. Through the Local Development Plan the Council has polices covering a broad range of topic areas to help deliver new communities and support and protect existing ones. It is nevertheless accepted that due to the economic cycle the type of development pressure which the city experiences changes, and with that polices may need to change to help support or indeed restrict development.

3.6 **Introducing planning polices**

Aberdeen City Council adopted its second Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP2017), in January of 2017 and this is due to run for five years to 2022. In order to adopt any new policies deemed necessary to support mixed/balanced communities, the Scottish Government is clear that this must be included in the ALDP even if the detail of the policy is provided in supporting Supplementary Guidance. To adopt a new policy it will therefore have to be included in the next ALDP. The recommendation of this report, as

noted earlier, is therefore to include this topic within the first phase of the new ALDP preparation process, the Main Issues Report (MIR).

3.7 Main Issues Report

The first major step in the preparation of the ALDP is the preparation of the MIR. The MIR sets out a menu of the most significant issues which the city faces and looks at what planning policies can be used to help influence them. Consultation will be undertaken both before the MIR is prepared (Feb-April 2018 subject to approval) and then after the MIR is published (Jan-March 2019 subject to approval). (Details of the process can be found in Committee report CHI/17/283 Development Plan Scheme which is being presented to this committee, 18th January 2018). This offers the opportunity to engage in a city wide consultation with a broad range of stake holders. It is also proposed that any draft policy would be included within the MIR, allowing all stakeholders to formally engage and comment on the policy. The results of this process will be reported to committee and this in turn will help shape the Proposed ALDP2022.

- 3.8 Finally the Local Development Plan process also provides the opportunity for any policy to be independently reviewed by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). When the proposed plan is submitted to examination an independent reporter will assess the policy against the legislative background while also having access to submissions from any stakeholders who submit comments to the proposed plan consultation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report as the MIR consultation process is included within the Local Development Plan process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Any future implications of a policy will be considered as part of the MIR and LDP processes.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

It is considered that there are no risks associated with the recommendations made in this report. The recommendation of this report is to include topics with the consultation process for the next LDP. As such any risk will be addressed through that process.

- Financial – this has been considered and no risks have been identified
- Employee – this has been considered and no risks have been identified

- Customer / citizen – this has been considered and no risks have been identified, indeed the recommendations of this report increase public participation within the process.
- Environmental – this has been considered and no risks have been identified
- Technological – this has been considered and no risks have been identified
- Legal – this has been considered and no risks have been identified
- Reputational– this has been considered and no risks have been identified. Indeed like Customer / citizen above, the recommendations of this report increase public participation within the process and will by extension show an openness and willingness to engage.

7. IMPACT SECTION

Economy

There is no direct economic impact due from the recommendations of this report. The economics around the types of developments noted above will be discussed as part of the MIR and LDP process. Indeed this process will allow for a much more extensive examination for the process by the Council, the community and the development industry.

People

There is no impact expected and a Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening was carried out. The Local Development Process will be subject to a separate EHRIA.

Place

Again while there is no direct impact on Place as a result of this report, the purpose of the recommendation is to give all parties the opportunity to engage in a dialogue on the impacts of these forms of development on Place.

Technology

There are no expected technological impacts from this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Committee report and minutes of the Committee – HMO Overprovision Policy – Report on Public Consultation – CHI/17/113
<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=47904>
- CHI/17/283 Development Plan Scheme

9. APPENDICES

None

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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