



Report Title	DRAFT HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)
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CABINET REPORT

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	24 July 2019
Key Decision:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Service Area:	Planning
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Hill
Ward(s)	All wards

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to approve the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation for 6 weeks commencing 8th August 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation for 8 weeks from 8 August to 3 October 2019.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Head of Planning be given delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to make minor non-material spelling, formatting, mapping and other amendments to the consultation documents where they do not alter the intent of the document.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) sets out a need to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations. Paragraph 61 states that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.
- 3.1.2 The draft submission Northampton Local Plan Part 2 sets out the housing requirements for Northampton to 2029 and Policy 14 Delivering Houses in Multiple Occupation will help manage the concentration and quality of HMOs more effectively. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) also contains Policy H5 which relates to the management of existing housing stock. This includes allowing houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) where they would not adversely affect the character and amenity of existing residential areas.
- 3.1.3 In 2014, Northampton Borough Council adopted the Houses in Multiple Occupation Interim Planning Policy Statement (IPPS), which provided the principles for determining planning applications for HMOs. This IPPS was aimed at managing the quality and concentration of HMOs within the Borough. This SPD, if adopted, will replace the IPPS.
- 3.1.4 This draft Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD has been prepared to provide further and updated guidelines on the management of the concentration and quality of HMOs. It will provide guidance for property owners and developers as well as the Council's Development Management Team. New evidence, including a study prepared by Loughborough University on HMOs, which was used to inform the Local Plan Part 2, has also been used to inform the principles in this updated guidance. Once adopted, the Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Houses in multiple occupation provide a key role in offering accommodation for a wide range of people including students, key workers, those on low incomes and those who prefer to rent. In preparing the Northampton Local Plan Part 2, Loughborough University was commissioned to undertake a study on HMOs. There are three key findings from the evidence base prepared by Loughborough University.
- 3.2.2 First, there is an undersupply of HMOs in Northampton and the demand is likely to increase. Secondly, over concentrations of HMOs in some parts of Northampton have resulted in detrimental effects on the character of local communities and neighbourhoods. Finally, the relocation of the University of Northampton to its Waterside campus has shifted the geographical demand for HMOs to the town centre. However, the study concluded that the increase

is not tied just to students but also to young professionals, workers in temporary jobs and vulnerable social groups. Recommendations were provided in the study to address the key findings.

- 3.2.3 In preparing this SPD, the draft policy on HMO contained in the Submission Draft Northampton Local Plan Part 2 and the above evidence base from Loughborough University have been used to inform the formulation of key principles to guide those wishing to convert their properties into HMOs. It is also applicable to those wishing to build a purpose built HMO unit. Appeal decisions over the last 3 years (2016-2019) have also been interrogated to understand the effectiveness of the Interim Planning Policy Statement on HMOs (adopted 2014). This helped in formulating principles which will be tested more positively at planning appeals.
- 3.2.4 The three new principles have been set out in the SPD based on the evidence. Principle 1 provides a methodology to assess the concentration of existing HMOs and a threshold to allow new HMOs which will help manage the concentration of HMOs and impacts on neighbourhoods. The current threshold used by the Council (set out in the IPPS) is 15% of dwellings within a 50m radius of site. The most important impact of Principle 1 of the draft SPD is that it introduces a new and more stringent saturation threshold of 10% of dwellings within a 50 metre radius of the application site.
- 3.2.5 Principles 2 sets out amenity standards in terms of space standards, refuse, health and safety and layout, as well as the minimisation of flood risk in order to manage the quality of HMOs.
- 3.2.6 Principle 3 sets out the requirements for the provision of adequate parking for HMOs. This will ensure that there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on on-street parking and highway safety in the vicinity.

3.3 Choices (Options)

Option 1: Agree to the recommendation

- 3.3.1 If Cabinet approves this Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the document can be released for consultation to residents, stakeholders and other interested parties for 8 weeks from 8 August to 3 October 2019. After this consultation, the Planning Policy team will consider the responses received and make any necessary changes to the document. The SPD will then be considered at Cabinet for adoption.

Option 2: Do not agree to the recommendation

- 3.3.2 Cabinet has the option not to approve the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD for consultation. The risk with this option is that there will be a continued reliance on the existing Interim Planning Policy Statement on HMOs which was adopted in 2014 when it comes to determining planning applications. This weight which can be attached to the Interim Statement will decrease over time as it becomes dated and it does not reflect the findings of the Loughborough University report, making it harder for the Council to manage the proliferation of HMOs effectively.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The draft Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD will not introduce new policies. It seeks to amplify further Policy 14 of the Submission Draft Northampton Local Plan Part 2 and Policy H5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 Sufficient resources have been incorporated into the budget for 2019/20 to fund the remaining stages of the SPD preparation.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 Supplementary Planning Documents provide additional guidance on matters covered by Development Plan Documents. They are not part of the statutory Development Plan, unlike Development Plan Documents. However, Supplementary Planning Documents form part of the Local Development Framework, and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

4.3.2 The Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD has been prepared in accordance with the provisions set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has recently been carried out for the draft Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2). As this SPD is being prepared to provide guidance to those involved in the management of the concentrations of HMOs, and does not propose new policies in addition to those included within the draft LPP2, the Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken for the draft LPP2 is also relevant for this SPD. The Equalities Impact Assessment is available at:

https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200205/planning_for_the_future/1746/

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 This draft SPD has been prepared in consultation with colleagues in Development Management and Private Sector Housing, as well as external parties such as Northamptonshire County Council and the Environment Agency.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD will provide guidance to those involved in the delivery and management of HMOs in Northampton.

Northampton's Corporate Plan 2018-20 includes strategic priorities which seek to build stronger and more resilient communities. Managing the concentrations of HMOs without compromising the need to provide a sufficient supply will contribute towards the delivery of these strategic priorities.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 There are no other implications arising directly from the proposals in this report.

5. Background Papers

Appendix A – Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document, July 2019

National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, December 2014, West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit -

<http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectId=2737424>

A Study of Houses in Multiple Occupation Policy (Loughborough University, November 2018)

<https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/file/11015/02-houses-in-multiple-occupation>

6. Next Steps

6.1 The results of this consultation will be fed into the adoption version which will be considered at Cabinet later in 2019.

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