

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 19th March 2024

Title: Report for the Re-Designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation for Ceredigion

Purpose of the report: For Elected Members to consider and ratify the Re-designation of an Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation in Ceredigion (2024 - 2029)

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection

Introduction

The Housing Act 2004 Part 2 places a duty on LAs to licence Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) of 3 or more storeys, five or more persons, forming two or more households.

- The aim of the legislation is to ensure adequate:
 - Management, amenity and safety standards
 - Control of anti-social behaviour, noise and waste management in HMOs
 - Kitchen and bathroom amenities and facilities
 - Ensure they are managed by 'fit and proper persons'
 - Specify a maximum number of people avoiding overcrowded conditions.
 - Mandatory and discretionary 'licence conditions' relating to:
 - Heating: adequate means of space heating
 - Washing / kitchen facilities - hot and cold water, suitable cooking, storage and food preparation facilities, suitable refuse disposal facilities
 - Satisfactory certificate of:
 - Fire precautionary facilities, equipment and installations
 - Gas appliances and installations;
 - Declarations as to the safety of electrical appliances and furniture;

In addition to Mandatory HMO Licensing the LA **may** also designate additional licensing, in the whole or part of the Authority's area, based on the number of occupiers/ households and storeys).

- The LA must consider:
 - significant proportion of the HMOs poorly managed giving rise to problems affecting the tenants or members of the public and community more widely.

- whether there are any other courses of action available to them.
- making the designation will significantly assist them to deal with the problems.

Current Situation

Ceredigion County Council has operated an Additional Licensing scheme since 2009. The first designation Additional Licensing Scheme came into force on 1st April 2009 up to 31st March 2014 covering the whole of Ceredigion.

The second designation Additional Licensing Scheme came into force on the 14th April 2014 and was operative up to 13th April 2019, and applied to:

- HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming two or more households: Aberystwyth, Llanbadarn Fawr, Borth, Llanfarian, Lampeter.
- Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004)

The third designation Additional Licensing Scheme came into force on the 14th April 2019 and is operative up to 14th April 2024, and applies to:

- HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming three or more separate households regardless of the number of storeys in the following specified wards only:
 - i. Aberystwyth Bronglais
 - ii. Aberystwyth Central
 - iii. Aberystwyth North
 - iv. Aberystwyth Penparcau
 - v. Aberystwyth Rheidol
 - vi. Faenor
 - vii. Llanbadarn Fawr Padarn
 - viii. Llanbadarn Fawr Sulien
- The whole of the County of Ceredigion for:
 - HMOs occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys, and
 - Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004)

Review of the Additional Licensing Scheme

Section 60 of the Housing Act 2004 provides that the designation must from time to time be reviewed and if it is to continue must be re-declared at the end of a 5 year period (in April 2024). A thorough review and evaluation of the additional licensing scheme has been undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the existing scheme and to consider the options for whether an Additional Licensing Scheme should continue for a further 5 years from 2024-2029. As part of this review and evaluation a 10-week Public Consultation has been undertaken between 15th December 2023 and 23rd February 2024.

Legislative process

A legislative procedure is required to be followed in declaring an Additional Licensing Scheme, as contained within sections 56-60 of the Housing Act 2004. In April 2007, the Welsh Government issued approval to local authorities (The Housing Act 2004 (Additional Licensing) (Wales) General Approval 2007) stating that councils may

introduce an Additional Licensing Scheme without obtaining Assembly approval, providing that certain requirements are met. In particular, the Council must:

- i. consider that significant proportion of the HMOs of that description are being managed ineffectively as to give rise, or likely to give rise, to one or more particular problems either for those occupying the HMOs or for members of the public;
- ii. consider whether there any other courses of action available to them that might provide an effective method of dealing with the problem or problems in question;
- iii. consider that making the designation will significantly assist them to deal with the problems,
- iv. Consult persons likely to be affected by the designation.
- v. Ensure that any exercise of the power is consistent with the authority's overall housing strategy.
- vi. Seek to adopt a co-ordinated approach in connection with dealing with homelessness, empty properties and anti-social behaviour affecting the private rented sector, both:
 - (a) as regards combining licensing under this Part with other courses of action available to them, and
 - (b) as regards combining such licensing with measures taken by other persons.

If, following consultation, it is deemed that an Additional Licensing Scheme ought to be re-introduced, the LA can approve the scheme under a general consent regime, as laid down in guidance provided by LACORS, and provide a Public Notice of Designation at least **3 months** before the Scheme becomes operational.

The aim of this report and accompanying Appendices is to demonstrate compliance with these sections of the Housing Act by supplying the evidence required to support the proposal, including full details of the consultation exercise undertaken.

Public Consultation

A Public Consultation was carried out between 15th December 2023 and 23rd February 2024. Questionnaires were delivered by hand within Aberystwyth town and Lampeter to a mixture of owner-occupied properties, Houses in Multiple Occupation and other rented properties. The questionnaire was also available online and at the county's libraries.

County Councillors, members of the Landlords Steering-Group, The University, Dyfed-Powys Police, Mid Wales Fire and Rescue and all other relevant departments of the Council with an interest were also consulted.

The Consultation documents were placed on the Ceredigion County Council corporate website, utilising the Engagements and Consultations facility. Various social media outlets such as Facebook, X / Twitter were similarly deployed.

Summary of Findings

Only 17 responses to the Consultation were received and details of the questionnaire are available in Appendix 2. Of those that responded 65% were in favour of re-designating the Additional Licensing Scheme.

Whilst the response to the Consultation is low, this could be an indicator of the effectiveness of the scheme over the last 15 years and the subsequent decline in anti-social behaviour, noise and waste management issues associated with this type of premises.

Analysis of data relating to the licensing of these premises in the last five years is contained in Appendix 1.

During the Pandemic students returned to their homes and undertook their studies online. In addition, all physical inspections of residential premises including HMOs were suspended for long periods. This included both programmed licensing inspections and licence application checks. The suspension of inspections during this time had a knock-on effect of delaying licenses being renewed and an interruption to the routine licence inspection programme creating a large backlog of properties requiring inspection. This in turn has impacted the standards of repair experienced in HMO properties that have been inspected in the last 18 months as we recover from the Pandemic. This is reflected in the data recorded in respect of the number of Licenses issued in 22/23 with conditions attached as seen in the Table below.

Year	Number of full licences issued	Number of conditional licences issued
2019/20	89 %	11%
2020/21	92 %	8 %
2021/22	84 %	16 %
2022/23	78 %	22 %
2023/24	68 % (April – Nov)	32 % (April to Nov)

The ratio of licences issued with conditions has increased post Covid -19 suggesting a slip in overall standards during this period.

Benefits of Re-Designating Additional Licensing Scheme

The HMO Additional Licensing scheme has been running for nearly 15 years and the Council has significant experience of this area of regulation and believes the continuation of the scheme within Ceredigion will deliver the following benefits:

- New HMOs can make a valuable contribution to housing stock. HMOs provide accommodation for a wide range of groups, including young professionals, students, refugees and persons on low incomes. However, such conversions must be completed appropriately, and licensing provides a mechanism to regulate such properties.
- Licensing ensures properties are maintained to an appropriate standard to protect tenants' health and safety and they are appropriately managed.
- Ensure standards of accommodation provide a safe and healthy environment by examining hazards such as damp, cold, heat, falls, fire, electrical safety, gas safety, suitable room sizes, adequate kitchens / bathrooms for the number of tenants, food safety, biocides, lead, asbestos etc.
- Reduces levels of anti-social behaviour and crime. Licence conditions require the landlord to deal with this within the curtilage of the licensed properties. We would expect the landlord to inform tenants that their behaviour was

unacceptable in the first instance and if the behaviour continues, to seek possession of the property.

- A more secure and stable living environment for tenants and neighbours. Reduce complaints of poor housing conditions, noise, rubbish, overgrown gardens, rodents and pests.
- A more attractive area for businesses and residents. Continuing the work with the Council's Waste Management team by including waste storage requirements as licence conditions to Improve waste and recycling compliance.
- Direct benefits for tenants include regular inspections of properties by Council Officers leading to improved welfare and confidence in the landlord due to compliance with standards set by licensing.
- Benefits for the community as a whole, including fewer environmental problems, protection of vulnerable persons who might otherwise live in poor condition properties and inclusion of the properties on the Public Register.

Since the introduction of the Council's 3rd Additional Licensing scheme in 2019, significant numbers of properties have been improved, many of which would have been outside the scope of Mandatory licensing and as such it is likely that, without the Council's Additional licensing scheme, a much smaller number would have been improved.

Evidence indicates problems with housing conditions and more generally for the community may be found in and caused by small as well as large HMOs.

Without the designation of an Additional Licensing scheme in the county, the Council will not have such an effective, proactive mechanism to ensure that these smaller properties are regulated and brought up to a satisfactory standard and properly maintained at that standard.

Despite the good work undertaken to improve properties through the current Additional Licensing scheme, it is evident that many properties still require improvement, and some tenants are not being adequately protected. Further work is required.

Options

The Options to be considered are:

Option 1 - To continue with the Additional Licensing Scheme in its current form, whereby licensing applies to:

- HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming three or more separate households regardless of the number of storeys in the following specified wards only:

Aberystwyth Bronglais, Aberystwyth Central, Aberystwyth North, Aberystwyth Penparcau, Aberystwyth Rheidol, Faenor, Llanbadarn Fawr Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr Sulien.

- The whole of the County of Ceredigion for:
 - HMOs occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys, and
 - Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004)

Option 2 - Licensing all properties which meet the following criteria on a county wide basis:

- Those properties occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of stories, AND
- Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004) created by converting buildings into flats where the conversions did not meet the Building Regulations 1991 Standards and they have not been subsequently brought up to the relevant standards.

Option 3 - To allow the existing Additional Licensing Scheme to expire on the 14th April 2024 and not declare/designate an Additional scheme in its place.

Recommendation

Having considered all the evidence and the benefits of having an Additional Licensing Scheme together with the response to the Public Consultation, it is recommended that Option 1 be considered for re-designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for a further 5 years from 2024 – 2029. The numbers of HMOs in both the Lampeter and Cardigan area are low. The data for the last 5 years does not support the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme in these areas.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? Yes

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

Long term: The proposal is for a period of 5 years at which time the Licensing scheme will be reviewed and evaluated to determine whether it should continue. The scheme is self-financing.

Collaboration: We currently liaise with colleagues in Highways and Public Protection, together with external partners such as the Police, Fire Authority and University, Agents and Landlords in delivering the scheme.

Involvement: A Public Consultation has been undertaken for a period of 10 weeks. This has included information and questionnaires available on the website and through social media. Directly consulting with known landlords and agents. Targeted letters, information and questionnaires to a selection of properties in the current Designation area of Aberystwyth and Lampeter.

Prevention: The proposal tackles specific properties meeting the criteria for the Additional Licensing scheme and aims to improve conditions for those residing within the properties and other residents living within the vicinity of the licensed properties.

Integration: The proposal seeks to assist services in both Highways and Public Protection in relation to waste management and anti-social behaviour and noise issues.

Recommendation(s):

OPTION 1: To redesignate the Additional Licensing Scheme to include:

- a. Those properties occupied by 3 or more persons, forming three or more separate households in the following specified wards only: Aberystwyth - North, Central, Penparcau, Rheidol and Bronglais; Llanbadarn Fawr – Padarn and Sulien, Faenor

AND

- b. Licensing all properties which meet the following criteria on a county wide basis:
- Those properties occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of stories, AND
 - Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004) created by converting buildings into flats where the conversions did not meet the Building Regulations 1991 Standards and they have not been subsequently brought up to the relevant standards.

Reasons for decision:

To comply with legislative requirements.

Overview and Scrutiny:

Presented to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th March 2024

Policy Framework:

Housing Strategy 2023-2028

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Creating Sustainable, Greener and Well-Connected Communities

Finance and Procurement implications:

N/A

Legal Implications:

N/A

Staffing implications:

N/A

Property / asset implications:

N/A

Risk(s):

The existing Additional Licensing Scheme will end on the 14th April 2024. Additional Licences already issued will continue to run until they either expire or are revoked by the LA. No new or renewal of licences will take place. This will result in a loss of income where it is not considered appropriate to declare a new scheme. However, It should

be noted that loss of income should not be used as a reason to declare an Additional Licensing Scheme.

Statutory Powers:

Housing Act 2004

Background Papers:

N/A

Appendices:

Appendix 1- Review and Evaluation of Additional Licensing Scheme 2018-2024

Appendix 2- Public Consultation Response

Appendix 3- Integrated Impact Assessment

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Date:

27/02/2024



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Review of Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation in Ceredigion 2018 - 2024



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1. Introduction and General Background in Wales and UK.

1.1 Mandatory HMO (House in Multiple Occupation)Licensing

A scheme under the Housing Act 2004, that came into force in Wales in June 2006. It requires landlords to obtain a licence for certain types of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). HMOs are properties that are rented out to three or more unrelated people who share facilities such as a kitchen and bathroom.

The Mandatory Licensing Scheme applies to HMOs that meet the following criteria:

- They have three or more storeys and five or more occupants who do not form a single household.
- They are converted buildings that have been converted into flats or bedsits, even if they have fewer than three storeys and five occupants.
- They are purpose-built flats that are let to three or more unrelated people who share facilities.

Landlords of HMOs that are subject to the Mandatory Licensing Scheme must apply for a licence from their local council. The licence application process typically involves providing the council with information about the property, including its condition, amenities, and management arrangements. The council will then inspect the property to ensure that it meets certain minimum standards.

If the council is satisfied that the property meets the standards, it will issue a licence. The licence will specify the conditions that the landlord must comply with, such as requirements for fire safety, electrical safety, and gas safety.

Landlords who fail to comply with the Mandatory Licensing Scheme can be fined up to £20,000. They may also have their licences revoked and be served with a Prohibition Notice, preventing them from renting out their property.

In April 2007, the Welsh Assembly Government issued guidance to local authorities, (The Housing Act 2004 (Selective Licensing) (Wales) General Approval 2007) indicating that councils may introduce an Additional Licensing Scheme without obtaining Assembly approval, providing that certain requirements of the legislation with regard to evidence, consultation with interested parties and implementation are carried out.

1.2 Additional Licensing Scheme HMO (House in Multiple Occupation)

An Additional Licensing Scheme HMO is a type of HMO that is licensed by a local council under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004. Additional Licensing Schemes are introduced in areas where the council believes that there are issues with smaller HMOs and that their management would also benefit from inclusion in a management and licensing scheme.

The scope of Additional Licensing Schemes can vary from one council to another, but they typically cover most rented property with 3 or more occupiers who form 2 or more households. This means that even if a property does not meet the criteria for the Mandatory Licensing Scheme, it may still be subject to an Additional Licensing Scheme.

Additional Licensing Schemes run for a period of 5 years, after which the council must re-declare the scheme. If the council decides not to re-declare the scheme, then the licences that have been issued will expire.

The following property types **are** classed as HMOs under the Additional Licensing Scheme:

- An entire house or flat which is let to 3 or more tenants who form 2 or more households and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.
- A house which has been converted entirely into bedsits or other non-self-contained accommodation and which is let to 3 or more tenants who form two or more households and who share kitchen, bathroom, or toilet facilities.
- A converted house which contains one or more flats which are not entirely self-contained (i.e., the flat does not contain within it a kitchen, bathroom, and toilet) and which is occupied by 3 or more tenants who form two or more households.
- A building which is converted entirely into self-contained flats if the conversion did not meet the standards of the 1991 Building Regulations and more than one-third of the flats are let on short-term tenancies. (Housing Act 2004 s257)

2 General Background and History in Ceredigion

In Ceredigion, as from 1st April 2009, Ceredigion County Council introduced an Additional Licensing Scheme covering the following categories of HMOs:

- Occupied by three or more persons, forming two or more households.
- Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004), created by converting buildings into flats where the conversions did not meet the Building Regulations 1991 Standards and they have not been subsequently brought up to the relevant standards.

The Council chose to vary the scheme so that different rules apply to different areas or wards in the County. This approach has been taken elsewhere by other councils - often where areas of larger cities are wholly dominated by student lets, for instance. This approach was based on there being evidence of significant variations in the character of a region and in the demands on the Council's services historically.

To this end it was originally decided that the following wards were included: **Aberystwyth North, South, West, East; Llanbadarn Fawr, Faenor, Borth, Tirymynach, Cardigan, Lampeter.**

Since April 2009 as required by legislation, the Additional Licensing Scheme has been reviewed and following public consultation, re-declared at the end of two five-year periods in 2014 and 2019. Therefore, at this time it is necessary to undertake a reappraisal and consultation exercise to establish the effectiveness of the existing scheme and to consider the options for whether an Additional Licensing Scheme should continue for a further 5 years from 2024-2029 (unless revoked sooner).

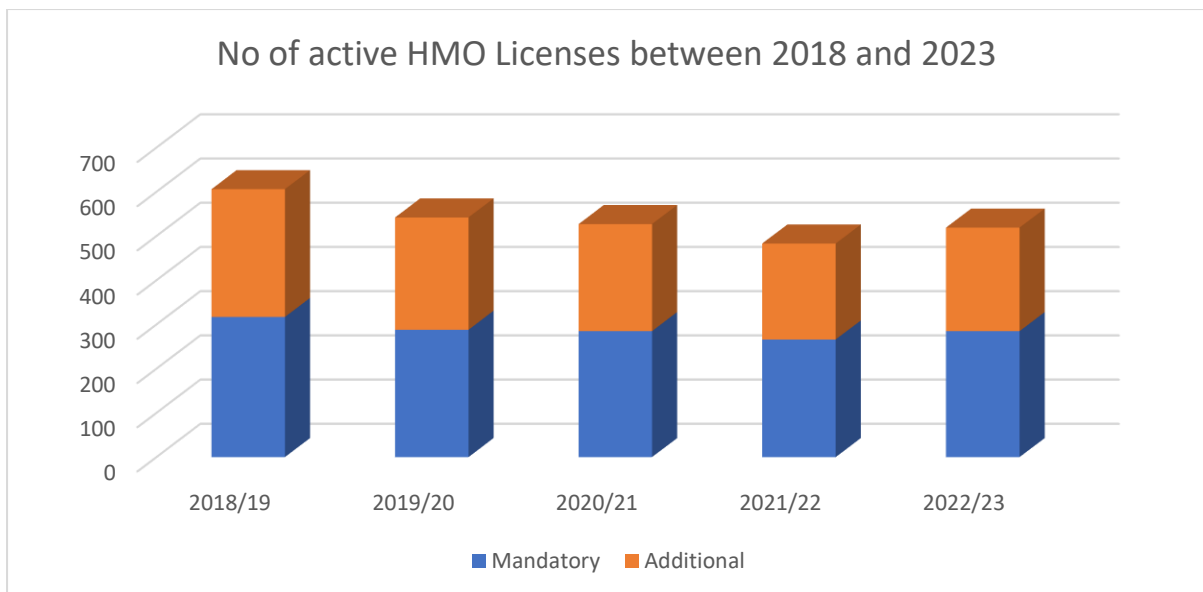
3. HMO Licensing Facts and Figures

An evaluation of the Additional Licensing Scheme has been undertaken to evidence what has been achieved during the scheme and to provide background to the issues within the areas covered.

- 20.6% of population in Ceredigion are in Private rented properties (equivalent of 6,371 households) according to the ONS Survey 2021 (this compares to an all-Wales average of 14%).
- Of the total private rented sector there were 519 licensed HMOs (31st March 2023) A further 149 in the application process for renewal of licences. Of those licensed, 234 were properties licenced in accordance with the current Additional Licensing Scheme parameters.
- Of those currently licensed 56% are Mandatory, 40% Additional Shared Houses & 4% Additional Converted Flats.

3.1 Operational Licences

Fig. 1 Operational Licensed HMOs by Type 2019 to 2023



The Graph above highlights the number of operative HMO Licences (both Mandatory & Additional) from the introduction of the initial Additional Licensing Designation on the 19th April 2019 up to the 31st March 2023. It should be noted that the dip in licensed premises between 2021 & 2022 is likely to be attributable to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic when it was not possible to undertake licence inspections. This led to a delay in the renewal of expiring licences and the inability to issue licences to new premises. As can be seen from the figures the number of licensed properties has increased in the last 12 months.

Fig. 2 Number of Full and Conditional Licences 2019 to 2023



The graph above shows the split in the number of mandatory and additional licences issued without conditions since the introduction of the current Additional Licensing Designation on the 19th April 2019 up to the 31st March 2023.

The table below shows the percentage of licences issued with and without conditions.

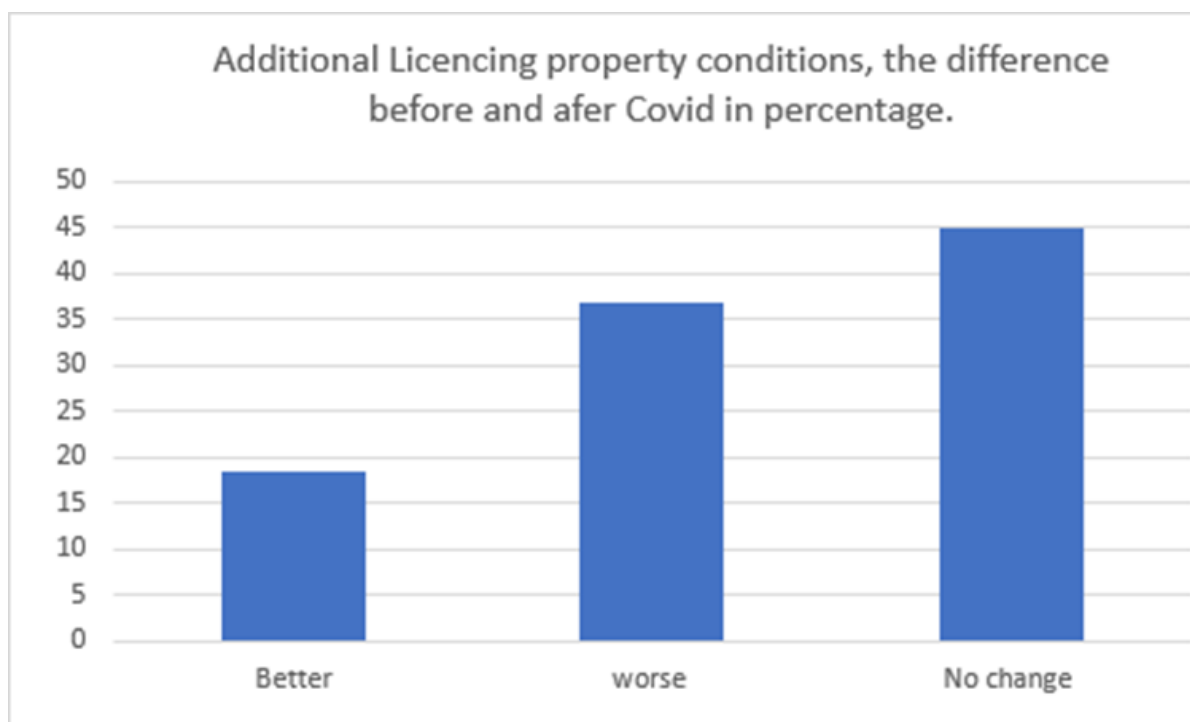
Fig. 3 HMO Licensing: Total Licences Full / Conditional 2019 to 2023

Year	Number of full licences issued	Number of conditional licences issued
2019/20	89 %	11%
2020/21	92 %	8 %
2021/22	84 %	16 %
2022/23	78 %	22 %
2023/24	68 % (April – Nov)	32 % (April to Nov)

Programmed inspections were suspended during lockdown. This impacted the number of renewal and new licences that were issued in this time. It can also be seen that the ratio of licences issued with conditions has increased post Covid -19 suggesting a slip in overall standards during this period.

Analysis of a 25% sample of inspection records for properties with additional licences indicate that 37% were in a worse condition post Covid than their last inspection prior to the Pandemic.

Fig. 4 Percentage difference in condition before and after Covid 19 Pandemic



3.2 HHSRS Analysis: Ceredigion (2018 to 2023)

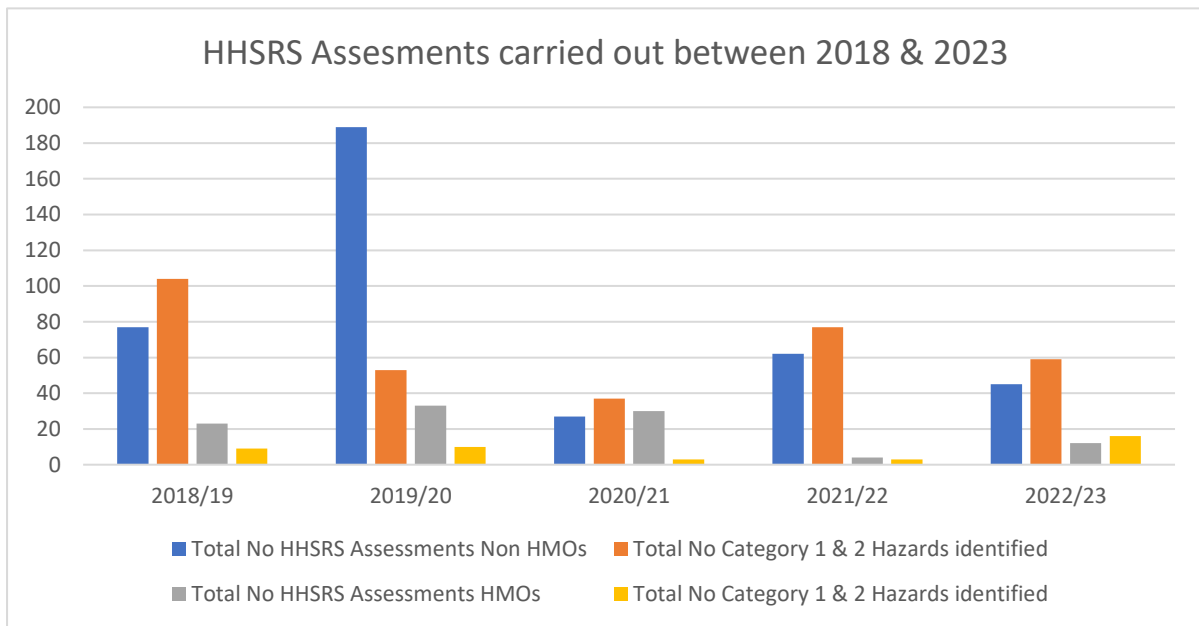
The information presented here covers the condition of residential properties, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Below is an analysis of significant Category 1 and 2 Hazards identified in Ceredigion over the period April 2018 to 31st March 2023.

Fig. 5 Category 1 and 2 Hazards identified in Ceredigion 2019 to 2023

Year	Total No HHSRS Assessments Non HMOs	Total No Category 1 & 2 Hazards identified	Total No HHSRS Assessments HMOs	Total No Category 1 & 2 Hazards identified
2018/19	77	104	23	9
2019/20	189	53	33	10
2020/21	27	37	30	3
2021/22	62	77	4	3
2022/23	45	59	12	16

Fig. 6 Category 1 and 2 Hazards identified in Ceredigion 2018 to 2023



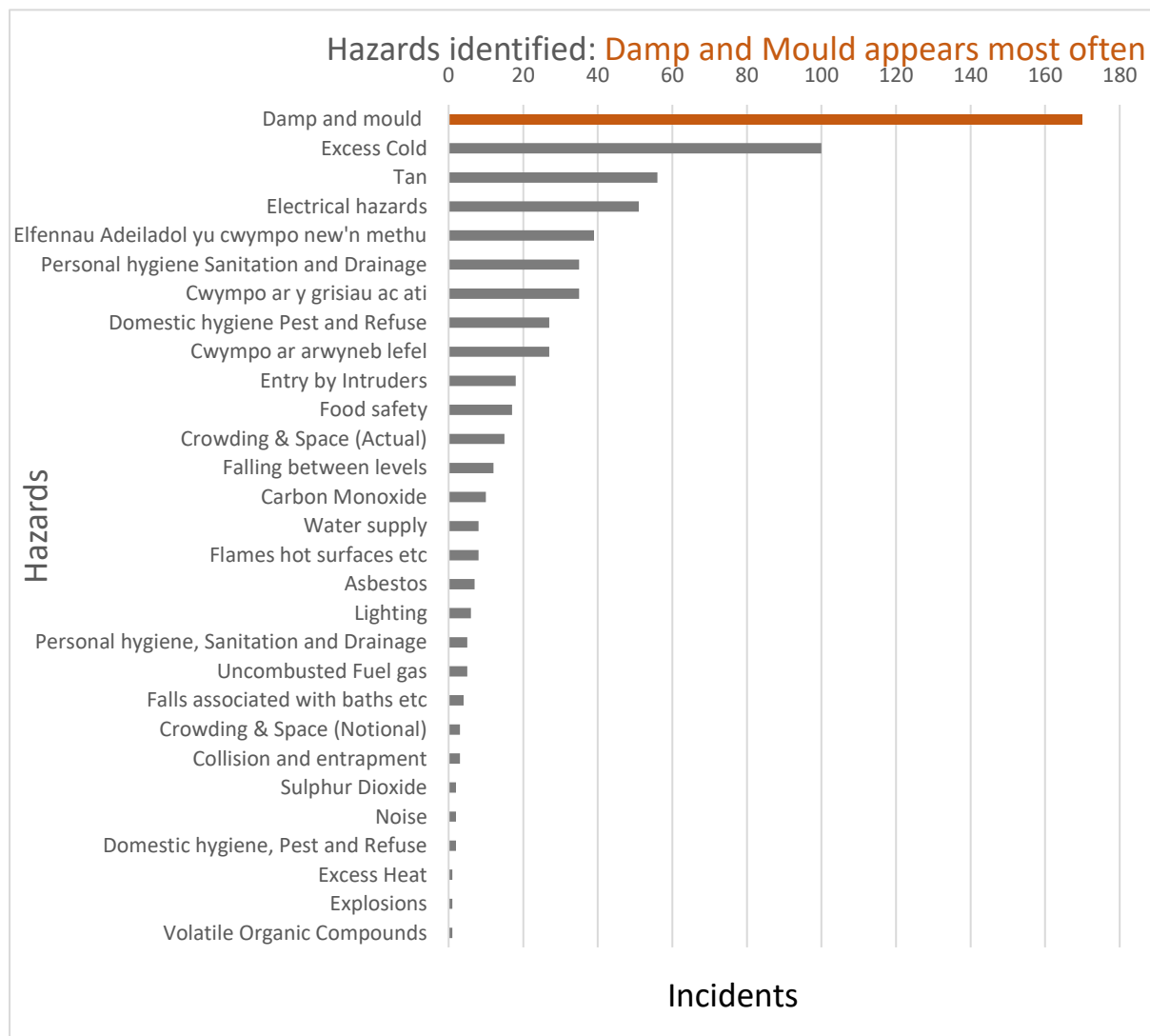
The HHSRS is used to determine whether residential premises are safe to live in. It replaced the Fitness Standard in July 2006. Local authorities use the System to determine whether a hazard exists that may cause harm to the health and safety of a potential occupant. Hazards are divided into two categories. Those which score high on the scale (and therefore the greatest risk) are called Category 1 hazards. Those that fall lower down the scale and pose a lesser risk are called Category 2 hazards. Where a condition is classified as a Category 1 hazard the local authority has a **duty** to take the appropriate enforcement action. The local authority **may** take enforcement action in respect of Category 2 hazards.

3.3 HHSRS Hazards Identified

A range of Hazards are identified during HHSRS assessments – Damp and Mould and Excess cold occur most frequently as indicated in Fig.7 below.

Within Ceredigion there are significant incidents of Damp and Mould Growth deficiencies identified within HMOs which may be attributable to inefficient heating systems, lack of insulation and disrepair. Fire safety defects in HMOs are also significant. Excess cold hazards illustrate the adequacy of the heating, insulation, and ventilation measures within the property. SAP/ EPC data is also taken into consideration. HMO licensing within the county has helped to ensure sufficient heating and insulation is provided within licensed properties.

Fig. 7 Category 1 and 2 Hazards identified in Ceredigion 2019 to 2023



3.4 Housing, Environmental and Nuisance Complaints/Service Requests in the Private Rented Sector

Below we consider the demand on the service in relation to licensing visits, housing inspections and following complaints in relation to housing standards, management, tenancy and nuisance related complaints associated with Houses in Multiple Occupation. These are categorised into the following.

- Licensing and Programmed Inspections:** Relates to inspections of licensed HMOs and includes both those initiated on receipt of an HMO application and any risk based programmed inspections required during the license period based on the size of the property and housing and management standards.
- HHSRS and Property Conditions:** These relate to complaints associated with housing and management standards which may present either Category 1 or 2 hazards under the HHSRS or maintenance and management concerns. These are usually in response to complaints made by the occupants or their representatives.

- **Eviction and Tenancy Matters:** These include complaints of instances of alleged harassment, illegal eviction, and tenancy agreement disputes as examples.
- **Empty Property Complaints:** Previously licensed HMOs which are vacant and having a negative impact on the local community.
- **Unlicensed HMOs:** Includes proactive and complaint lead investigations made by the authority into unlicensed HMOs.
- **Noise Complaints:** Complaints directly attributable to the occupants and/ or their visitors in HMOs.
- **Nuisance – Waste:** Complaints made to the authority regarding waste and refuse accumulations, fly-tipping and wrongly presented domestic waste directly attributable to HMOs.
- **Nuisance – other:** Relates to issues causing a nuisance to either occupants or local residents and may include drainage and odorous complaints as examples.

The last 5 years have seen a reduction in nuisance and waste related complaints associated with licensed HMOs. This may be due to the existence of the licensing regime but is also likely to be impacted by the Covid 19 Pandemic and fewer properties being occupied during the various lock downs.

The graph below indicates the number of noise complaints received that were associated with HMO premises in the Aberystwyth area. No complaints were received relating to HMOs in the towns of Lampeter and Cardigan during this period.

Fig. 8 Nuisance and refuse related complaints associated with HMO premises.

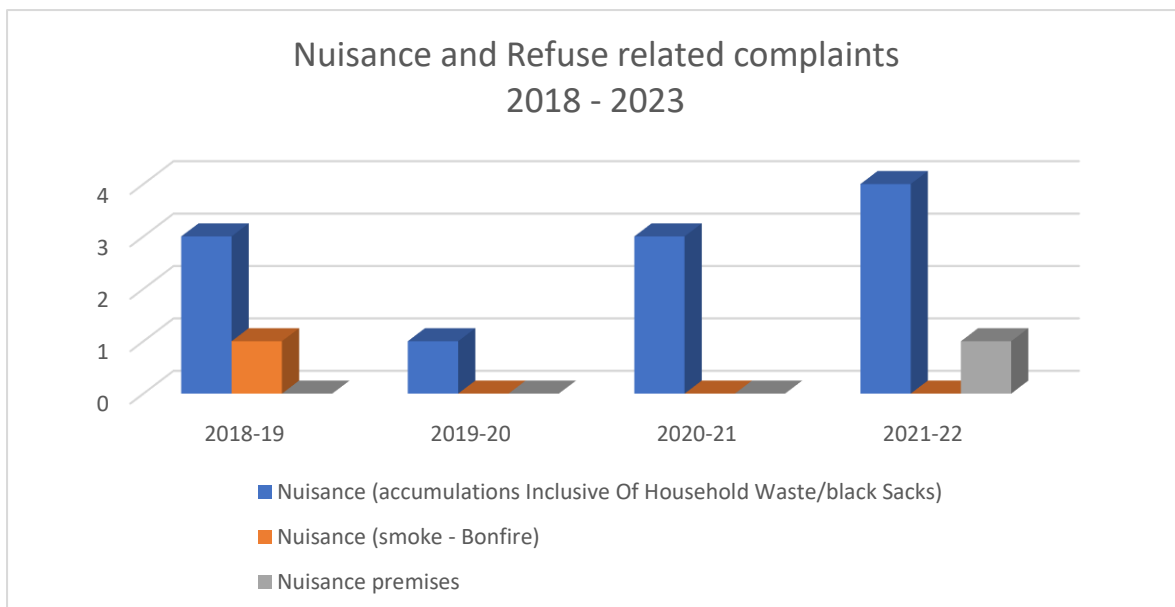


Fig. 9 Noise complaints received between 2019 and 2023 associated with Licensed HMOs

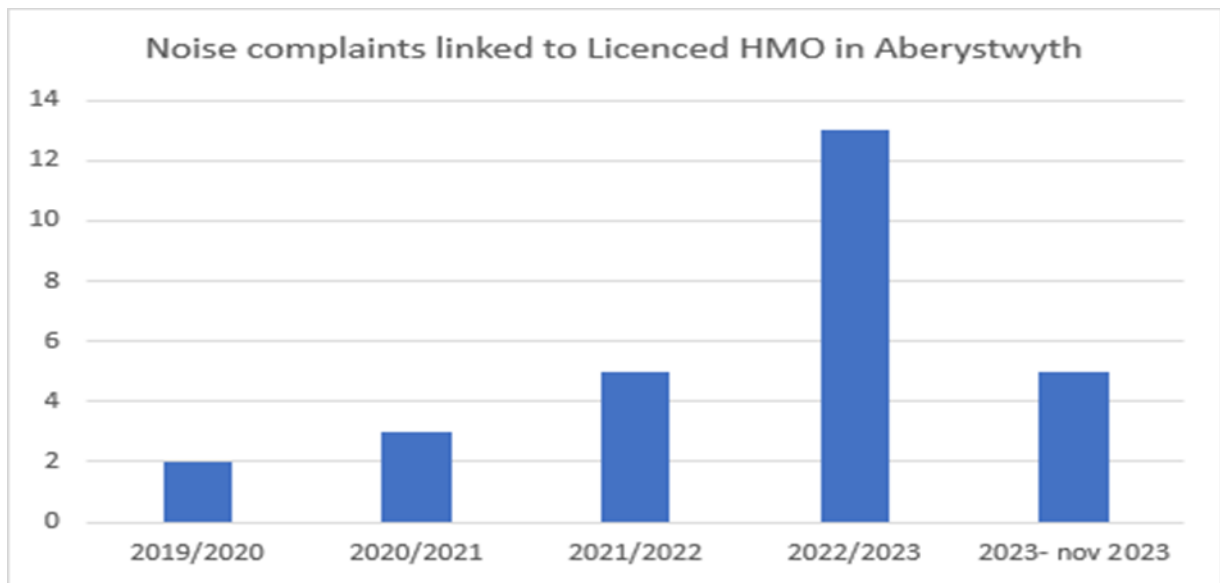
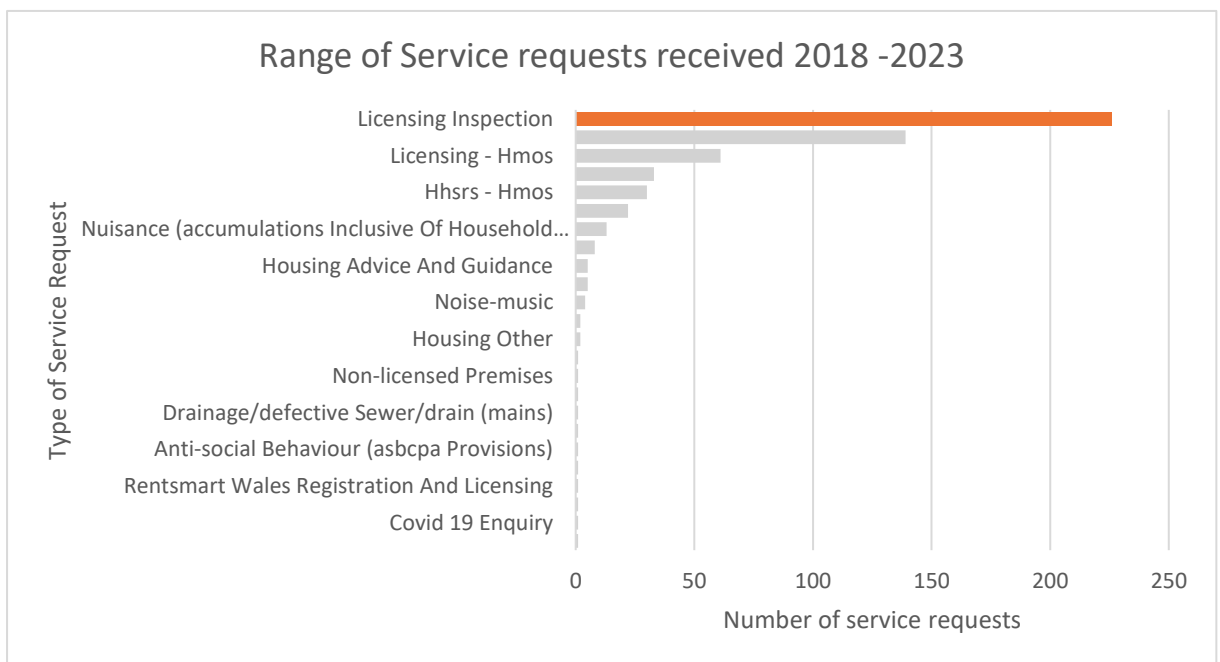


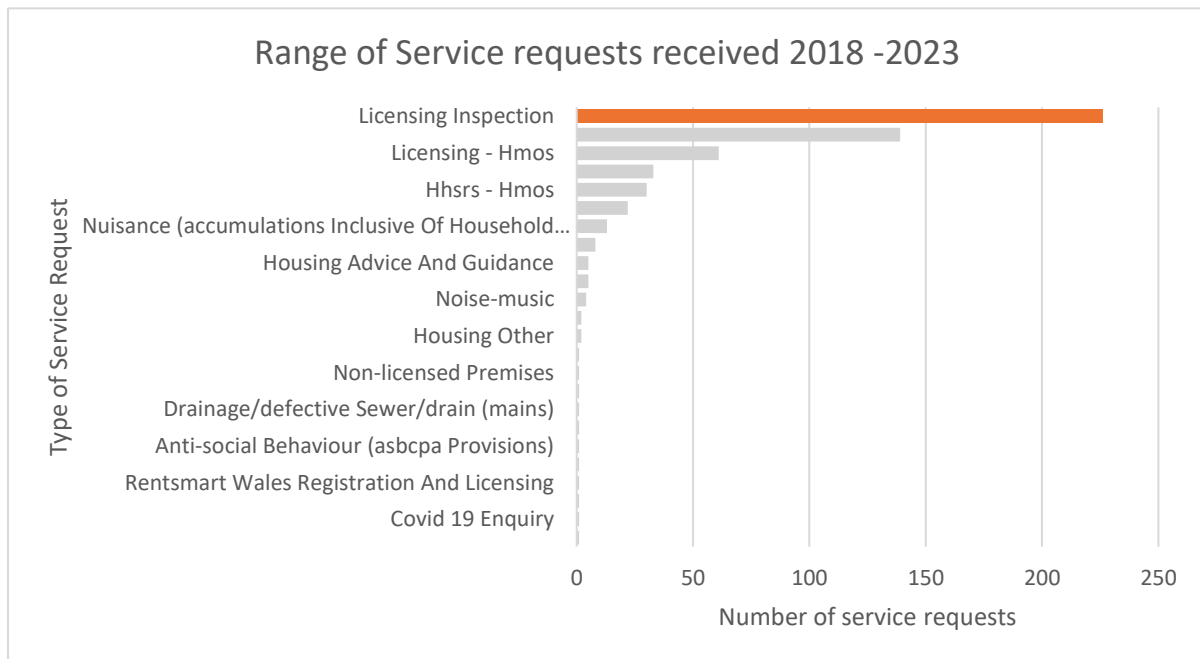
Fig. 10 Housing related Service requests received 2018 – 2023.



The above graph indicates the range and number of service requests received by the Housing Service during the last 5 years.

Fig. 11 overleaf indicates the range and number of service requests relating to HMO properties between 2018 -2023.

Fig. 11 Range of Service Requests received 2018 – 2023.



3.5 The effects of the Covid19 Pandemic

The Covid 19 Pandemic had a significant impact on both the mandatory and additional HMO licensing schemes. The County has 2 Universities and a significant number of HMO's particularly in Aberystwyth are occupied by students. During the Pandemic students returned to their homes and undertook their studies online. In addition, all physical inspections of residential premises including HMOs were suspended for long periods. This included both programmed licensing inspections and licence application checks.

The suspension of inspections had a knock-on effect of delaying licenses being renewed and an interruption to routine licence programme creating a large backlog of properties requiring inspection. This in turn has impacted the standards of repair experienced in HMO properties that have been inspected in the last 18 months as we recover from the Pandemic. This is reflected in the data recorded in Fig.3 in respect of the number of Licenses issued in 22/23 with conditions attached.

During the Pandemic, Ceredigion saw a significant growth in property prices as demand outstripped supply. Prices began to increase as soon as the Pandemic reached Wales in March 2020 and grew significantly throughout 2021.

As a result, nationally, Ceredigion has the 4th highest Housing Affordability Ratio behind Monmouthshire, Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff. This makes it harder for local people and first-time buyers to purchase in their chosen communities, especially when considering earnings in Ceredigion are below average. The median annual earnings, by place of residence, was £23,576 in 2021 in Ceredigion.

This in turn increases the demand for accommodation in the County. Several Landlords have taken the opportunity to leave the rental market and have sold their

properties. This in turn has resulted in a decrease in the number of HMOs in the County.

3.6 Summary Findings

Whilst much progress has been made in recovery from the pandemic, the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will assist the Authority in the continued improvement of housing standards in Houses on Multiple Occupation.

The decline in complaints relating to anti-social behaviour, noise and waste management issues show the effectiveness of having the Additional Licensing Scheme in place.

4. Rent Smart Wales

Licensing by Rent Smart Wales and both Mandatory and Additional HMO Licensing are continuing to work well in tandem.

HMO licensing is dealt with under Housing Act 2004 and is entirely enforced by local housing authorities. Rent Smart Wales registration and licensing requirements were introduced by Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Cardiff Council, working as Rent Smart Wales, is the single licensing authority for Wales. Elements of enforcement are shared between the single licensing authority and local housing authorities by agreement and delegation of authority.

A Mandatory or Additional HMO licence relates to a specific licence holder concerning a specific HMO. Each property requires a separate HMO licence. Anyone letting or managing a residential property in Wales let under a domestic tenancy requires a licence from Rent Smart Wales. This applies to properties let to single households as well as those let in multiple occupation. They do not require a separate licence for each property they let or manage.

4.1 Summary Findings

An HMO licence cannot replace a Rent Smart Wales licence and vice versa. Licensing by Rent Smart Wales and both Mandatory and Additional HMO Licensing are continuing to work well in tandem and are combining to improve housing conditions and tenancy standards.

5. Links to Policies, Plans and Strategies

5.1 Local Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 – ‘Housing for all’

The Housing Strategy for Ceredigion has been reviewed and a new Strategy for 2023-2028 developed in Partnership with the RSL’s operating in the County. The Strategy sets out Ceredigion’s vision and plans for Housing in the County for the next 5 years providing a firm foundation for dealing with the priorities facing housing and housing related services in Ceredigion.

The priorities identified by the strategy are as follows:

- Increasing supply and improving housing conditions
- Supporting people in their own homes and communities

Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation helps to deliver in key areas within the strategy. Those key areas include providing affordable and good quality accommodation in Ceredigion with the improvement of housing standards at the core of the strategy, in summary this includes:

- Improving housing standards by removing Category 1 hazards that impact on health and safety in all tenures
- Ensuring homes are safe from fire
- Working to improve thermal efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- Supporting the delivery and enforcement of Rent Smart Wales requirements
- Ensuring the use of model contracts, introduced by The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- Ensuring all qualifying Houses in Multiple Occupation in the county are licensed

5.2 Corporate Strategy 2022 – 27

The Corporate Strategy sets out our priorities called Corporate Well-Being Objectives, along with our ambitions and the steps to achieve these over the next five years. The Strategy informs everything the Council does. It is based on a wide-ranging review of evidence and needs-assessments.

The strategy outlines four well-being objectives, which include:

- Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment
- Creating caring and healthy communities
- Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
- Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities

The Objectives have also been identified through the lens of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This involved identifying how we could maximise our contribution to the national well-being goals and ensure that we used the sustainable development principle to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

5.3 Through Age & Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2027

This strategy is a key part of the Ceredigion County Council Corporate Strategy that illustrates the main priorities for the Council. The priorities aim to enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for the people of Ceredigion.

The current economic crises together with low incomes has placed increasing difficulties on the ability of people to access safe, affordable housing.

One of the key priorities within the corporate strategy is to enable individual and family resilience. Access to an improved choice and quality of safe affordable housing is a key factor in achieving this.

5.4 Summary Findings – Housing Strategies

1. The Housing Strategy for Ceredigion has been reviewed and a new Strategy for 2023 -2028 developed in Partnership with the RSL's operating in the County. The Strategy sets out Ceredigion's vision and plans for Housing in the County for the

next 5 years. Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation helps to deliver on several key areas within the strategy.

2. The Corporate Strategy (2022-2027) highlights the main priority areas for Ceredigion County Council over the next 5-year period. The Additional Licensing Designation and associated Review takes into account the aims of the Corporate Strategy and has a particular role in achieving improved accommodation standards and the condition of housing across the County.
3. The Through Age & Wellbeing Strategy focuses on preventative services which help people to remain independent or regain the independence they want and value. Additional HMO Licensing helps to deliver on this element of the Strategy.

6. Implementation of an Additional Licensing Scheme

The overall purpose of an Additional Licensing Scheme is to improve the standard of rented property within the county. This includes all properties that are considered HMOs within the definition of the scheme. The department will continue to work closely with members of the public and organisations noted below to ensure the Additional Licensing Scheme will secure real benefits for tenants and the neighbouring communities in general as well as other Council services and external organisations and agencies. This will be achieved through:

- Continued engagement with landlords and lettings agents, to ensure well managed and safe HMO accommodation using licensing regulatory provisions.
- Improve the condition of HMOs relating to amenities and repair through Licensing and associated legislative controls and ensuring overcrowded conditions are avoided.
- Continued engagement with the local communities and their representative to improve management practices around waste, noise and anti-social behaviour concerns in neighbouring communities.
- Continued partnership working with colleagues in Highways and Environmental Services, Mid and West Wales Fire Authority, Universities and Guild of Students representatives and Rent Smart Wales as examples. This is to ensure targeted and intelligence led enforcement of those not in compliance with appropriate licensing and housing and safety standards.

When considering the implementation of the Additional Licensing Scheme, the Council firmly believes that securing sustained improvements to the private sector stock in Ceredigion can only be achieved through a robust partnership approach involving tenants, landlords, Universities, local communities and the voluntary and private sectors including various council services working collectively. The department continues to deliver on service improvement in relation to HMO Licensing, areas that have been addressed to date include:

- Changes to the HMO Application Form making the process of applying for a licence easier through the simplification of the licensing application form and introduction of a Renewal Licence Application Form.
- Introduction of a reduced licensing fee for landlords on renewal of an HMO Licence in circumstances where:

- a) Application is received prior to the expiry of the existing licence and
 - b) Licence Renewal Application is full and complete including all certification, documentation and appropriate payment and
 - c) The licence holder has, for the previous licence period complied with all licence conditions (including submission of the annual Gas Safe Certificate if applicable) and
 - d) The licence holder and/or nominated manager are appropriately registered and licensed with Rent Smart Wales, and
 - e) There has been no Housing Act 2004 Part 1 Notice has been served on the licence holder/person in control within the previous licensing period.
- Continued review and updating of information on the Ceredigion Web Pages providing information on licensed HMOs through a GIS enabled Public Register and the provision of advice and guidance to landlords on a range of housing standards and HMO Licensing matters.
 - The introduction of a new Web-based database system which has streamlined the application process for local authority officers introducing wholesale changes to the way HMO Licensing, enforcement and housing inspection information is recorded by the authority.

7. Public Consultation

As part of the review of the HMO Additional Licensing Scheme, every five years, it is a mandatory requirement that a Public Consultation is carried out. The authority is required to ensure that a thorough consultation exercise is conducted with all those likely to be affected by the licensing designation. A guide for practitioners from Local Government Regulation recommends a minimum consultation period of 10 weeks and this was carried out in Ceredigion between 15th December 2023 and 23rd February 2024.

Questionnaires were delivered by hand within Aberystwyth town and Lampeter to a mixture of owner-occupied properties, Houses in Multiple Occupation and other rented properties. The questionnaire was also online and available at the county's libraries.

County Councillors, members of the Landlords Steering-Group, The University, Dyfed-Powys Police, Mid Wales Fire and Rescue and all other relevant departments of the Council with an interest were also consulted.

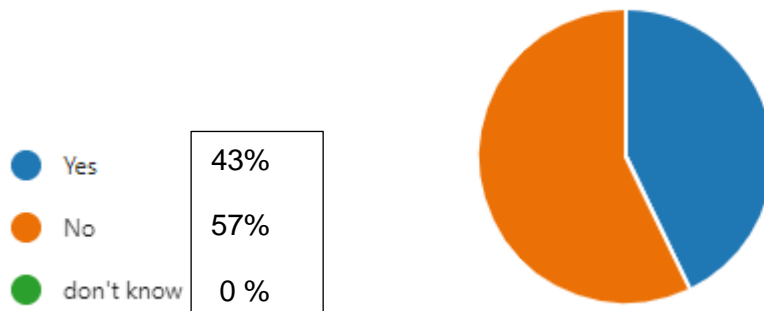
In addition, the Consultation was placed on the Ceredigion County Council corporate website, utilising the Engagements and Consultations facility. Various social media outlets such as Facebook, X / Twitter were similarly deployed.

A complete copy of the findings of the Public Consultation is included in Appendix 2

8. Key Questions and responses relating to the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme

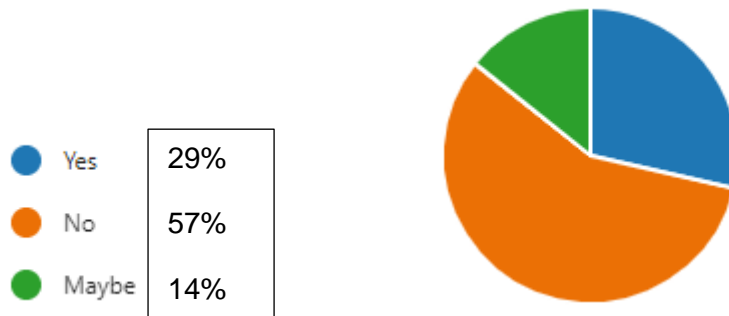
There was a total of 17 responses received to the Public Consultation. The graphs below indicate that 65% percent of those that responded to the questionnaire generally support the re-designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme and only 6% opposed the re-designation with 29% unsure.

Q. Do you think that landlords and agents manage properties in your area to an acceptable standard?



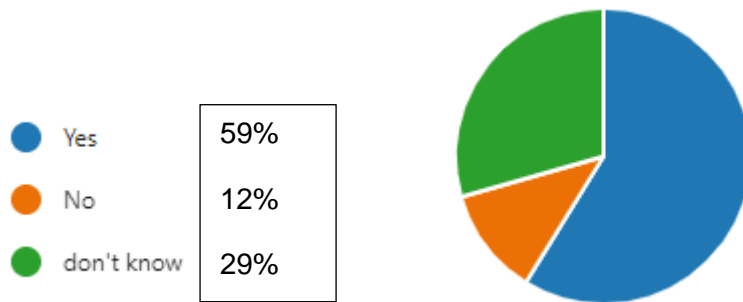
A: Results show that there is almost a 50:50 split in the public's general opinion regarding the current good management of HMOs. Over 50% feel that more work is needed to raise the standard generally and continuation of the scheme will assist in this provision.

Q. Do you think Rent Smart Wales licensing of landlords is sufficient to ensure proper management of your property?



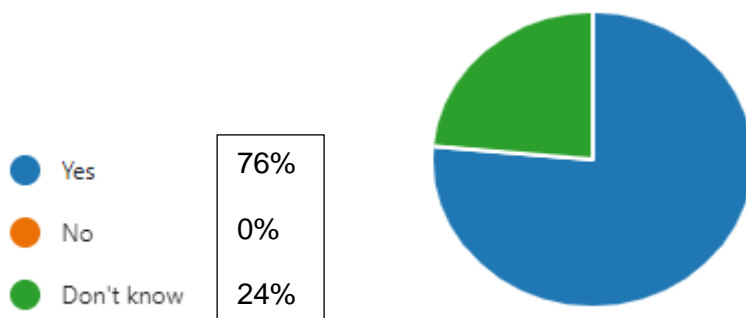
A: The findings would indicate that there is a general opinion that Rent Smart Wales on its own is not sufficient to ensure the effective management of private rented properties and that a combination of the two schemes is desirable to raise standards.

Q. Do you think that HMO Licensing benefits the community as a whole?



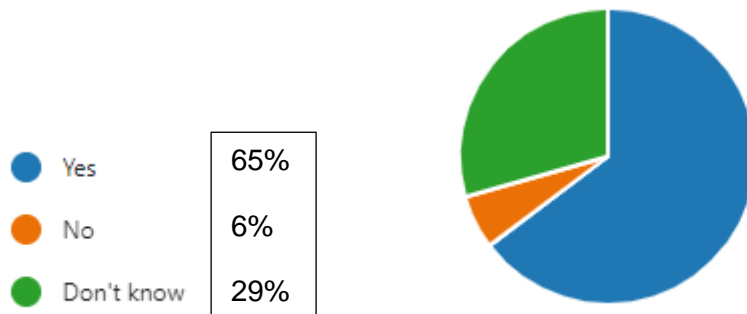
A: This chart would indicate a strong support for HMO licencing generally and that it does benefit the community.

Q: Do you think the HMO Licensing Scheme benefits tenants of HMOs?



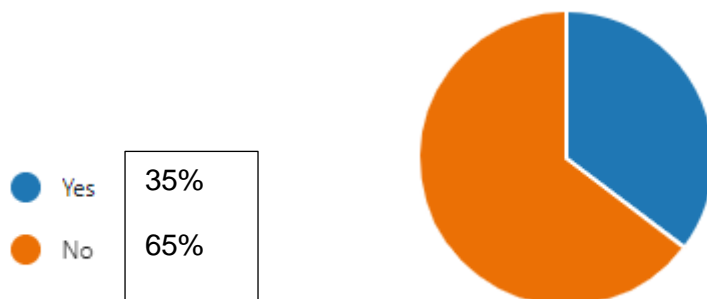
A: The evidence in this chart strongly supports that HMO licencing does benefit tenants with regards to housing conditions, safety and tenancy.

Q. Do you support the continuation / introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme?



A: Only a very small minority of the responses oppose the continuation of the additional licencing scheme in the Aberystwyth area. The majority recognise the benefits of the scheme.

Q: Do you think the number of storeys should be taken into consideration as part of the HMO Licensing Scheme?



A: The evidence extracted indicates that most respondents feel the number of stories in a property should not be considered with regards to HMO licencing and that they recognise the benefits of licensing all HMOS.

8.1 Summary of Findings

From the questions and answers received it can be reasonably concluded that there is a good understanding of and broad support for the continuation of the Licensing Scheme from both tenants and the broader public.

9. Benefits of having an Additional Licensing scheme

The HMO Additional Licensing scheme has been running for nearly 15 years and the Council has significant experience of this area of regulation and believes the continuation of the scheme within Ceredigion will deliver the following benefits:

- New HMOs can make a valuable contribution to housing stock. HMOs provide accommodation for a wide range of groups, including young professionals, students, refugees and persons on low incomes. However, such conversions must be completed appropriately, and licensing provides a mechanism to regulate such properties.
- Ensure properties are maintained to an appropriate standard to protect tenants' health and safety and are appropriately managed.
- Ensure standards of accommodation provide a safe and healthy environment by examining hazards such as damp, cold, heat, falls, fire, electrical safety, gas safety, suitable room sizes, adequate kitchens / bathrooms for the number of tenants, food safety, biocides, lead, asbestos etc.
- Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour and crime. Licence conditions require the landlord to deal with this within the curtilage of the licensed properties. We would expect the landlord to inform tenants that their behaviour was unacceptable in the first instance and if the behaviour continues, to seek possession of the property.
- A more secure and stable living environment for tenants and neighbours. Reduce complaints of poor housing conditions, noise, rubbish, overgrown gardens, rodents and pests.
- A more attractive area for businesses and residents. Continuing the work with the Council's Waste Management team by including waste storage requirements as licence conditions to improve waste and recycling compliance.
- Direct benefits for tenants include regular inspections of properties by Council Officers leading to improved welfare and confidence in the landlord due to compliance with standards set by licensing.
- Benefits for the community as a whole, including fewer environmental problems, protection of vulnerable persons who might otherwise live in poor condition properties and inclusion of the properties on the Public Register.

Since the introduction of the Council's 3rd Additional Licensing scheme in 2019, significant numbers of properties have been improved, many of which would have been outside the scope of Mandatory licensing and as such it is likely that, without the Council's Additional licensing scheme, a much smaller number would have been improved.

Evidence indicates problems with housing conditions and more generally for the community may be found in and caused by small as well as large HMOs.

Without the designation of an Additional Licensing scheme in the county, the Council will not have such an effective, proactive mechanism to ensure that these smaller properties are regulated and brought up to a satisfactory standard and properly maintained at that standard.

Despite the good work undertaken to improve properties through the current Additional Licensing scheme, it is evident that many properties still require improvement, and some tenants are not being adequately protected. Further work is required.

10. Proposals for the future of the Additional Licensing Scheme in Ceredigion

After considering the evidence gathered during the review and evaluation of the Additional Licensing Scheme 2018 – 24, the options below are being offered for consideration to determine whether the Ceredigion County Council Additional Licensing Designation should be renewed for the period 2024 - 2029. Proposals to consider include:

Option 1 - To continue with the Additional Licensing Scheme in its current form, whereby licensing applies to:

- HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming three or more separate households regardless of the number of storeys in the following specified wards only:
Aberystwyth Bronglais, Aberystwyth Central, Aberystwyth North, Aberystwyth Penparcau, Aberystwyth Rheidol, Faenor, Llanbadarn Fawr Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr Sulien.
- The whole of the County of Ceredigion for:
 - HMOs occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys, and
 - Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004)

Option 2 - Licensing all properties which meet the following criteria on a county wide basis:

- Those properties occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of stories, **AND**
- Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004) created by converting buildings into flats where the conversions did not meet the Building Regulations 1991 Standards and they have not been subsequently brought up to the relevant standards.

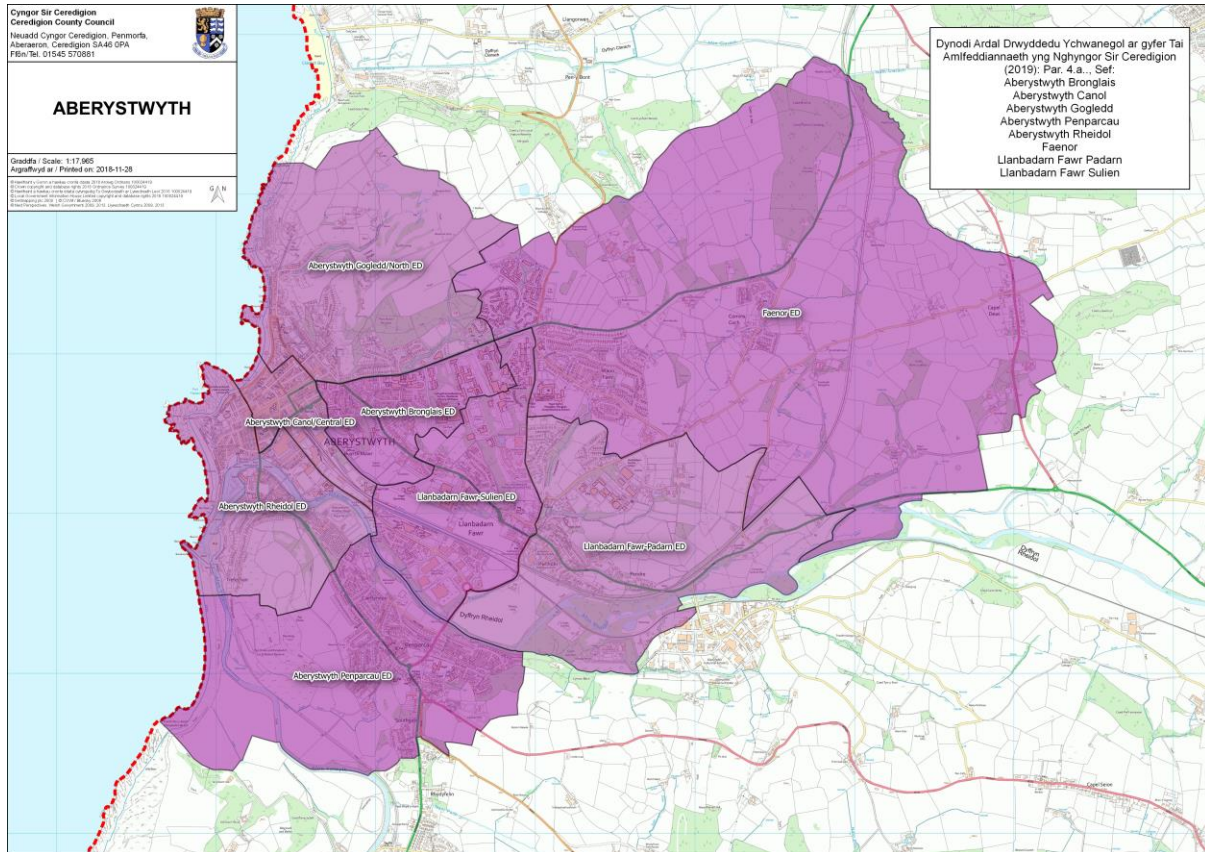
Option 3 - To allow the existing Additional Licensing Scheme to expire on the 19th April 2023 and not declare/designate an Additional scheme in its place.

11. Recommendation

Having considered all the evidence and the benefits of having an Additional Licensing Scheme together with the response to the Public Consultation, it is recommended that Option 1 be considered for re-designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for a further 5 years from 2024 – 2029. The numbers of HMOs in both the Lampeter and Cardigan area are low. The data for the last 5 years does not support the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme in these areas.

12. Appendix 1

11.1 Map showing extent of current Additional Licensing Scheme in Aberystwyth



RESIDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Review of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes for Ceredigion

The Housing Act 2004 introduced a requirement for certain Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) to be licensed. This enables Local Authorities to ensure that HMOs are suitably equipped with amenities and facilities for the number of occupants residing in them and are effectively managed by 'fit and proper persons'.

HMOs are rented houses which are shared by more than one household, for example, shared student houses and houses converted into flats/bedsits.

The **Mandatory** Licensing Scheme applies to larger, high-risk HMOs of 5 or more occupants and of 3 or more storeys.

The **Additional** Licensing Scheme is a discretionary licensing scheme. Since April 2019 Ceredigion County Council has run an Additional Licensing scheme which has incorporated the following.

- HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming three or more separate households regardless of the number of storeys in the following specified wards only:
 - i. Aberystwyth Bronglais
 - ii. Aberystwyth Central
 - iii. Aberystwyth North
 - iv. Aberystwyth Penparcau
 - v. Aberystwyth Rheidol
 - vi. Faenor
 - vii. Llanbadarn Fawr Padarn
 - viii. Llanbadarn Fawr Sulien
- The whole of the County of Ceredigion for:
 - HMOs occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys, and
 - Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004)

This Additional scheme is due to end in April 2024 and the Council is reviewing whether this scheme should be continued in its current form, extended, reduced or otherwise changed.

The results of this questionnaire will enable Ceredigion County Council to ensure that the HMO Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes that operate in the County are achieving the desired outcomes and will be used to address any concerns in future schemes that we may introduce.

The consultation will close on Friday 23rd February 2024

You can also complete the survey online via Ceredigion County Council Engagement and Consultation webpage or via this QR code.



1. What is the postcode of your home address?

2. Which of these best describes you?

Private Tenant

Social housing tenant

Owner Occupier

Landlord

Letting Agent

3. What kind of property do you live in? (Owner occupiers and tenants only) (*please tick*):

Flat single family occupancy

House single family occupancy

Shared house with others (not one family)

Shared flat with others (not one family)

If flat, how many flats are there in the block?

If shared house or flat, how many people live there?

How many storeys are there in the house/flat you live in?

4. How long have you lived at the property?

Questions 5 - 10 are for tenants only.

5. If you are a tenant, please provide details of what was provided by your landlord when you moved in? *Tick all that apply*

Written Tenancy Agreement

Information about refuse collection days

Details of how deposit is protected

Your responsibilities as a tenant

Copy of gas safety certificate

Copy of energy performance certificate

Inventory

Location of gas, electric, water meters

How to silence fire alarm

Rent book

6. If you are a tenant, are you concerned about any of the following in relation to your home?

- Not enough amenities (i.e. toilet, kitchen facilities)
- Waste, storage and refuse
- Fire safety
- Too little space/too many people
- Security
- Efficient heating system/ adequate insulation (Energy Efficiency)
- Property in poor state of repair
- Damp and mould
- Security of your tenancy (getting evicted)
- Other, please specify

7. If you are a tenant, are you aware of the requirement for landlords to be licenced under Rent Smart Wales?

- Yes No

8. Do you think that the Rent Smart Wales Scheme has improved the quality of your home or relationship with your landlord?

- Yes No

Please explain further.

9. Do you think that landlords and agents manage your property or other properties in your area to an acceptable standard?

- Yes No Don't Know

Please comment further if necessary:

10. Do you think Rent Smart Wales licencing of landlords is enough to ensure proper management of your property?

Yes No Don't Know

Please comment further if necessary:

These questions are for ALL

11. Are you concerned about any of the following in relation to your area?

- Noise, nuisance
- Litter, waste and refuse
- Unkempt and overgrown gardens/forecourts
- Properties detrimental to the amenity of the area (untidy properties)
- Burglary
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Other crime
- Other, please specify

12. Do you have any ideas about how these could be tackled?

13. Do you think that the Licensing Scheme for HMOs benefits the community?

Yes No Don't Know

Please comment further if necessary:

14. Do you think a HMO Licensing Scheme benefits tenants of HMOs?

Yes No Don't Know

Please comment further if necessary:

15. Do you support the continuation/ introduction of an Additional licencing scheme?

- Yes No Don't Know Depends on the scheme/ in part

Please explain your answer:

16. Please indicate which of the following types of property you would like to see licenced?

- A dwelling shared by 5 persons or more and 3 storeys or more – *This is mandatory and will continue*
- A dwelling occupied by one family
- A dwelling shared by 2 or more families/ households
- A dwelling shared by a family/household and a non-related lodger
- A dwelling shared by a family/ household with two or more lodgers
- A dwelling shared by three single people, not related
- A dwelling shared by four single people, not related
- A dwelling shared by five or more single people, not related

17. Do you think the number of storeys should be taken into consideration as part of the licensing scheme?

- Yes No

If yes, what number of storeys should be licensed? No. of floors?

Please return this questionnaire to the following address:

Ceredigion County Council, Community Wellbeing Service
Canolfan Rheidol
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UE
Ref: Additional Licensing Review 2023

Email: housing@ceredigion.gov.uk

The consultation will close on Friday 23rd February 2024



Equality Monitoring Form

These questions are optional, but we need to ask them to understand if our consultation has reached the right people (in accordance with the requirement of the Equality Act 2010) and to understand how different groups may be affected by the proposal allowing us to address this if we can.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, any information requested on the following questions is held in the strictest confidence for data analysis purposes only.

1. Age: What is your age group?

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Under 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45 – 64 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 – 24 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 65+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25 – 44 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Gender: What is your gender?

- | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Male | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer Not To Say | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Transgender: Is your gender the same now as when assigned at birth?

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|

4. Sexual Orientation: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Heterosexual/Straight | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bisexual | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gay Man | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gay Woman/Lesbian | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (state if desired) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Note: This question should only be asked of people age over 16.

5. Partnership: Which of the following options describes your partnership status?

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Single | <input type="checkbox"/> | Widowed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Married | <input type="checkbox"/> | Civil Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Living with Partner | <input type="checkbox"/> | Separated | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Divorced | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

6. National identity: How would you describe your national identity?

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Welsh | <input type="checkbox"/> | British | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| English | <input type="checkbox"/> | Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scottish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Northern Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please describe) | |
- _____

7. Race: What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| White | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gypsy Travellers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black/African/Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (Please State) | |
| Mixed | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
- _____

8. Language: What is your preferred language?

- | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Welsh | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| English | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (including British Sign Language) | |
- _____

Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?

Understand spoken Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speak Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Disability: Do you have a long term physical or mental health condition or illness that reduces your ability to carry out day to day activities

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>		

If you answered 'Yes' please indicate which applies to you:

Hearing Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical / Mobility Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	

10. Caring Responsibilities: Do you look after or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long term physical or mental ill-health, disability or problems related to old age?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-------------------	--------------------------

11. Religion or Belief: What is your religion?

Christian (all denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Atheist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	No religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for completing this form.



INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA) TOOL

Proposal Details

Title of Policy / Proposal / Initiative	
Redesignation of Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation	
Service Area	Officer completing IIA
Housing	Tracy Evans
Corporate Lead Officer	Strategic Director
Greg Jones	James Starbuck
Please give a brief description of the purpose of the proposal	
To consider the Review and Evaluation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation 2018 – 24 and consider whether the Scheme should be redesignated for a further period of 5 years	
Who will be directly affected by this proposal? HINT	
Landlords, Agents, Members of the Public	
Have those who will be affected by the proposal had the opportunity to comment on it?	
Public Consultation held between December 15th and the 23 rd February 2024	

Version Control

The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and included sustainable development, Welsh language and equality considerations wherever possible.

Version Number	Author	Decision making stage HINT	Date Considered	Description of any amendments made HINT
01	Tracy Evans	Post Consultation	23/02/2024	N/A

Council Corporate Well-being Objectives

Which of the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives does this proposal address and how? Click here to read a summary of our [Corporate Strategy 2022-27](#)

Boosting the economy, supporting business, and enabling employment.	
Creating caring and healthy communities	
Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages	
Creating sustainable, greener, and well-connected communities	The proposal seeks to regulate smaller houses in multiple occupation to ensure that residents of the County are able to reside in safe affordable housing that meets relevant housing standards.

National Well-being Goal: A Prosperous Wales

An innovative, productive, and low carbon society where everyone has decent work and there is no poverty.

Click [here](#) for information about a prosperous Wales.

Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts. (Click here for information)
Licensing of HMOs ensures that residents of the County are living in safe affordable accommodation that can be monitored and regulated in a consistent manner to meet current housing standards.
What evidence do you have to support this view?
Where proactive monitoring and inspection of this type of housing is not undertaken there is evidence that housing standards slip. Resulting in people living in unhealthy environments that are costly to run impacting both health and poverty. This was evident

through the Covid Pandemic when routine inspections of this type of premises were suspended for long periods of time.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to this National Well-being Goal?

The negative impact of the licensing scheme is the cost to the Landlord to obtain a licence. This is mitigated by the benefits to the tenants of living in accommodation that meets current housing standards.

National Well-being Goal: A Resilient Wales

A society where biodiversity is maintained and enhanced and where ecosystems are healthy and functioning.

Click [here](#) for information about a resilient Wales.

Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts. (Click [here](#) for information)

The proposal does not directly contribute to this goal

What evidence do you have to support this view?

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to this National Well-being Goal?

National Well-being Goal: A Healthier Wales

A society where people make healthy choices and enjoy good physical and mental health.

Click [here](#) for information about a healthier Wales.

Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts. (Click [here](#) for information)

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing peoples mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact on residents.

What evidence do you have to support this view?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to this National Well-being Goal?

No negative impacts identified

National Well-being Goal: A More Equal Wales

A society where everyone has an equal chance whatever their background or circumstances.

This section is longer because you are asked to assess the impact of your proposal on each group that is protected by the **Equality Act 2010**.

Click [here](#) for information about equality in Wales.

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their age? (Click [here](#) for information)

Children and Young People up to 18	Positive
People 18-50	Positive
Older people 50+	Positive

Describe the positive or negative impacts.

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing peoples mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact on residents.

What evidence do you have to support this?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing health and wellbeing. e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.

What action(s) can you to take to mitigate any negative impacts?

There should be no negative impact from this proposal on the general population

Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?

None identified

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their disability? (Click [here](#) for information)

Hearing Impairment	Positive
Physical Impairment	Positive
Visual Impairment	Positive
Learning Disability	Positive
Long Standing Illness	Positive
Mental Health	Positive
Other	Choose an item.

Describe the positive or negative impacts.

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing **all** people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact on residents.

What evidence do you have to support this?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts?

No negative impacts identified.

Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people who are transgender? (Click [here](#) for information)

Trans Women	Positive
Trans Men	Positive
Non-binary people	Positive
Describe the positive or negative impacts	
Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing all people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.	
What evidence do you have to support this?	
There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the WHO.	
What action(s) can you to take to mitigate any negative impacts?	
No negative impacts identified.	
Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?	
Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different sexual orientation? (Click here for information)	
Bisexual	Positive
Gay Men	Positive
Gay Women/Lesbian	Positive
Heterosexual/Straight	Positive
Describe the positive or negative impacts	
Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing all people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.	
What evidence do you have to support this?	
There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.	

What action(s) can you to take to mitigate any negative impacts?

No negative impacts identified.

Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership? (Click [here](#) for information)

People who are married	Positive
People in a civil partnership	Positive

Describe the positive or negative impacts

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing **all** peoples mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.

What evidence do you have to support this?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the WHO.

What action(s) can you to take to mitigate any negative impacts?

No negative impacts identified.

Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people who are pregnant or on maternity leave? (Click [here](#) for information)

Pregnancy	Positive
Maternity	Positive

Describe the positive or negative impacts

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing **all** people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in

that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.

What evidence do you have to support this?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

No negative impacts identified

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their ethnic origin? (Click [here](#) for information)

Asian / Asian British	Positive
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Positive
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	Positive
White	Positive
Other Ethnic Groups	Positive

Describe the positive or negative impacts

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing **all** people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.

What evidence do you have to support this?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing peoples health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.

What action(s) can you to take to mitigate any negative impacts?

No negative impacts identified.

Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different religions, beliefs, or non-beliefs? (Click [here](#) for information)

Buddhist	Positive
Christian	Positive
Hindu	Positive
Humanist	Positive
Jewish	Positive
Muslim	Positive
Sikh	Positive
Non-belief	Positive
Other	Positive

Describe the positive or negative impacts

Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing **all** people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.

What evidence do you have to support this?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts?

No negative impacts identified.

Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on men or women? (Click [here](#) for information)

Men	Positive
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Women	Positive
Describe the positive or negative impacts	
Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing all people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.	
What evidence do you have to support this?	
There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the WHO.	
What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts?	
No negative impacts identified.	
Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between men and women?	

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people from the Armed Forces Community? (Click here for information)	
Members of the Armed Forces	Positive
Veterans	Positive
Spouses	Positive
Children	Positive
Describe the positive or negative impacts	
Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing all people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.	
What evidence do you have to support this?	
There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.	
What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts?	
No negative impacts identified	

Socio-economic Duty

Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, making it more difficult to access basic goods and services.

Family background or where a person is born still affects their life. For example, a child from a wealthy family often does better at school than a child from a poor family, even if the poorer child is more naturally academic. This is sometimes called socio-economic inequality.

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?	Positive
Describe the positive or negative impacts	
Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing all peoples mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in that is free from conditions such as damp and mould. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.	
What evidence do you have to support this?	
There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g. Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation.	
What action(s) can you to take to mitigate any negative impacts?	
No negative impacts identified.	
Is there an opportunity to use this proposal to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or encourage good relations between people in this group and the rest of the population?	
This proposal is an opportunity to improve and monitor living conditions for people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage .	

National Well-being Goal: A Wales of Cohesive Communities

A society with attractive, viable, safe, and well-connected communities.

Click [here](#) for information about cohesive communities.

Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts. HINT
Living in safe affordable housing is a key factor influencing all people's mental health and wellbeing in addition to giving them a healthy environment to live in which positively impacts their physical health. Where people are happier in their home and general health, this has positive impacts for their social wellbeing and community involvement. The scheme has operated in one form or another since

2009. This has shown a positive impact over the years in relation to waste management and anti-social behaviour and nuisance complaints which can have a negative impact on communities. As such the continuation of the Additional Licensing Scheme will have a positive impact for all.

What evidence do you have to support this view?

There is a wealth of evidence available that indicates that housing is a major factor in influencing people's health and wellbeing e.g., Safe housing is included in the Determinants of Health as defined by the World Health Organisation. Introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme over the last 15 years has shown an overall decline in the number of complaints reported by the community in respect of anti-social behaviour, noise and waste management issues.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?

No negative impacts identified.

National Well-being Goal: A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

A society that that promotes and protects culture, heritage, and the Welsh language and which encourages people to take part in the arts, sports, and recreation.

Click [here](#) for information about culture and the Welsh language

Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts.

Impact on this goal is considered to be neutral

What evidence do you have to support this view?

The housing Service is available to both English and Welsh speakers. In excess of 50% of the staff speak welsh.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?

None identified

With reference to the following, do you think this proposal will have a positive or negative effect on the Welsh language?

Click [here](#) for information

Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language	None / Negligible
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	None / Negligible
What evidence do you have to support this view?	
The Housing Service/Additional Licensing Scheme is available in both English and Welsh	
What action(s) can you take to increase the positive impact or mitigate any negative impact on the Welsh language?	
Documentation is available in Welsh and English. 50% plus of the staff speak both English and Welsh	

National Well-being Goal: A Globally Responsible Wales

A society that considers how our actions might impact on other countries and people around the world.

Click [here](#) for information about global responsibility.

Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts. <u>HINT</u>
The impact on this goal is considered to be positive as the regulation of these premises allows properties to be improved to meet current standards. This includes tackling fuel efficiency which impacts climate change.
What evidence do you have to support this view?
There is a wealth of evidence to support the view that tackling energy efficiency in homes will assist with CO2 reduction
What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?
No negative impacts identified

Strengthening the Proposal

If you have identified any negative impacts in the above sections, please provide details of any practical changes and actions that could help remove or reduce the negative impacts.

What will you do?	When?	Who is responsible?	Progress
N/A			
<p>If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative impacts, please justify why. <i>(If you have identified any unlawful discrimination then the proposal must be changed or revised.)</i></p>			
<p>The only negative impact of the proposal identified was the cost to landlords in obtaining a licence. It is considered that the benefits to residents, communities, and climate change out way this impact. Costs are calculated on a cost recovery basis only and are based on the number of habitable rooms in the property.</p>			
<p>How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?</p>			
<p>The impact and effectiveness of the proposal will be monitored through the Strategic Housing Partnership.</p>			

Sustainable Development Principle: 5 Ways of Working

Describe below how you have implemented the five ways of working in accordance with the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

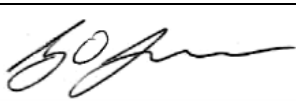
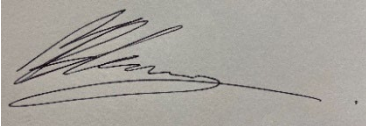
<p>Long term Balancing short-term needs with long-term need and planning for the future.</p> <p><u>HINT</u></p>	<p>The proposal is for a period of 5 years at which time the Licensing scheme will be reviewed and evaluated to determine whether it should continue. The scheme is self-financing</p>
<p>Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver.</p> <p><u>HINT</u></p>	<p>We currently liaise with colleagues in Highways and Public Protection, together with external partners such as the Police, Fire Authority and University, Agents and Landlords in delivering the scheme.</p>
<p>Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views.</p> <p><u>HINT</u></p>	<p>A Public Consultation has been undertaken for a period of 10 weeks. This has included information and questionnaires available on the website and through social media. Directly consulting with known landlords and agents. Targeted letters, information and questionnaires to a sample of properties in the current Designation area of Aberystwyth and Lampeter.</p>
<p>Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.</p> <p><u>HINT</u></p>	<p>The proposal tackles specific properties meeting the criteria for the Additional Licensing scheme and aims to improve conditions for those residing within the properties and other residents living within the vicinity of the licensed properties.</p>
<p>Integration Considering the impact of your proposal on the four pillars of well-being (social, economic, cultural and environment) the objectives of other public bodies and across service areas in the Council.</p> <p><u>HINT</u></p>	<p>The proposal seeks to assist services in both Highways and Public Protection in relation to waste management and anti-social behaviour.</p>

Risk

Summarise the risk associated with the proposal.

	1	2	3	4	5
Impact Criteria	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Likelihood Criteria	Unlikely to occur	Lower than average chance of occurring	Even chance of occurring	Higher than average chance of occurring	Expected to occur
Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Score (Impact x Likelihood)		
Falling housing standards and fire risks	High	Higher than average	16		
Increased anti-social behaviour	High	Higher than average	16		
Increased waste management and increased prevalence of pests	High	Higher than average	16		

Sign Off

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Corporate Manager	Llyr Hghes		28/02/2024
Corporate Lead Officer	Greg Jones		27/02/2024
Corporate Director	James Starbuck		27/02/2024
Portfolio Holder	Matthew Vaux		28/02/2024

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 19.03.2024

Title: Report for the Re-Designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation for Ceredigion

Purpose of the report: To provide feedback following the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the 11th of March 2024

Background:

The Housing Act 2004 Part 2 places a duty on Local Authority's to licence Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) of 3 or more storeys, five or more persons, forming two or more households.

Committee Members were asked to consider the following options for the Redesignation of an Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation in Ceredigion (2024 -2029).

Options

The Options to be considered are:

Option 1 - To continue with the Additional Licensing Scheme in its current form, whereby licensing applies to:

- HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming three or more separate households regardless of the number of storeys in the following specified wards only:
Aberystwyth Bronglais, Aberystwyth Central, Aberystwyth North, Aberystwyth Penparcau, Aberystwyth Rheidol, Faenor, Llanbadarn Fawr Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr Sulien.
- The whole of the County of Ceredigion for:
 - HMOs occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys, and
 - Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004)

Option 2 - Licensing all properties which meet the following criteria on a county wide basis:

- Those properties occupied by 5 or more persons, forming two or more separate households, regardless of the number of stories, AND
- Section 257 HMOs (Housing Act 2004) created by converting buildings into flats where the conversions did not meet the Building Regulations 1991 Standards and they have not been subsequently brought up to the relevant standards.

Option 3 - To allow the existing Additional Licensing Scheme to expire on the 14th April 2024 and not declare/designate an Additional scheme in its place.

Following discussion, Committee Members considered the following recommendation:

Recommendation

Having considered all the evidence and the benefits of having an Additional Licensing Scheme together with the response to the Public Consultation, it is recommended that Option 1 be considered for re-designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for a further 5 years from 2024 – 2029. The numbers of HMOs in both the Lampeter and Cardigan area are low. The data for the last 5 years does not support the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme in these areas.

Committee Members agreed to recommend that Cabinet:

1. Approve Option 1 as outlined above.

Councillor Caryl Roberts
Chair of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee