

Proposed: Sam Al-Hamdani

Seconded: Mark Kenyon

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Oldham and the impact this has on local communities, housing standards, and infrastructure. While HMOs can provide an important source of affordable accommodation, their proliferation in certain areas has led to issues including overcrowding, pressure on local services, and a decline in housing quality. In the past 5 years the number of licensed HMOs in Oldham has almost doubled.

This Council also notes that

- on 1 November 2023, it resolved to direct officers to “collect and collate evidence on the number of HMOs in each ward across the Borough, identifying clusters and report back to the relevant cabinet member if any case can be made for an Article 4 direction”.
- current national planning regulations allow certain HMOs (Class C4, up to six residents) to be established without the need for planning permission. This limits the ability of local authorities to manage their spread and ensure they are appropriately located and regulated.
- no figures are currently available on the number of HMOs in the borough – only for the number of licenced HMOs (which meet one definition) or for HMOs which have received planning permission (which meet a separate definition).
- there are standard tests which allow the Council to define whether any building is an HMO, as defined under the Housing Act 2004.
- Councillors have been told that they cannot be informed of forthcoming HMOs for licensing, due to data privacy.
- Councillors have no right to make a representation to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.
- the Council has let licenses for HMOs lapse on multiple occasions, sometimes for up to a year.

This Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Chancellor of an additional £2 billion for social and affordable housing. This funding provides an opportunity to address the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and to ensure that people in Oldham have access to safe, secure, and high-quality housing.

This Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation.

This council further requests that the Chief Executive writes to the borough's 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking for their support in reversing the aforementioned changes.

This Council calls on the Cabinet Member responsible to provide a report back to Council at the soonest opportunity on the work that has been carried out to establish whether a case can be made for an Article 4 direction; to continue efforts to establish that case, and to report back on a regular basis.

This Council will wherever possible ensure that any building being used as an HMO is defined as such, with a view to ensuring that any work towards an Article 4 direction is provided with the best available information.

This Council will provide information on forthcoming HMO applications, with any personal information removed.

The Council will establish a right for Councillors to make representations to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.