

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **COMMITTEE — Policy Development and Review Panel 3 - 10 July 2007** **REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER Commercial** **(Author: Gordon Partridge, Principal, Environmental Health Officer)**

#### **ADDITIONAL HMO LICENSING**

**Summary:** This report summarises the progress of the proposed additional licencing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation.

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced licencing for Houses in Multiple Occupation, (HMOs)
- 1.2 For HMOs consisting of 3 or more stories and occupied by at least 5 persons in at least 2 households the licencing is mandatory. Section 56 of the Act allows for a Local Housing Authority. ( LHA ), to designate all or part of it's area as subject to an additional licencing scheme in relation to specified types of HMO. Such a designation cannot come into force until it has been confirmed by the appropriate national authority.
- 1.3 The LHA has to consider that a significant proportion of the specified HMOs are being managed sufficiently 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. We are satisfied that due to the numbers of complaints received from members of the public, and from the conditions found during inspections by officers, that large numbers of HMOs are managed ineffectively.

#### **2. KEY DECISION**

- 2.1 This is not a key decision

#### **3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 3.1 The matter raised in this report falls within the following Council priorities:
  - A safe and healthy environment
  - A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities
  - A prosperous place to live and work

#### **4. PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 It is proposed to designate the whole of Breckland's district for an additional scheme. It is also proposed to specify all types of HMO. (except those specifically exempted by legislation), for inclusion within the scheme. This is because we have found many different types of properties, from bungalows to disused shops. being used to house tenants, often migrant workers, in all parts of the district, both urban and rural.

- 4.2 The contents of the additional scheme will be exactly as those for the mandatory scheme covering management. provision of amenities. fire precautions and means of escape. The charge for the licence will also be the same at £250 per HMO.
- 4.3 As part of the submission to the appropriate national authority of the scheme we have to have consulted widely on the proposals with those likely to be affected including local residents, tenants, landlords, agents and members of the business community. [n addition we will be consulting with fire and police authorities.
- 4.4 Thus far the proposals for the scheme have been communicated to landlords and agents through our regular mailings to them and have been presented at the Landlord's Forum. An article has also appeared in Breckland Voice. A more specific consultation document is being more widely distributed seeking views on the proposals. Consultation is currently in progress with Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.
- 4.5 The process s currently on track for a report to be prepared for October Cabinet.

## **5. RECOMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Members are recommended to note the progress of the proposed additional HMO licencing scheme.

*Footnote:* Recommendation complies with the foilowing Equal Opportunities. Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998. and Human Rights Act 1998