

**Report to:** **Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:** **4 December 2023**

**Title:** **Update on the work of Consultants - Eastbourne Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Study**

**Ward(s):** **All wards**

**Purpose of report:** **To provide background to the request from the Scrutiny Committee for licenced houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's) to be included on its work programme.**

**Officer recommendation(s):** **(1) To note the update from the Consultants commissioned to undertake an assessment of HMO's in Eastbourne Borough.**

**Reasons for recommendations:** **To allow Members to discuss the issue further and consider any next steps that may be required.**

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 7 February 2022, Members agreed, following consideration of a report of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership, that further oversight by the Committee of the inspection and governance of houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's) should be undertaken and added to its work programme. This report is intended to provide background to the issue and allow Members to consider any further steps that may be required.
- 1.2 At its meeting on the 11 July 2022, the Committee considered a review of planning policy and licensing for HMO's. The recommendation of the report being considered was that consultants be commissioned to provide robust evidence to support and justify any future decisions on action regarding HMO planning policy and licensing. The work due to be commissioned would provide

a map of licensable HMOs and give a wider picture of the concentrations of HMOs in the Town. Members were later advised that consultants had been appointed to undertake an assessment of licensable HMO's in Eastbourne, including a recommendations to collect data on smaller HMOs.

- 1.3 An update was provided to the Committee at its meeting on the 5 December 2022 and Members were advised that the data collection on HMO's, particularly smaller ones (properties with under 6 residents which were not licenced) was complex and that one area of focus would be on policy direction that allowed control of the volumes of HMO's (possibly by street/road). Members have requested at subsequent meetings that a report from the Consultant's be presented to the Committee. Unfortunately, the report is not yet available, however, the Consultants commissioned to produce it will update the Committee on its progress.

## **2 Outcomes**

- 2.1 The report from the Consultants is expected to look at the volume of HMOs in the Borough, their make-up and the level of impact they have, both positively and negatively on residents, the economy of the Town and those occupying HMO's. Members will receive the final version of the Consultant's report and may wish to consider whether any further, interim scrutiny of the issue is required.
- 2.2 The report will provide evidence to inform any future decision on actions that can be taken by the Council to manage the supply and condition of HMOs going forward.

## **3 Financial appraisal**

- 3.1 This report is for information only and provides background to the request from the Scrutiny Committee for updates on the work of the Consultants commissioned to assess HMOs in the Borough – there is no direct financial impact as a result of the report.

## **4 Legal implications**

- 4.1 This report is for information only and provides background to the request from the Scrutiny for updates on the work of the Consultants commissioned to assess HMOs in the Borough – there are no direct legal implications as a result of the report.

## **5 Risk management implications**

5.1 This report is for information only and provides background to the request from the Scrutiny for updates on the work of the Consultants commissioned to assess HMOs in the Borough – there are no direct risk management implications as a result of the report.

## **6 Equality analysis**

6.1 This report is for information only and provides background to the request from the Scrutiny for updates on the work of the Consultants commissioned to assess HMOs in the Borough – there is no direct impact on equalities as a result of the report.

## **7 Environmental sustainability implications**

7.1 This report is for information only and provides background to the request from the Scrutiny for updates on the work of the Consultants commissioned to assess HMOs in the Borough – there are not direct environmental sustainability implications as a result of the report.

## **8 Appendices**

There are none.

## **9 Background papers**

There are none.