



Principal benefits of the proposed designation

- As HMO licensing is compulsory, the onus is on the landlord to apply for a licence and, if they operate a licensable HMO without a licence, they will be committing a criminal offence, any section 21 Notice they serve will be invalid and the Council may prosecute them or impose a civil penalty;
- Where a landlord has a portfolio of properties, they will have to identify (in the first licence application they submit) the locations of all of their HMOs, reducing the amount of time the Housing Enforcement Team spends chasing landlords and enabling it to focus on intelligence-led, targeted enforcement;
- A comprehensive database of all licensed HMOs within the designated area will be created and maintained and, because landlords are required to provide the Council with their contact details, they can be contacted more easily in the event of any issues arising in relation to their properties;
- It will enable the Council to recognise those responsible landlords of well managed and properly maintained HMOs who will not only be eligible for a reduced HMO licence fee but will also be trusted to undertake more 'self-regulation' with less local authority intrusion;
- The burden on the council taxpayer will be reduced because the licence fees will cover the cost of administering the scheme;
- Problematic HMO properties can be targeted and it will be easier for the Council to identify and tackle those landlords whose accommodation and/or management is inadequate and to ensure that steps are taken to bring those properties up to the required standard;
- It will enable the Council to control the maximum number of occupants allowed to reside in a property, preventing unlawful overcrowding in HMOs;
- Criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords will be identified and only those landlords that are 'fit and proper' will be allowed to have control of an HMO;
- It will enable the Council to devise and apply bespoke licensing conditions against individual licence holders in order to ensure that specific risks and/or concerns can be appropriately addressed;

- Where a landlord has had an HMO licence revoked and/or they have been prosecuted and convicted for housing-related offences, fraud or violence, they will be deemed not to be a 'fit and proper person' and, if they submit an HMO licence application to the Council, their application will be refused; and
- A better and more co-ordinated enforcement approach can be formulated with partner agencies (such as Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards, Social Services and the UK Border Agency) when tackling substandard HMOs and any crimes that are committed by those running them or residing in them.
- The proposed designation will have a significant impact because landlords of all licensable HMOs within the proposed area (irrespective of the number of storeys) will be required to apply for a licence to operate their HMOs. This will provide the Council with enhanced controls and the ability to target enforcement resources at criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.