FAIRER HOUSING

City of Westminster

LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION



Additional HMO Licensing Proposed Scheme Objectives

August 2025

Proposed objectives

The proposed renewal of Westminster's Additional HMO Licensing Scheme aims to build on the progress made since 2021 by further improving the standards, safety, and management of shared housing across the borough. Through a multidisciplinary, intelligence-led approach, the scheme will continue to target unlicensed HMOs, address persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB), and contribute to Westminster's wider housing and environmental objectives, including energy efficiency and tenant protection. It recognises the complexity of the private rented sector (PRS) and the importance of coordinated enforcement, tenant support, and partnership working.

Objective	Outcome
Improve the standards and management of HMOs in Westminster.	Ensure that all HMOs meet minimum standards for safety, amenities, and maintenance. Strengthen management accountability by requiring licence holders to demonstrate fit-and-proper status and robust management arrangements. Promote good landlord practices and provide clear expectations around compliance. Continue progress made to date by removing hazards from HMOs and increasing the number of properties improved.
Enhance enforcement and target unlicensed HMOs	Proactively identify and take action against unlicensed HMOs using data, complaints, and partnership intelligence. Hold landlords and agents accountable through civil penalties, Rent Repayment Orders, and prosecution where appropriate. Increase visibility of enforcement activity to deter unlawful letting practices.
Work proactively to reduce repeat Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Use licensing as a tool to address properties linked to persistent ASB. Impose and enforce where necessary licence conditions to manage behaviour, improve security, and ensure landlord intervention. Collaborate with internal ASB, noise, and community safety teams to monitor and respond to complaints.

Strengthen engagement with landlords and tenants	Improve communication channels to ensure landlords and tenants understand their rights, responsibilities, and licensing requirements. Provide accessible guidance and support for landlords to promote legal and effective property management. Support awareness and readiness for upcoming regulatory changes including proposed reforms to tenancy law, dispute resolution, and landlord accountability
Support improvements to energy efficiency and sustainability	Encourage landlords to adopt energy-saving measures and ensure that HMOs (where applicable) meet at least the minimum EPC rating required under current legislation. Use licence inspections to identify opportunities for improved insulation, heating, and energy efficiency. Align licensing activity with Westminster's wider climate objectives, recycling and waste and fuel poverty reduction efforts
Embed a multidisciplinary and partnership led approach	Embed a Multidisciplinary and Partnership-Led Approach Continue close working with internal council teams to proactively target problematic properties (e.g. Planning, ASB, Council Tax, Trading Standards). Share intelligence to identify high-risk properties, prevent exploitation (including modern slavery), and coordinate timely interventions