

Adoption of Amenity Standards for Properties in the Private Rented Sector

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Craig Warhurst |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Judith Willis |
| Ward(s) Affected | All wards |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted | No |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision | No |

1.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Redditch Borough Council has revised its previous amenity standards in line with the requirements under the Housing Act 2004 as well as guidance from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). The new amenity standards are in line with what those already adopted by the majority of other West Midlands Local Authorities.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND:

- 2.1 The Amenity Standards Policy be adopted; and
- 2.2 The Head of Community and Housing Services be delegated authority to update and amend the Amenity Standards Policy, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Housing Act 2004 has important implications for the private rented sector in particular with the introduction of mandatory licensing of certain higher risk Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), discretionary licensing other privately rented housing in specific circumstances, plus a rating system of assessing hazards linked to housing conditions known as the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which replaces the former housing fitness standard.

It is therefore an appropriate opportunity for the Council to issue this revised standards document which is intended to act as a code of practice to which property owners, landlords and managers should be working in order to achieve compliance with the new legislation. Most of the accommodation arrangements commonly encountered are described however it is recognised that there will always be circumstances which do not match those given. If this is the case then it is always advisable to contact the Council for further guidance.

This standards document also provides basic information about the definition of House in Multiple Occupation and which properties need to be licensed. Further details about licensing can be found on the City Council's website [https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/business/landlords/landlord-regulatory-requirements/landlord-and-houses-in-multiple-occupation-\(hmos\).aspx](https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/business/landlords/landlord-regulatory-requirements/landlord-and-houses-in-multiple-occupation-(hmos).aspx).

Financial Implications

- 3.2 There are no financial implications to the Council by adoption of the Amenity Standards.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 By adopting the new Amenity Standards the Council would be able to legally require landlords and agents to comply with the requisite standards expected in the privately rented properties. In most cases this would be done without requiring any enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004. However in small number of cases where the landlords or agents fail to comply with the standards then the Council would take legal action to enforce the standards.

4.0 Background / Service Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 By adopting the Amenity Standards the Council will be able to drive up the standards in the privately rented properties thus providing a safer and improved sector for all its private sector residents.

5.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.3 Officers from the council's Private Sector Housing Team will work closely with all landlords, agents as well as with tenants to ensure that they have a good understanding of what is required to comply with the Amenity Standards.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Amenity Standards document

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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