

Houses in multiple occupation Supplementary planning document

Adoption
29 June 2026



1.0 Introduction

HMO overview

- 1.1 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are properties rented out to three or more unrelated individuals. The HMO would typically be the individual's only or main residence, where residents share basic amenities, such as a kitchen and/or a bathroom.
- 1.2 HMOs can make an important contribution to the housing market, generally providing low-cost private sector rented accommodation for those on lower incomes, including students, and those seeking temporary accommodation. Typically, they are located in areas with good access to public transport and local services.
- 1.3 However, high concentrations of HMOs can have a detrimental impact on areas. They can, for instance, result in a more intensive use of a building that may increase instances of noise issues for adjacent residents or increased parking demands in the locality. In addition, they can increase pressures on local services, including waste collection, can impact on social cohesion, given the nature of the residents are typically more transient, and result in the loss of family homes.

- 1.4 Planning permission is now required for all proposals for HMOs in Tameside. This includes small HMOs (use class C4) that have undergone a material change of use from a dwellinghouse (use class C3), given the Council introduced a Borough wide Article 4 Direction on 2nd October 2025, restricting the ability to carry out such change of use without prior consent from the LPA.

Purpose of document

- 1.5 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides further guidance to support the application of Tameside's adopted planning policies, primarily contained within both Places for Everyone (PfE) and the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and ensure that new HMO developments contribute to sustainable and balanced neighbourhoods, while protecting residential character and amenity.
- 1.6 The HMO SPD is one of a number of documents constituting material considerations in the determination of planning applications in the authority. To be successful, proposals for HMO developments must thereby comply with all material considerations, including the HMO SPD, and also relevant policies contained within PfE, the UDP and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 1.7 To achieve the aims set out in paragraph 1.5, the SPD will:
 - Explain what a HMO is, in planning terms
 - Explain why planning permission is required for HMOs in Tameside
 - Identify the national and local planning policies of relevance when considering planning applications for HMOs
 - Set out detailed guidance that will be used to assess planning application for HMOs, supporting adopted national and local planning policies
 - Provide an overview of HMO licencing requirements
 - Provide a checklist of information the Council requires to be submitted with a planning application for a HMO.
- 1.8 The SPD is primarily for use by prospective planning applicants, property developers and landowners, as well as decision makers such as planning officers and Elected Members. However, it is also intended to help residents understand how the Council intends to apply its planning policies to proposals for HMOs.

Consultation

- 1.9 This document was published by Tameside Council for public consultation for a period of 4 weeks. Full details on how to view the documents and respond to the consultation on the draft SPD were set out in the Consultation Statement and Representation Guidance Note on the Council's website.
- 1.10 Following the period of public consultation, the responses received were considered, and those considered necessary informed amendments to the document prior to its adoption.

Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment

- 1.11 The draft HMO SPD was screened for the need to undertake a sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment (including a Habitat Regulation Assessment), and it was determined that assessments were not required.
- 1.12 The determination statements can be viewed on the Tameside website.

2.0 Background

What is a HMO?

- 2.1 In planning terms, a HMO is a dwelling (house or flat) that is occupied by three or more unrelated individuals who share one or more basic amenities, such as a kitchen and/or bathroom. They are commonly known as shared houses.
- 2.2 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) classifies HMOs as:
- Use class C4: small shared houses, accommodating between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence
 - Sui generis: accommodating 7 or more unrelated individuals.
- 2.3 To confirm, the size of a HMO relates to the number of unrelated individuals, not the number of bedrooms. For example, a 4no bedroom HMO, that serves 7no unrelated individuals, would comprise a sui generis use, or a 'large scale' HMO.

Permitted development rights

- 2.3 Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) allows dwellinghouses (use class C3) to be converted into small HMOs (use class C4), and vice versa, without the need for planning permission.
- 2.4 There are instances, such as in the case of listed buildings, where such permitted development rights do not exist, and anyone seeking to make such a change is always advised to contact the Local Planning Authority for advice.

HMO Article 4 Direction

- 2.5 Although the GPDO grants permitted development rights, there is recognition that where justified, local planning authorities may restrict specific permitted development rights across a defined area. The power to restrict development is set out in Article 4(1) of the GPDO and is known as an "Article 4 Direction".
- 2.6 To ensure that small HMOs, undergoing a change of use from a dwellinghouse, also contribute to sustainable and balanced neighbourhoods, protect residential character and amenity and provide a high standard of living for future users,

Tameside introduced a borough wide HMO article 4 direction on 2 October 2025, which removed the above mentioned permitted development rights for the change of use from use class C3 (dwellinghouses) to use class C4 (small HMO).

- 2.7 For clarity, the change of use of an existing small HMO (use class C4) back to a dwellinghouse (use class C3) would still be 'permitted development', not requiring development.

The requirement for planning permission

- 2.8 Planning permission is required to change the use of a building to an HMO. The following scenarios identify when planning permission is most often required.



1. **Change of use of a dwellinghouse to a small HMO (use class C4):**

2.9 Given the introduction of the HMO article 4 direction, planning permission is required to change a dwellinghouse (use class C3) to a small scale HMO (use class C4). This also applies where changing a use class C3 dwellinghouse to use class C4 small HMO would have been a lawful change of use prior to the introduction of the Article 4 Direction on 2nd October 2025, but that was not substantially complete, or fit for habitation, prior to the Direction coming into play.

2. **Change of use of a dwelling to a large HMO (use class sui generis):**

2.10 The change of use of a dwelling (use class C3) to a large HMO (use class sui generis), accommodating 7 or more unrelated individuals, requires planning permission. The 2 uses are not within the same use class and thereby a material change of use, which constitutes development, having regard to section 55 (2) (f) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. **Intensifying/expanding an existing HMO:**

2.11 Expanding an existing small HMO (use class C4), that would still accommodate no more than 6 unrelated individuals (still use class C4), would require planning permission, given the HMO article 4 direction. Likewise, the occupation of additional residents within an existing large HMO (use class sui generis) would also require planning permission. Planning permission will also be required for the change of use of an existing small HMO (use class C4) to a large HMO (use class sui generis), for example from 6 unrelated individual residents, to 7 or more unrelated individuals.

4. **Change of use of HMOs from other uses:**

2.12 A change of use to a small or large HMO (use class C4 or sui generis), from other uses, such as public houses, shops, offices, or vice versa, will require planning permission. .

Properties not considered to be HMOs:

2.13 Within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), C4 HMOs have the same meaning as that given in the Housing Act 2004. Schedule 14 of this Act identifies buildings which are not considered to be HMOs. This includes social housing, care homes, children’s homes, bail hostels and small religious groups, which fall either within a class C3 use, or a sui generis use.



3.0 Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

- 3.1 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. To achieve sustainable development, the NPPF expects the planning system to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities as a key social objective.
- 3.2 There is no specific reference to shared housing within the NPPF, but local planning authorities are required to make provisions for the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including for those who require affordable housing, students, families with children, and people who rent their homes etc.
- 3.3 Chapter 5 of the NPPF supports local planning authorities to ensure that the delivery of new housing seeks to meet locally identified need and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.
- 3.4 Chapter 11 of the NPPF (paragraph 124) requires planning policies and decisions to promote an “effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and

improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.”

- 3.5 Chapter 12 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of creating high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places which “which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”. This addressed within Tameside’s Housing Strategy (2021-2026), which identifies that there is growing evidence that poor quality standards associated with private rented sector living is having a significant impact on the physical and mental well-being of Tameside residents.

Places for Everyone (PfE) 2024

- 3.6 PfE was adopted in March 2024 and is a strategic plan that covers 9 of the 10 Greater Manchester districts, prepared collaboratively by the boroughs concerned. PfE identified the overall spatial strategy for those 9 boroughs, including Tameside, including the appropriate scale and distribution of housing and employment development. There is no specific reference to HMOs within PfE, though reflecting the principles of the NPPF, the plan aims to provide high quality housing, that meets local need.

- 3.7 PfE policies that are of particular relevance to planning applications for HMOs are summarised below:
 - Policy JP-H1 (scale, distribution and phasing of new housing development) requires new homes to be of a good quality and design, adaptable, and supported by the necessary infrastructure.
 - Policy JP-H3 (type, size and design of new housing) requires development across the plan area to seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods, including specialist housing for older households and vulnerable people. It also requires all new residential developments to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (2015) (NDSS), which sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.
 - Policy JP-P1 (sustainable places) requires, amongst other matters to be socially inclusive, responding to the needs of all parts of society and to promote a sense of community.
 - Policy JP-C8 (transport requirements of new development) requires new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and transport use, to reduce negative effects of car dependency, and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments.



**Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
(2004)**

- 3.8
- The UDP provides a framework for development and conservation over the whole of the Tameside area, to set out the main considerations in which planning applications in the Borough are determined, and to guide land use decisions by the Council.
- 3.9
- The UDP does not provide any specific policy relating to HMOs, though the following policies are relevant in the decision-making process:

• Policy H4 (type, size and affordability of dwellings) states the overall provision of new housing in the Borough should incorporate a range of dwelling types, sizes and affordability to meet the needs of all sections of the community and to help create a better balance of communities for the future.

• Policy H10 (detailed design of housing developments) relates to the layout, design and external appearance of proposed housing developments, covering: the amenity of existing future users, highways and parking, landscaping and storage of wheelie bins, and minimisation of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Policy T1 (highway improvement and traffic management) amongst other factors, requires development to encourage the use of non-car modes, provide safe and convenient facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and assist sustainable development.

Tameside Housing Needs Assessment (2025)

- 3.10
- The 2021 census reported a total of 201 households living in HMOs, with 168 in small HMOs and 33 in large HMOs. There are 189 licenced dwellings in multiple occupation (HMO) with five or more bedrooms based on the council’s current HMO licence public register.
- 3.11
- However, evidence suggests these figures are likely to be much higher, given smaller HMOs are more challenging to quantify. Smaller HMOs, with less than 5 residents do not require a licence, and prior to the introduction of the Article 4 direction, changing the use of a dwellinghouse (use class C3) to a small scale HMO (use class C4) did not require planning permission.
- 3.12
- The Council’s latest Housing Needs Assessment (2025) identifies that Tameside’s housing market suffers from shortages at nearly every level: affordable ownership, social rent, larger family

homes, supported housing, accessible properties, and options for younger single people. The rise in HMOs thereby could contribute to meeting an element of housing demand, particularly affordable options for younger single people, and vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion or homelessness.

- 3.13
- However, the need for more diverse housing types is also highlighted, particularly larger family homes to meet the booming family market, and there is a need to protect those types of properties that exist to help support in meeting those needs from unsuitable conversion to HMOs.

Homes Spaces Places (HSP)

- 3.14
- HSP is the new draft Tameside local plan, which is at an early stage of development. HSP has very limited weight in the decision-making process for applications for HMOs at this stage given the stage of plan production and several areas of the plan where there remain unresolved objections at the point of writing. The Council intends to submit the draft plan to government by December 2026.
- 3.15
- Nevertheless the policies, as contained within the HSP Preferred Options Consultation Draft that

would be relevant to planning applications for HMOs in the future are as follows:

- Policy HSP H1 (housing size, type, mix and tenure) ensures the delivery of an appropriate mix of dwelling size, including number of bedrooms, type and tenure, to meet local need

• Policy HSP H3 (meeting the housing needs of different groups within the community) requires housing to be provided to meet specific groups of people including singles, couples, families, older people etc

• Policy HSP H5 (houses in multiple occupation (HMO)) relates specifically to HMOs and sets out the parameters in which they will be acceptable, specifically in relation to functionality and location.

• Policy HSP T8 (parking) relates to securing the appropriate level of parking for different types of development.

4.0 Guidance on Proposals for HMOs

4.1 Effective management of an HMO:

A management plan should be submitted with any application for a HMO. The management plan should outline how the HMO will be run, or is run (if applying retrospectively), and should include the following detail:

- Property maintenance (communal areas (internal and external), repairs)
- Tenant management
- Waste and recycling
- Health and safety (fire)
- Specific procedures for day-to-day operations
- Complaints procedures.

4.2 Private amenity spaces:

- Single bedrooms must have a minimum functioning floor space of 7.5sqm, and 11.5sqm for a double bedroom, though proposals should always seek to provide better than the minimum

- Functioning floor area/space is set out within the NDSS and is calculated where the floor to ceiling height is no less than 1.5m, and for at least 75% of the gross internal floor area, the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m. This is particularly relevant when considering bedrooms/habitable rooms within roof spaces
- Applicants should carefully consider provisions for storage in private rooms, noting there should be sufficient room for a wardrobe, set of drawers and a desk
- Contrived/irregular shaped bedrooms should be avoided
- Private bedrooms at ground floor, where occupants may be subject to excessive noise and disturbances should be avoided. This could be where:
 - » Bedrooms are directly adjacent to the shared front and rear entrance
 - » Bedrooms are directly adjacent to the HMOs outdoor amenity space
 - » Bedrooms are directly adjacent to the communal living, dining and kitchen facilities
 - » Bedrooms that directly face onto the footway.

4.3 Internal communal facilities (kitchen, living, dining, washing):

- All proposals for HMOs must include a shared kitchen, dining room and living room, either as distinct rooms, or in open plan format
- Shared kitchen, dining and living spaces should be provided within the main structure of the building and should not be more than 1 floor away from a private bedroom
- Shared kitchen, dining and living space(s) must be appropriately sized, proportioned and equipped, relative to the expected number of occupants, and as such, proposals must demonstrate:
 - » There is adequate storage and circulation space within a kitchen
 - » A dining room is of a sufficient size to enable a table large enough to seat all residents at once
 - » A living room is of a sufficient size to comfortably seat all residents at once
- Proposals with shared washing facilities will be accepted only where they are suitable for multi-residential use, comfortably fitting a bath, separate shower, toilet and sink
- Where HMOs are reliant on a shared washing facility, there should be an additional toilet and basin separate to the main facility.



4.4 External communal facilities (garden):

- HMOs must be served with direct access to an outdoor amenity space
- The size of the space must correspond to the number of residents, providing a meaningful and functional space for multi-residential use, whether this be relaxing, and/or carrying out domestic activities such as drying washing
- The space must not be dominated by bin or cycle storage.

Failure to provide sufficient internal and external communal facilities would increase the time occupants spend indoors, in their individual bedrooms, and can therefore hinder the social cohesion within the property, failing to achieve a high standard of living.

4.5 Private and communal rooms:

All habitable rooms must be served with clear glazed openings. For the purposes of this SPD, a habitable room includes a bedroom, living room, dining room and kitchens. Windows serving habitable rooms must:

- Have an adequate outlook, avoiding views out to servicing areas, or in close proximity to boundary treatments/other built form

- Have access to sufficient levels of natural light, avoiding being enclosed by surrounding built form
- Be openable to allow rooms to ventilated.

Lightwells and roof lights can be utilised, though where they serve habitable rooms, they must be secondary to this room.

4.6 Design:

- Extensions to existing buildings to form a new HMO, or to intensify the use of an existing HMO, must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area and must not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring existing residents
- Storage of waste should be located to the side or rear of the property, in a storage facility that appropriately fits the required number of refuse bins, and that is of a suitable design and appearance
- Refuse storage to property frontages should be avoided, unless they can be stored in a suitably sized and designed facility, that does not visually dominate or detract from the street scene
- Refuse storage/bins should not be kept on the highway, expect for on collection days, where

they are to be removed as soon as possible once emptied

- For large HMOs, storage of refuse could be located internally, where space allows
- Storage of bikes should be located either externally, to the side or rear of the property, or internally, where space allows
- Where bikes are stored externally, they must be covered and secure, and must be appropriately designed, not detracting from the character of the surrounding area.

4.7 Functionality:

- The operation for taking waste to external waste storage facilities, and taking waste out on collection days, should be quick and simple. Residents should not be expected to have to leave the site to place waste in an external refuse facility
- The route for taking refuse bins out on collection days should be short, and access to do so should not be at risk of being regularly blocked, by a parked car, for example
- Applicants must ensure waste storage is accessible both internally and externally, avoiding any change in levels where it may be difficult to take out and return bins on collection days

- A HMO is only entitled to 1 set of bins (1x general waste, 1x paper waste, 1x glass waste and 1x green/food waste), which is not sufficient for a HMO. A commercial waste contract therefore should be in place by the landlord. Details of the number of bins to be on contract for, which streams of waste and the frequency of collection, will need to be submitted with any application for planning permission. Further information on waste can be found at: <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/TamesideMBC/media/refuse/developer-waste-leaflet.pdf>
- Cycle storage must accommodate the required number of cycles relative to the number of residents (1 bike for every resident)
- The use of basements for cycle storage should be avoided, unless justified, given the difficulties of navigating a cycle up/down a series of steps. This is the same for other internal cycle storage that requires access via steps
- Access to the cycle storage must be convenient and usable to residents.

4.8 Sustainable location:

- Applicants are required to demonstrate the HMO is within 400m of the nearest bus stop **and** 800m to the nearest rail station or tram stop
- This should be set out within a design and access statement.



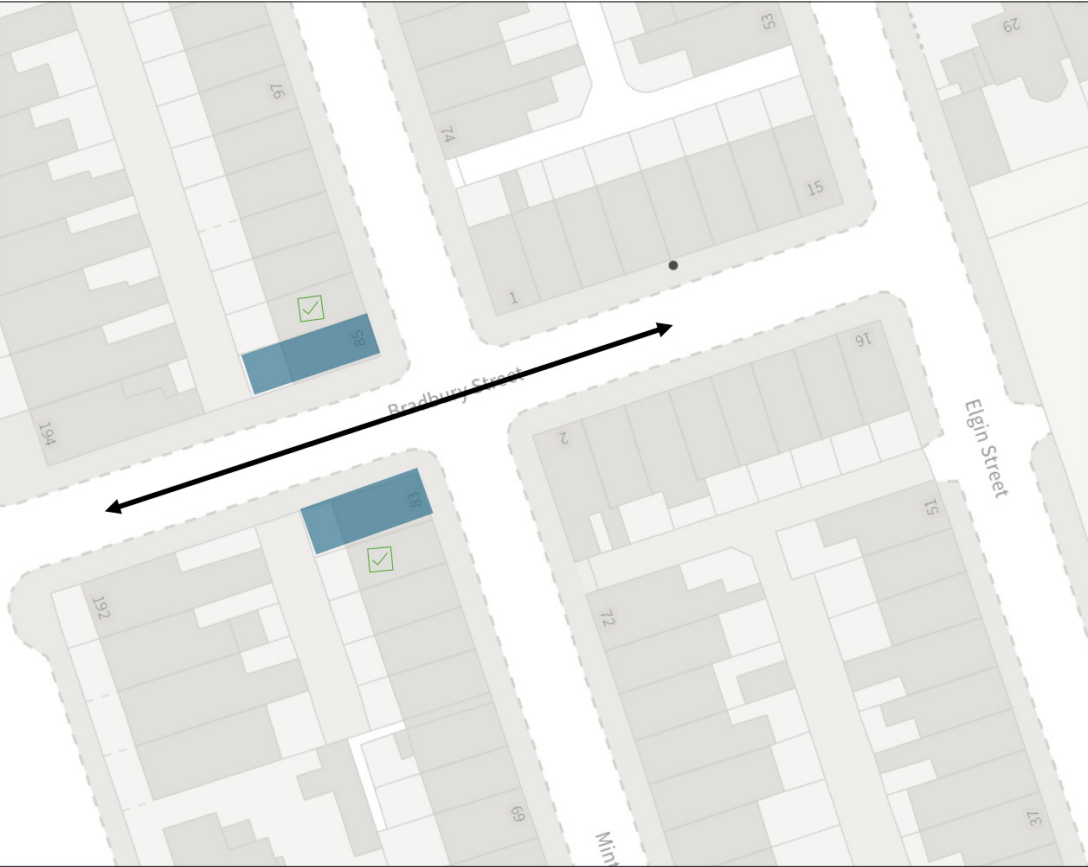
4.9 Mitigating the over concentration of HMOs and ensuring balance, the loss of family homes and the impact on existing neighbouring amenity:

This is a multi-limbed policy comprising 4 parts. **Applications need to successfully comply with all 4 parts, subject to all other material considerations.**

1. Proposals for HMOs must not result in three or more adjacent residential properties in a continuous frontage within the street scene being in use as HMOs. For the purposes of applying this policy, a continuous frontage is a consistent line of buildings within the street scene, without clear and distinct separation, such as provided by a side road. Properties being semi-detached or detached in nature does not mean that they cannot form a continuous frontage; and



The following examples demonstrate where planning permission may or may not be granted.

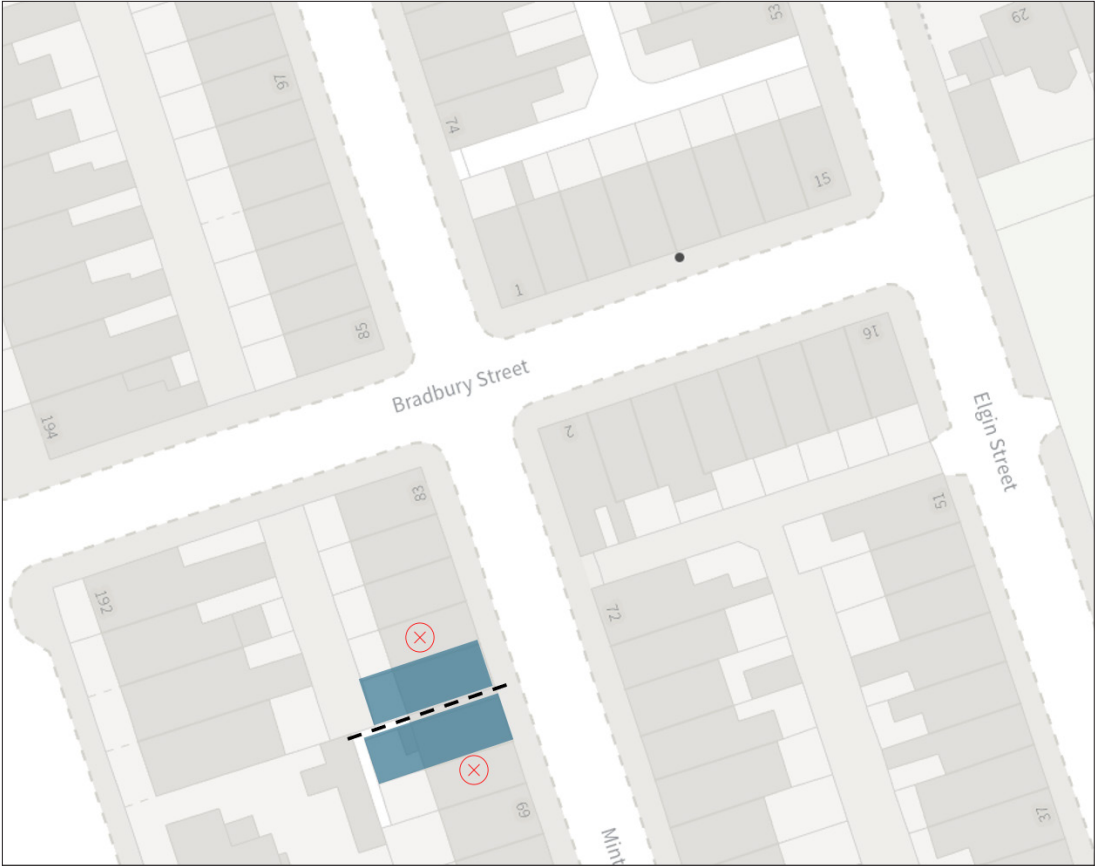


Key:

- Existing dwellinghouse (C3 use) or residential institution (C2 use)
- Existing HMO
- Permission for a HMO would not be granted
- Permission for a HMO could be granted
- Alleyway between two properties
- Intersecting highway

Example 1: Permission for a HMO could be granted here, subject to other material considerations, given the row of 4 HMOs would be clearly and distinctly separated by an intersecting road.





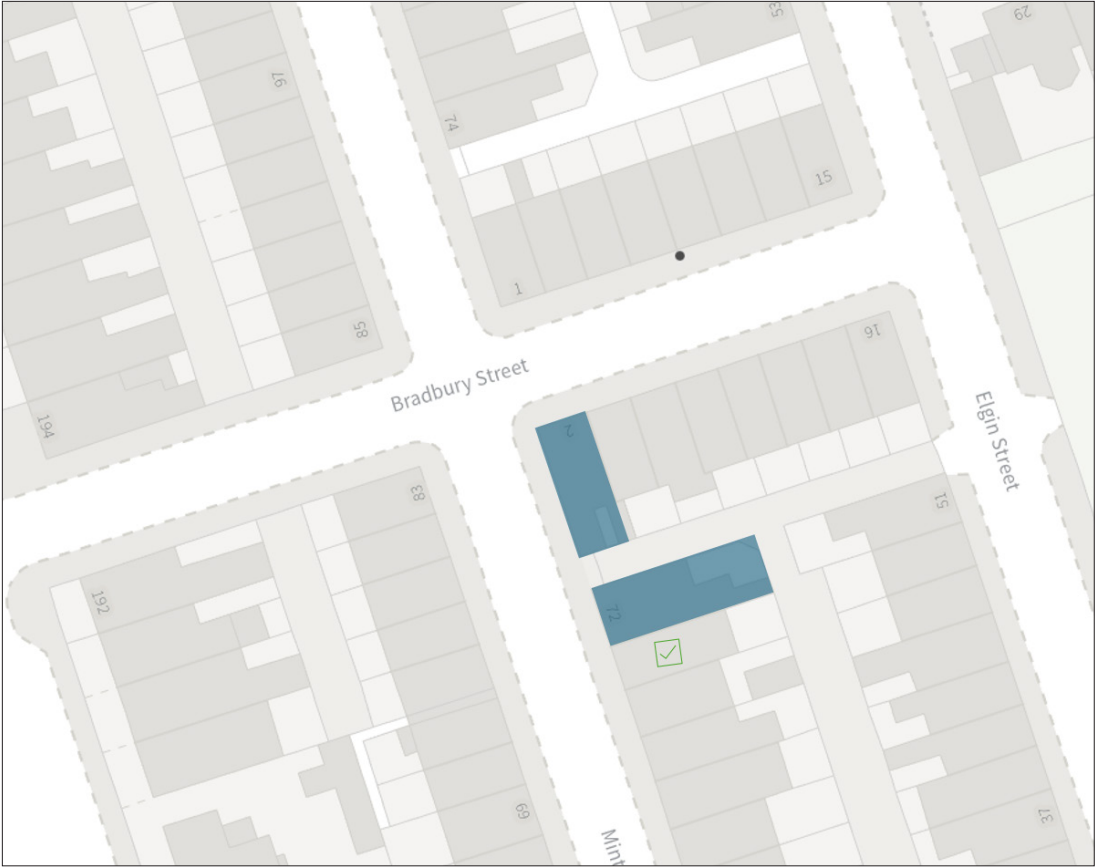
- Key:**
- Existing dwellinghouse (C3 use) or residential institution (C2 use)
 - Existing HMO
 - ⊗ Permission for a HMO would not be granted
 - ✔ Permission for a HMO could be granted
 - Alleyway between two properties
 - ↔ Intersecting highway

Example 2: Permission for a HMO would not be granted here as the alleyway between the two properties does not create a clear and distinct separation, and proposals would result in a row of 3 or more HMOs in a continuous frontage.



- Key:**
- Existing dwellinghouse (C3 use) or residential institution (C2 use)
 - Existing HMO
 - ⊗ Permission for a HMO would not be granted
 - ✔ Permission for a HMO could be granted
 - Alleyway between two properties
 - ↔ Intersecting highway

Example 3: Permission for a HMO would not be granted here as it would result in 3 adjacent residential properties in a continuous frontage within the street scene being in use as HMOs.



Key:



Existing dwellinghouse (C3 use) or residential institution (C2 use)



Existing HMO



Permission for a HMO would not be granted



Permission for a HMO could be granted



Alleyway between two properties

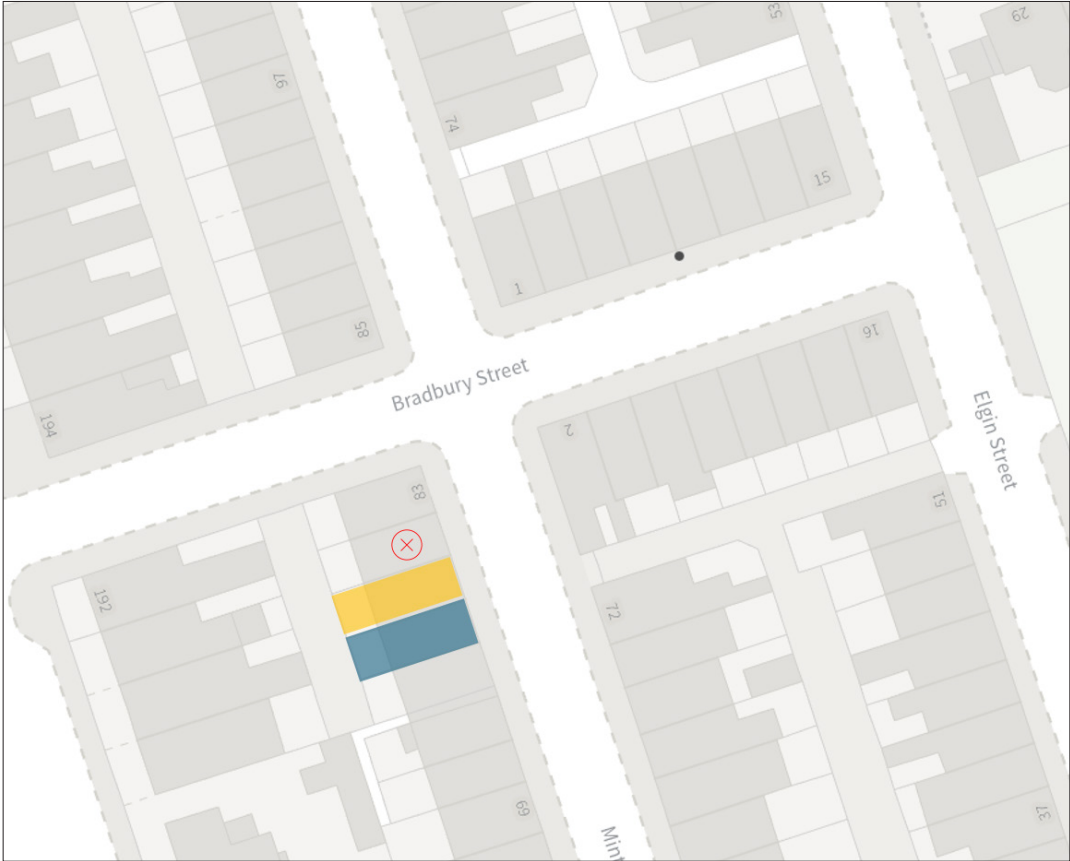


Intersecting highway

Example 4: Permission for a HMO could be granted here, subject to other material considerations, as there would not be 3 adjacent residential properties being in use as HMOs, as they do not share the same continuous frontage



2. Proposals for HMOs must not sandwich a C3a family dwellinghouse or C2 residential institution between an existing and/or proposed HMO; and



- Key:**
- Existing dwellinghouse (C3 use) or residential institution (C2 use)
 - Existing HMO
 - Permission for a HMO would not be granted
 - Permission for a HMO could be granted
 - Alleyway between two properties
 - Intersecting highway

Example 5: Permission for a HMO would not be granted here given the existing HMO and proposed HMO would sandwich the existing C3/C2 use.

3. Proposals for HMOs must also not result in the proportion of properties in use as HMOs being more than 10% of all residential properties within a 50-metre radius, and,

4. Proposals for HMO must also not be within an area where the proportion of HMOs already exceeds more than 10% of all residential properties within a 50-metre radius.

$$\text{HMO threshold \%} = \frac{\text{Total identified dwellings in use as HMOs within 50m radius}^*}{\text{Total identified dwellings within 50m radius}^{**}} \times 100$$

*Including the application property and HMOs within converted buildings

** Including dwellings within converted buildings.

Worked example 1: If the 50m radius includes 100 council tax paying properties, where 10 of which are already HMOs, proposals for an additional HMO would not be granted, given the proportion of HMOs in this radius would then exceed 10% of residential properties.

Worked example 2: If the 50m radius includes 100 council tax paying properties, 8 of which are already HMOs, an application for a proposed HMO could be granted, subject to other material considerations, as it would not result in the proportion of HMOs being more than 10% of residential properties within a 50m radius.



5.0 Licencing

- 5.1 Mandatory licensing of HMOs was introduced under the 2004 Housing Act. HMOs which need to have a licence are those where there are five or more tenants, forming two or more households, which use shared facilities such as toilets, bathrooms and kitchens for example. If the property meets the required minimum standards and the license holder/managing agent passes a fit and proper person test, the Council has no powers to refuse the license.
- 5.2 It is an offence for landlords not to license any HMO which is required to be licensed, and landlords can be prosecuted, have control of their unlicensed property taken away and be liable to repay any rents paid by their tenants. The Council must ensure that satisfactory management arrangements are in place and that the property meets the required minimum standards for the number of tenants housed.
- 5.3 Further licensing information for HMOs can be found via the following link - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f7f254ad3bf7f01936c0bb3/HMOs_and_residential_property_licensing_reforms_guidance.pdf

6.0 Making an application

- 6.1 Prior to submitting any proposals or planning applications, applicants are advised to engage in the pre-application process provided by the Council. Further information can be obtained via the following link: <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/planning/preapplications>
- 6.2 Applications will need to be accompanied by the relevant supporting evidence. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Location plan to the scale of 1:1250
 - Existing site plan to the scale of 1:200 or 1:500
 - Existing floor plans and elevations to the scale of 1:50 or 1:100
 - Proposed site plan to the scale of 1:200 or 1:500, detailing:
 - » outdoor amenity space
 - » refuse storage
 - » cycle storage (if external)
 - » off street car parking

- Proposed floor plans and elevations to the scale of 1:50 or 1:100, detailing:
 - » communal facilities (including kitchen work surfaces, dining room table/seats, living room sofas/chairs, shared bathroom/toilet and storage)
 - » private rooms (including double or single bed, en-suite, furniture/storage) setting out their internal measurements
- Section drawing where any habitable room is proposed within the roof space
- Management plan
- Design and access statement addressing locational requirements as set out above.

- 6.3 The above list is further to any other requirements set out in the full list of the Council's validation requirements, which can be found on the Council's website at: <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/getmedia/c344ce79-41c1-4ca6-8fcc-9a1b08c42d17/validation.pdf>

