



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Consultation Report for the Borough Wide Introduction of Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Telford & Wrekin Council

May 2026

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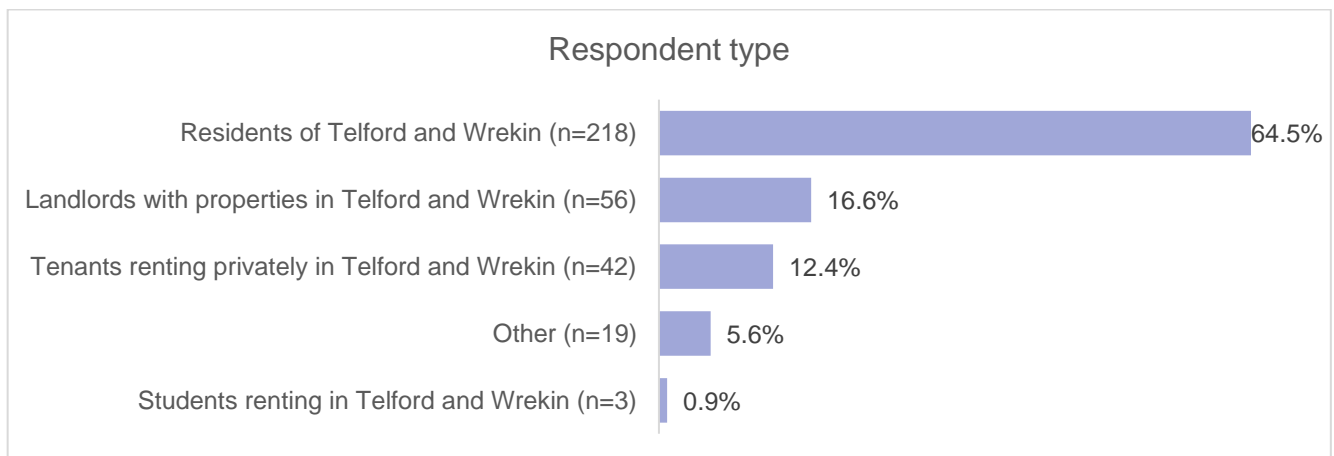
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1. Introduction

On the 4 December 2025, the Cabinet of Telford and Wrekin Council approved a public consultation on the proposed implementation of a borough-wide Additional Licensing Scheme of all Houses in Multiple Occupation, not currently subject to mandatory licensing.

2. Online Consultation

A 12-week online consultation commenced on 17 December 2025 and concluded on 11 March 2026. During this period a total of 338 responses were received. The profile of survey respondents by respondent type is shown below.



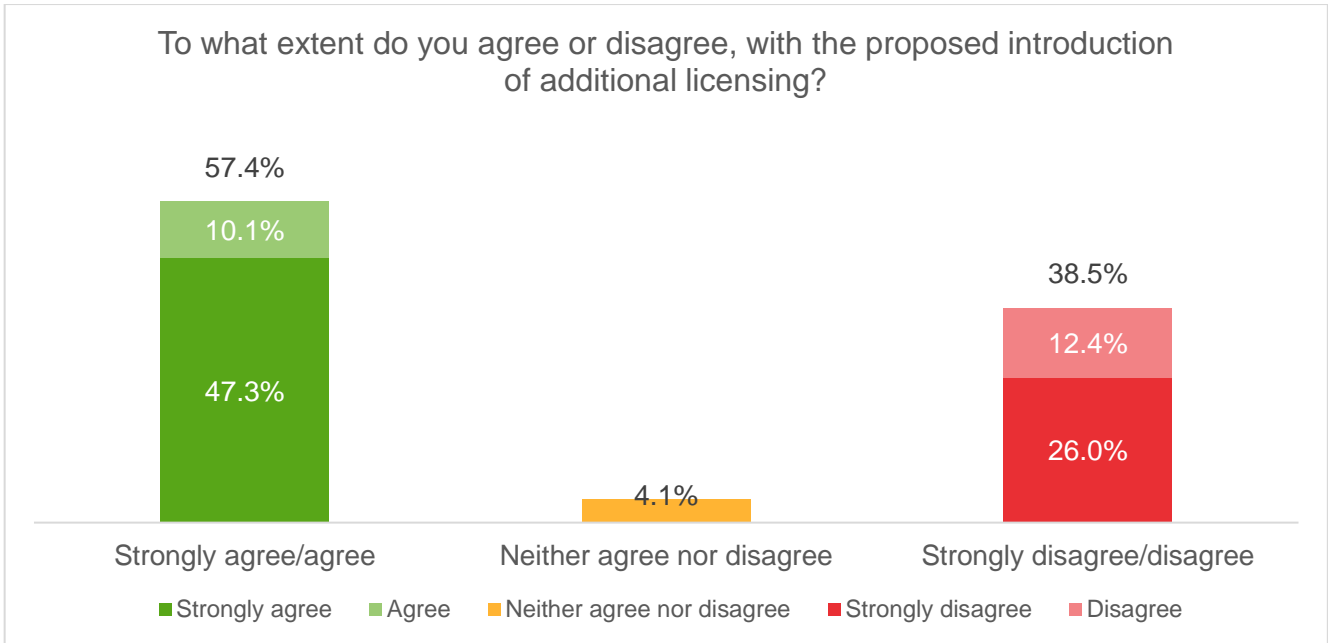
Around two thirds of survey respondents (64.5%) identified themselves as residents of Telford and Wrekin. Landlords with properties in the borough made up the second largest group (16.6%), followed by tenants renting privately in Telford and Wrekin (12.4%). There were 3 responses (0.9%) from students renting privately in the borough.

There were 19 respondents (5.6%) who identified as Other. This group included Town and Parish Councils, letting agents, public sector organisations, voluntary organisations and people resident outside of the borough who have family living in Telford and Wrekin.

Extent of agreement with the proposal

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to introduce additional licensing in Telford and Wrekin.

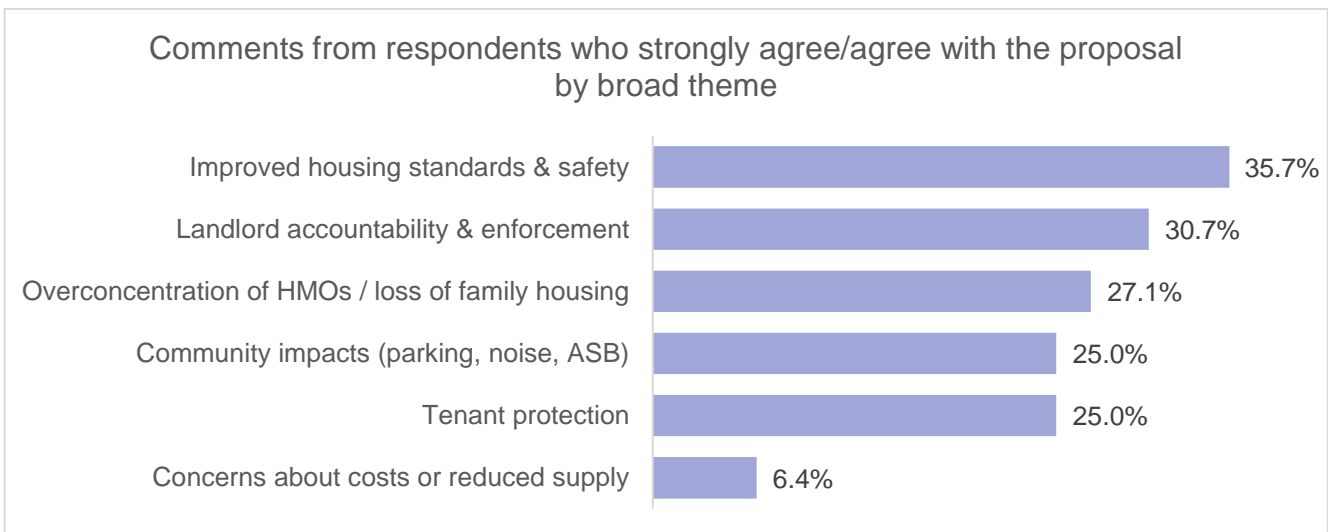
Overall, 57.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals. This compared with 38.5% of respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed. 4.1% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.



It is important to note that a number of respondents to the concurrent Article 4 consultation in respect of planning measures aimed at the control of HMOs also emphasised the need for additional licensing of small HMOs. For clarity, these are not included within the responses above to avoid the risk of double counting as it is recognised that some people may have responded to both consultations.

All respondents were invited to explain their reasons for supporting or opposing the proposal to implement a borough-wide additional licensing scheme. Their free-text comments have been analysed and categorised into broad thematic areas. Please note that with free text comments a response may fall into several thematic areas.

Themes from those Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing



Improved housing standards & safety: The largest number of respondents in this group, focussed on the value of additional licensing in bringing all HMOs up to acceptable standards. Many comments described poor conditions in some HMOs; for example, overcrowding, inadequate facilities, fire-safety risks and lack of maintenance and argued that additional licensing would ensure safer, better housing for tenants. By mandating minimum standards and regular inspections, the scheme is seen as a way to make landlords keep properties habitable and safe.

Landlord accountability & enforcement: Respondents considered that the scheme would hold landlords accountable and strengthen enforcement. It was pointed out that while most landlords are responsible, a minority of “rogue” landlords operate substandard HMOs unchecked. Licensing was widely supported as a tool to identify all HMO properties (so none can slip under the radar) and give the Council stronger powers to enforce rules. Respondents felt this would force irresponsible landlords to improve standards or face penalties, thereby protecting tenants and creating a fairer playing field for good landlords. Effective enforcement and oversight were seen as important to making the scheme work.

Tenant protection & support for vulnerable tenants: Responses noted that HMOs often house vulnerable and low-income individuals who have few other housing options. There was strong support for licensing as a means to better protect these tenants from exploitation and unsafe living conditions with some respondents referencing vulnerable residents living in poor conditions due to unscrupulous landlords. By enforcing proper standards and inspections, the scheme would help ensure safer, decent accommodation for those at risk. There was acknowledgment that HMOs play an essential role for people facing homelessness or other hardships, making it important to raise standards without unintentionally reducing the availability or affordability of these important housing units.

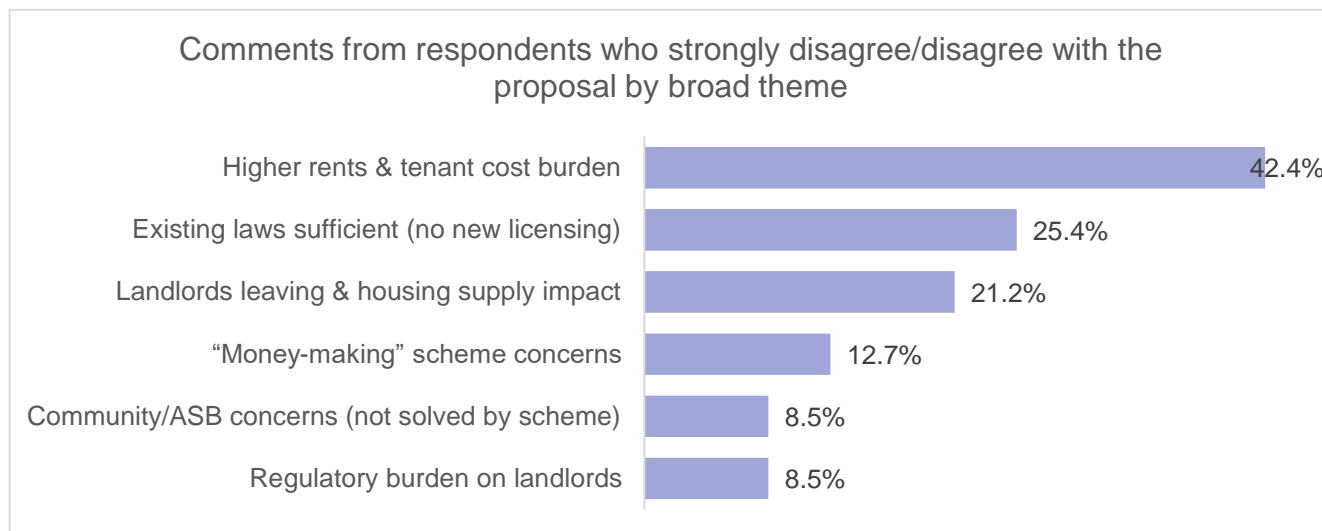
Community impacts (parking, noise, anti-social behaviour): Residents frequently brought up quality-of-life issues in neighbourhoods connecting this with HMOs felt to be poorly run. Examples of the negative impacts on neighbourhoods included parking issues from too many tenants’ cars, late-night noise and parties, poor property upkeep, litter, and other anti-social behaviour affecting neighbours. Respondents felt that stronger licensing would make landlords more responsible for tenant behaviour and property upkeep, thereby reducing these nuisances.

Overconcentration of HMOs & loss of family housing: Another common concern in this group was the overconcentration of HMOs in certain areas, leading to a loss of family homes and a change in community character. People described instances of multiple HMOs clustered on a single residential street, which can displace families and undermine the neighbourhood’s balance. Having too many HMOs in one place was linked to fewer long-term residents and a less family-friendly environment. Many supported using licensing (alongside planning controls) to avoid excessive clustering of HMOs. It was considered that keeping track of where HMOs are, and limiting their density, would support stronger community cohesion.

Alongside the themes identified above, and to address potential impact of some landlords leaving the market, respondents commented on the need for implementation to be fair and

the importance of working cooperatively with landlords with consideration given to offering more support and, potentially, incentives for compliance.

Themes from those Disagreeing/Strongly Disagreeing



Higher rents & tenant cost burden: Respondents who disagreed with the proposal stated that the added licensing fees would be passed on to tenants, causing rent increases.

Existing laws sufficient – no need for new licensing: Some respondents stated that additional licensing is unnecessary because adequate regulations and powers already exist to deal with problem properties. Respondents thought that enforcing existing laws and targeting the few rogue landlords removed the need for a blanket scheme for all HMO landlords. Some noted that upcoming national measures (e.g. the Renters' Rights Act) alongside current enforcement tools could address issues without new local additional licensing.

Landlords leaving the market & consequent housing supply impact: A number of responses suggested that the licensing scheme would drive some landlords to sell or leave the rental market reducing the supply of rental homes.

Licensing seen as a "money-making" scheme: some felt that the fees were designed to raise money rather than improve housing and noted that irresponsible or rogue landlords would likely evade the scheme.

Community and anti-social behaviour (ASB) concerns: A number of respondents raised concerns related to HMOs in their neighbourhoods citing issues like anti-social behaviour, noise, rubbish, parking shortages, and strain on local services associated with HMOs. However, they generally felt that the licensing scheme alone would not effectively solve these problems, pointing out that licensing won't create more parking spaces or stop bad behaviour.

Regulatory burden on landlords: A number of landlords cited already being overburdened with regulations and paperwork, and this scheme would add more red tape.

3. In Person Drop-in Events

A number of in person drop-in sessions were held across the Borough:

- Meeting Point House, Southwater (twice)
- The Anstice, Madeley
- Cosy Hall, Newport
- Ketley Community Centre
- Brookside Big Local

4. Wrekin Landlord Association

A number of face-to-face meetings have been held with the Wrekin Landlord Association (WLA), who have assisted by promoting the consultation to their members. A WLA members' meeting took place immediately after one of the face-to-face consultation events at the Anstice in Madeley, enabling officers to engage with a large number of landlords. WLA was also instrumental in helping to clarify operational details of the scheme to their members directing questions to officers, which helped to inform the Council's FAQ's on its website.

5. Written Responses

In addition to the survey responses above, 10 written responses were received from a number of partner organisations:

- A Better Tomorrow (Supported Accommodation Provider)
- Citizens Advice Telford and The Wrekin (CATW)
- National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA)
- Property Mark
- Safe Agent
- Shropshire Supports Refugees
- Shropshire Fire and Rescue
- Trident Group (Floating Support Provider)
- West Mercia Police
- Wrekin Landlord Association

6(60%) were in favour of the scheme and 4(40)% were not in favour

Key themes are summarised below (which were similar to those highlighted by survey respondents) drawing together partner perspectives on regulatory visibility, safeguarding, fire risk, community impacts and market considerations:

Existing laws are sufficient

Landlord organisations stated that the council has adequate powers (including the new provisions under the Renters Rights' Act 2025) without the need for additional licensing and that the council should at least delay implementation until the new act beds in.

Supporters consistently commented that unregistered HMOs operate below the threshold of visibility required for effective regulation, undermining safeguarding, enforcement and partnership action. Police, Fire & Rescue and specialist teams describe recurring engagement with small HMOs where ownership is unclear, landlords are absent or unresponsive, and agencies are unable to proactively intervene because properties are simply unknown to the system.

CATW report tenants who approach them for help are too afraid to complain to the Council. As a result, and to remove the reporting burden from tenants who are facing housing / landlord problems, there is a need for proactive measures allowing intervention as needed

Some respondents indicated that licensing is not duplication, but a mechanism that closes the regulatory gap by creating live, local intelligence on occupancy, management arrangements and safety accountability data that national registers cannot replicate. In this context it was felt that licensing enhances the effectiveness of current powers rather than replacing them.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Residents and Risk Concentration

Evidence from police and support agencies highlighted that HMOs disproportionately house individuals with complex needs, including poor mental health, substance misuse, language barriers and heightened vulnerability to exploitation. Supporters emphasise that unmanaged environments amplify these risks, with reports of tenants preferring rough sleeping to shared accommodation risking serious safeguarding failure. While acknowledging that landlords cannot manage complex personal needs, respondents argue that licensing enforces minimum management standards, safe environments and accountability at the point where risk is structurally concentrated. It was proposed that licensing would act as a safeguarding intervention.

Fire Safety and High-Risk Buildings

Fire & Rescue evidence identified HMOs as inherently higher-risk buildings due to density, turnover and complex internal layouts. Recurrent deficiencies such as poor fire detection, compromised escape routes and weak compartmentation are repeatedly linked to unregulated accommodation and absentee management.

Respondents felt that the Housing Health and Safety Rating System alone is not sufficient, arguing that licensing enables systematic identification of high-risk premises before incidents occur, aligning enforcement with the Fire Safety Order and Community Risk Management Plans. Comments indicated that regulation is not excessive but proportionate

to building typology and risk to occupants, offering a legally robust justification from a safety perspective.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Community Harm and Public Confidence

Landlord organisations stated that licensing would not tackle community ASB.

Police and frontline teams report repeated Anti-Social Behaviour (“ASB”) demand associated specifically with poorly managed, unregistered HMOs, alongside wider neighbourhood impacts such as waste, noise, neglect and community tension. Supporters do not argue that HMOs inherently cause harm; rather, stigma and community distrust are driven by unmanaged examples that erode public confidence.

The comments emphasised that there is a link between ASB and poorly managed HMO shown by consistent, case-based operational experience. Licensing was seen to be a selective, management-focused intervention that targets harm at source rather than tenure, with evidence showing that well-run HMOs can actively support cohesion and stability.

Market Exit and Supply Risk

Landlord organisations emphasised regulatory burden including additional licensing as well as requirements under the Renters Rights’ Act 2025, will result in landlords leaving the market and reducing housing supply.

Other respondents recognised that HMOs are an important element of housing supply for single people and that poorly designed schemes could risk landlord exit. Police and support providers explicitly acknowledge this tension, whilst compliant operators argue that unmanaged HMOs create disproportionate harm and distort the market.

Professionalisation, Equity and a Level Playing Field

Respondents in support argued that licensing protects responsible landlords and professional providers by addressing ‘free-riders’ who undercut standards and shift risk onto tenants and communities. Evidence from supported housing providers and sector-aligned voices highlights that vulnerable tenants rarely self-advocate, meaning reliance on complaints-based enforcement entrenches inequity. Licensing redistributes responsibility away from tenants and towards accountable management, enabling safer partnership working, structured engagement and consistent expectations.

It was felt that regulation establishes the baseline conditions that make education and improvement meaningful with licensing seen as fairness infrastructure rather than enforcement excess.

Revenue Generation

Landlord organisations stated that this is an income generation tool.

West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service and supported housing providers stress that effective protection requires adequate inspection and enforcement capacity.

Please see Appendix C for Council commentary.

6. Communications Summary

A communications plan was delivered alongside the online survey, drop-in events and one to-one meetings with officers, to maximise reach and response. This included targeting key audiences across the Borough.

Communications activity included:

- Dedicated website including a series of FAQs for tailored audiences
- A number of news stories issued to the local media
- Multiple emails to key stakeholders including Wrekin Housing Association, Telford & Wrekin Community Safety Partnership and town and parish councils
- A series of social media posts (including being the focus of the Leader's weekly video). During the course of the consultation, 16 posts were shared, which received a total reach of 71,900
- Information shared via the Council's digital newsletters
- Small print run of posters and flyers – distributed via leisure centres, libraries and community centres
- Internal communications via internal channels
- Messages sent to GPs for inclusion on surgery screens