

High Street Rental Auctions Early Adopter Programme

Terms of Reference

1. Background to High Street Rental Auctions

As part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, Government is introducing High Street Rental Auctions (HSRAs), a new permissive power for local authorities to require landlords to rent out persistently vacant commercial properties to new tenants. As an addition to a range of tools local authorities might use when attempting to regenerate an area; they will seek to increase cooperation between landlords and local authorities, and to make town centre tenancies more accessible and affordable for tenants, including small businesses and community groups.

2. The High Street Rental Auctions Early Adopter Programme

A High Street Rental Auction Early Adopter is a local authority selected by government and who has agreed to be part of a close working group to deliver one or more of the first HSRAs.

Early Adopters will be amongst the first local authorities to deliver HSRAs. Together, they will act as champions of the programme to encourage greater take up of HSRAs by other local authorities.

Government will be looking for them to provide a strategic and outward facing role in the delivery of the policy objectives. MHCLG will work closely with the Early Adopters group throughout the HSRA process, aiding progress at each stage and to publicise achievements through case studies post implementation. MHCLG will look to Early Adopters to perform an advisory role to help shape the guidance to improve the way in which the HSRAs can be delivered going forward.

3. Remit

The role of the HSRAs Early Adopters is to implement HSRAs in their local areas, act as champions of the programme, and provide feedback and advice to help shape future guidance.

Objectives for the Early Adopters programme will include:

1. **Early Adopters to maximise their understanding of the legislation and process** by working closely with MHCLG throughout the implementation of HSRA - MHCLG will both meet individually and bring together the Early Adopters in a group forum regularly.
2. Use insights gained from Early Adopters to **further develop and fine tune HSRA Guidance** for future implementation and wider roll out; this could include adjusting the policy where necessary and practical (within the boundaries of the legislation). This may involve work to develop implementation toolkits and/or on evaluation.
3. Early Adopters will **showcase delivery and best practice of HSRAs** through completing detailed case studies. They may also be asked to contribute to the delivery of a regional programme of workshops for local authorities to attend.
4. Early Adopters will then **continue to champion the policy**, by providing local authorities with support and guidance where necessary. This could take the form of a buddy/guide programme, or something more informal.

The Early Adopters Programme will operate until October 2025.

4. Responsibilities

The Early Adopters programme is broken down by phases in which Early Adopters will be responsible for;

- 1. Onboarding – December 2024 – January 2025** - where Early Adopters will maximise their understanding of the policy, process and application;
 - Community engagement on high streets and town centre designation – minimum of 28 days
 - Designating a high street or town centre to formalise the geographic boundaries in which a HSRA can take place
 - Scope potential options for identifying eligible properties for HSRAs
 - Scoping a potential tenant base
 - Setting up procedures
- 2. Implementation, from December 2024** - where Early Adopters will carry out one or more HSRAs;
 - Carry out one (or more) HSRAs
 - Have built and be utilising a strong peer network away from MHCLG input.
- 3. Learning – December 2024 – October 2025** - where Early Adopters will play a leading role in maximising HSRA take up by other local authorities;
 - Early Adopters will complete a detailed case study of their HSRA experience.
 - Facilitate a stand-alone Wash Up Workshop bringing all Early Adopters together when nearing completion of at least one HSRA.
 - Collaborate with MHCLG to produce regular newsletter style briefings throughout the implementation phase to track the progress of Early Adopters.
 - Regional workshops for local authorities to attend.

We also envisage Early Adopters to build a strong network to maximise peer learning. This could come through formal engagement arranged by MHCLG or more informally at official level between local authorities.

5. Membership

Members of the **Early Adopters Programme** are those Local Authorities identified by Government and who have agreed to be part of a close working group to deliver one or more of the first HSRAs.

Early Adopters Members			
Attendees	Name	Role	Contact

Additionally, there will be a number of MHCLG attendees who will attend this forum.

6. Frequency of Meetings, Workshops and Calls

Frequency of meetings will be determined based on the needs of the programme at the different stages. A formalised communications plan will be agreed with each Early Adopter during the onboarding stage, this approach will allow for flexibility in communications to match the work requirements throughout the process. Early Adopters should expect up to 1-2 hours of contact time with MHCLG per week through online workshops and 1:1 calls where helpful.

Ad-hoc exceptional meetings, calls may be held if essential.