



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Public Comments regarding the East Suffolk Council HMO Consultation

Meeting: Planning Committee

Date: 22nd August 2024

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/NON-CONFIDENTIAL

- 1. I understand that the current East Suffolk Council consultation into HMO exceptional circumstances is to be discussed by the town council planning committee and would be grateful if my comments below could be circulated. If the proposed alterations to HMOs are approved, they will be enshrined into the Local Plan and therefore local planning law for the next decade or so, which could have a big impact on our town.*

No matter how exceptional the circumstances, recognised deprived areas such as Lowestoft, which already have large numbers of houses converted to flats, bedsits and HMOs, should not be allowed to be further degraded by the associated problems that HMOs are known to bring to an area. Pockets of deprivation such as Kirkley and Harbour in Lowestoft in particular, already suffer from the highest crime and antisocial behaviour problems in the whole of Suffolk, if not the whole of East Anglia, and this must surely be enough reason not to convert any more property into HMOs in this area.

Unless proposed buildings to be converted to HMOs have extremely large areas of outside space to cater for amenity and are detached so as not to cause undue disturbance to adjoining properties, I do not think they should be allowed under any circumstances. HMOs by their nature are generally used to accommodate vulnerable, single people, who are unlikely to be in employment and filling up large properties to house as many of them as possible will be a recipe for problems. It's not appropriate to allow change of use for anymore HMOs particularly when they are in terraced properties next door to family homes.

Many of the very large Victorian properties, especially in towns like Lowestoft where property prices are relatively very cheap compared to neighbouring seaside towns such as Southwold and Aldeburgh, only have tiny courtyard gardens so by the time an HMO for say 8 or 9 occupants has provided for cycle storage and bins, there would be hardly any, if any at all, outside space.

Already deprived areas, that have been used as Suffolk county's dumping ground for decades really cannot be allowed to be further degraded by altering planning law to allow more

HMOs whatever the "exceptional" circumstances. There's a reason why HMOs are no longer favoured and increasing numbers would be a most retrograde step for all concerned.

Best regards

REDACTED

- 2. Please could my comments below be circulated to the planning committee when the East Suffolk Council consultation into HMOs in Exceptional Circumstances is discussed?*

Many thanks.

REDACTED

Unless houses of multiple occupation are new and purpose-built they are a step backwards as trying to convert old, large, usually Victorian properties into HMOs is unsatisfactory for many reasons similar to care homes being much better if purpose-built rather than converted from old buildings. If you want a policy for HMOs regardless of how exceptional the circumstances, then purpose-built dwellings is the way to go.

Turning empty residential properties, especially if terraced, and putting a large number of single (and very often needy) individuals in them is detrimental to the nearby properties and neighbourhood in general. There are many examples of how areas have been run-down by conversion of houses into smaller units. HMOs tend to be poorly maintained and often accommodate unemployed people, are usually unkempt and poorly maintained and really just money-makers for the private landlords, who obviously make a lot more money from letting out single rooms.

Presumably this "consultation" is in response to the government's "Operation Scatter" to disperse asylum seekers and illegal immigrants around the UK into residential areas thus spreading the problem around in the hope that it won't be so noticeable. I doubt that any of these HMOs would be properly managed if managed at all.

Conversion of buildings for whatever purpose is rarely, if ever, as good as purpose-building and in particular, conversion to HMOs has been proved up and down the country over many decades to have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area.

East Suffolk Council is already a dental desert, is not providing enough SEND spaces for children and has incredibly high waiting lists for both housing and NHS treatment. The district is struggling and places such as Lowestoft are already blighted and inundated with converted properties into smaller units. Flat Saturation Zones were created so as to prevent further deterioration and degradation of the area so converting properties outside of these already saturated areas will simply increase the size of current Zones and cripple the already struggling infrastructure further.

So in conclusion, I am against HMOs regardless of whether the circumstances are exceptional or not.

- 3. I recently sent to you a statement regarding opposition to the proposed change of use to HMO C4 accommodation at 47, London Rd. South NR33 0AS. I was saddened to learn that there is to be a committee meeting held soon regarding this property to be reviewed under exceptional circumstances.*

Not being very savvy with council planning speak I can only assume that if this project goes ahead that the future for many of the large accommodating cheap buildings in the Kirkley area will become subject to HMO status further bringing more unwanted unfortunates into an area already socially troubled. Are we to assume that if we are to house potentially another 16 single probably young males into supported accommodation that this will enhance the goodwill of the majority of the Kirkley population, I personally think not. I'm in no way racist but the influx of 'boat people' is of great concern to all of us as recent riots have confirmed however misguided and misinformed those taking part may have been. I am actively involved in various projects to make Kirkley a better place to live for all to the exclusion of no one but to take advantage of available buildings and cram vulnerable people into them does not exactly help.

Please read my concerns with open minds. I realise this project may go ahead anyway despite concerns I know have already been voiced, but I believe there are many out there who would share my concerns were they to know this proposed accommodation had been planned.

*You have my kindest regards,
REDACTED*