

**90 UPDATE ON HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**  
**Report HPR2021/070**

The report provided an update on evidence relating to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the Borough, following a report to Development Control Committee, Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and Executive in summer 2021.

At the meeting of 15 July 2021, Executive authorised the making of two Article 4 Directions to remove C3 to C4 permitted development (PD) rights; an immediate Direction covering Biggin Hill and Darwin wards, and a non-immediate Direction covering the rest of the Borough. The immediate Direction must be confirmed by 28 February 2021 in order to remain in force after this date, while the non-immediate Direction must be confirmed before 1 September in order for it to come into effect.

The report summarised the current evidence available in relation to HMOs in the Borough, and considered that there was not sufficient justification to confirm either of the Directions, in line with the requirements of national planning policy and guidance.

Noting that the Officer's recommendation, based on the lack of empirical evidence of the quantum of HMOs in the Borough, was that the Article 4 Directions were not confirmed, the Chairman noted that this was not consistent with the experience of local ward councillors who were seeing a greater volume of HMOs beginning to appear. Acknowledging the difficulties that Officers may have in identifying the hard evidence, the Chairman proposed that the Committee recommend that the Article 4 Directions be confirmed.

The Committee noted that a number of neighbouring boroughs and boroughs across London had Article 4 Directions for HMOs in place and there was extended control over HMOs in all neighbouring boroughs. A Member highlighted the need for HMOs to be planned for and for Committees to consider applications. It was further noted that information on the 2021 Census may be delayed, and equally, if there were houses that were planned to be converted into HMOs after the Census was conducted, they would not show up in the census data.

The Committee noted that the Portfolio Holder would be required to confirm both the immediate and non-immediate Article 4 Directions following pre-decision scrutiny by the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee.

The Chairman moved that the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing be recommended to confirm both the immediate Article 4 Direction covering Biggin Hill and Darwin wards and non-immediate Article 4 Direction covering all wards of the Borough with the exception of Biggin Hill and Darwin. The motion was seconded by Councillor Harmer, put to the vote and CARRIED.

**RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The updated evidence relating to HMOs set out in this report, which supplements the May 2021 evidence base document at Appendix 1 be noted;**
- 2. The Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing be recommended to confirm the immediate Article 4 Direction covering Biggin Hill and Darwin wards.**
- 3. The Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing be recommended to confirm the non-immediate Article 4 Direction covering all wards of the Borough with the exception of Biggin Hill and Darwin.**

The Meeting ended at 9.06 pm

Chairman