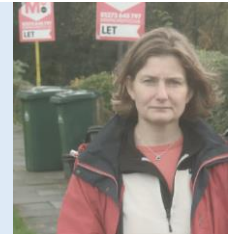


HMO BULLETIN April 2017

Working for safe, well-managed housing and friendly residential communities welcoming to all
From Cllr Tracey Hill, lead councillor for private rented housing on Brighton & Hove City Council.
For a "copy-paste" version or any other queries, email tracey.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk



HMO Forum Meetings

The HMO forum is a group attended by representatives from each of the residents' associations in the Lewes Road area, plus local councillors, representatives from the universities/students' unions and guests. I'm suggesting that the HMO Forum from now on meet **twice a year**, once in **September** and once in **April**, to coincide with university year start and finish. Topics include HMO enforcement and standards as well as community projects to help improve local neighbourhoods. Please email me with any ideas for themes for these meetings. The next meeting will be September 2017.

Enforcement of our rules

Planning controls are in place to limit HMO development to avoid over-concentration (known as an Article 4 Direction). Most landlords stick to the rules, but a few persistent developers continue to open new HMOs and expand existing ones without permission. Although the council budget has shrunk, we are recruiting for the planning enforcement team and have allocated some budget for a specific person to deal with **HMO enforcement**. This reflects the high priority this has to residents. We are already prioritising HMOs: since the beginning of 2016, all HMOs which get a licence for the first time are investigated for planning permission. Since November 2016, **notices have been served on 17 properties** requiring them to stop being used as HMOs or large HMOs.

The council has sent a **letter to landlords** with HMO licences for more than 7 occupants to draw attention to their need for planning permission. All properties regardless of where they are in the city need planning permission to be used as HMOs with 7 or more people, but many of them do not.

Following a petition to Council, HMO planning policy has been discussed at Full Council and at the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) committee. This will be discussed again at the next EDC committee (June 22nd).

New community service

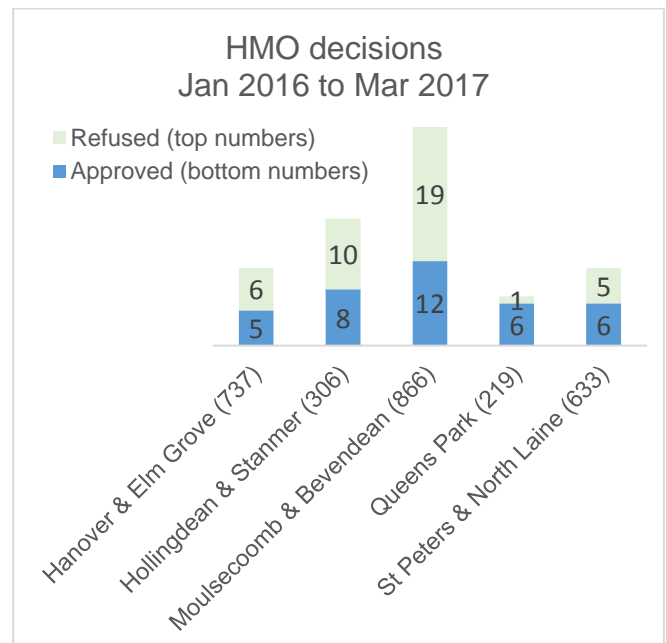
I was recently briefed by the University of Sussex on their **Community Ambassadors** pilot scheme, where student volunteers knock on doors to connect with local residents and ask about their issues. This is being piloted in Moulsecoomb, Bevendean and Coldean. Read more about it here: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/community/get-involved/community-projects/community-ambassadors>

Preston Barracks

The **Preston Barracks** planning application is now live. The proposal is for a large mixed-use development which will include purpose-built student housing units, as well as affordable housing and space for small businesses, retail etc. I support this development because there are very few sites in the city which have been designated suitable for purpose-built student housing, leading to pressure to convert family homes. Providing more student housing on Preston Barracks will help ease demand in residential areas. The target decision date is May 16th, so feel free to make comments before then. http://www3.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1199915&action=showDetail&APPLICATION_NUMBER=BH2017%2F00492

Focus on: HMO numbers

I am often asked how many HMOs there are and how many new ones are coming up. Here is some recently-compiled data on HMO planning decisions from January 2016 to March 2017 in the five Lewes Road wards. These are decisions to convert a property from residential to HMO, or from smaller to larger HMO. The figures in brackets are the number of licensed HMOs in each ward. NB all numbers are approximate.



The figures for 2013, when the planning controls we have started, to 2015, are similar to the above.

Of all the 41 refusals, 15 of them have been appealed so far and 11 can still be appealed. So **appeals are important!** See page 2 for how to comment on appeals.

Appeals and Enforcements

I will be updating this section of the Bulletin every month.

Enforcement notices can be issued as a result of planning refusals or directly as the result of a complaint. They can also be appealed. Details are in the enforcement register on the planning enforcement page of the council's website: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/planning/planning-enforcement>. **Since November 2016, notices have been served on 17 properties requiring them to stop being used as HMOs or large HMOs.**

Many refusals for HMO use are appealed. If you commented on a planning application you should be notified if the decision is appealed. The documentation, including the statement from the appellant of why they are appealing, should be on the planning applications register. Appeals are also listed in the agenda of the monthly planning committee meetings. The link to the April meeting is here and the appeals are towards the end of the agenda. **There are three new appeals against refusals for HMO conversions this month, in Brunswick and Adelaide, Hanover and Elm Grove and Moulsecoomb and Bevendean:** <https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=118&Mid=6126&Ver=4>

The planning committee agenda also includes a list of appeal decisions. There are no appeal decisions relating to HMOs this month.

Anyone can comment on an appeal on the Planning Inspectorate website. You can search here: <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/CaseSearch.aspx>. There is a time limit for comments to be taken into account. It generally takes a few months for the Planning Inspectorate to process an appeal.

Useful contacts for HMO tenants and neighbours:

University contacts:

- Brighton – Andy Keeffe a.w.b.keeffe@brighton.ac.uk or Kevin Mannall k.mannall@brighton.ac.uk 01273 641894
- Sussex – housing@sussex.ac.uk 01273 678219 and their office at 91 Lewes Road
- BIMM – Angélique Sabine angeliquesabine@bimm.co.uk

HMO licence register (to check if a property has an HMO licence, the landlord and managing agent: there are two lists at the bottom of this page, one for smaller and one for larger HMOs. Click on "Ctrl+F" for a search box to search for a particular property: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/licensing-houses-multiple-occupation-hmos>

Planning applications register (to check whether a property has applied/been granted/refused planning permission): <http://ww3.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1199915&node=20476>

Poor quality/badly maintained housing – interior: Private Sector Housing 01273 293156 (Mon – Fri 9am -5pm); psh@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Badly maintained exteriors, overgrown gardens: If a licensed HMO, Private Sector Housing 01273 293156 (Mon – Fri 9am - 5pm), hmolicensing@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Fly-tipping, rubbish left outside a property: If on street, CityClean contact centre 01273292929 Mon – Fri 0900 – 1700. If within curtilage of a licensed HMO Private Sector Housing 01273 293156 (Mon – Fri 9am -5pm), hmolicensing@brighton-hove.gov.uk. The university contacts will also follow up on refuse/recycling complaints.

Bins, refuse/recycling collections, street cleaning: CityClean contact centre 01273 292929 Mon – Fri 0900 – 1700

Noise nuisance: EHL on ehl.environmentalprotection@brighton-hove.gov.uk or 01273 294266. NB noise is not considered criminal or anti-social behaviour so not in itself a police matter. The university contacts will also follow up on noise complaints.

Anti-social behaviour: can be reported to the Community Safety Team on 01273 292735 or communitysafety.casework@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk. Mon – Fri 0900-1700. All incidents and enquiries are responded to within one working day. <http://www.safeinthecity.info/getting-help>.

Information and advice for people renting in the city: Rent Smart <http://rentsmartbrightonhove.org/>

HMO Licensing: what are the benefits to tenants of the HMO licence? <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/5751%20HMO%20licensing%20tenant%20factsheet.pdf>

General housing information from the council: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing>