



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Public Comments regarding DC/24/3455/FUL – HMO for Asylum Seekers at 47 London Road South NR33 0AS

Meeting: Planning Committee

Date: 24 October 2024

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/NON-CONFIDENTIAL

Please note the following public comments have been received and appropriate redacted regarding application DC/24/3455/FUL – HMO for Asylum Seekers at 47 London Road South NR33 0AS

1. No economic benefit for Lowestoft residents or businesses, in a Flood Zone and flooded previously, extra demand on already struggling health, infrastructure and community services, backwards step for a regeneration area already classed as in deprivation, high risk of additional crime and antisocial behaviour, HMO specifically for asylum seekers so close the seafront, local businesses and cinema does nothing to enhance the area, it's in the conservation area, the only profit will be by the landlords to the detriment of the local community, protection issues associated with asylum seeker cultural backgrounds, overcrowding with 2 people in each room, insufficient space for wheelie bins and cycle storage and problematic parking.
2. This is the third time I have objected to a proposed HMO on this particular site. Permission has been refused twice, and, looking at this new application, I don't see anything has changed besides the number of bedrooms. The number of bedrooms was not the reason for refusal, so I don't see how this should change the prior decisions.
My objections are:
 - The property lies within a Conservation and Heritage Action Zone
 - The property is adjacent to the Flat Saturation Zone
 - Crime rates and antisocial behaviour are already very high in the area. An HMO would only make the problem worse. With SERCO's performance record, I am not confident that they would be able to manage these concerns, and our police force is already overstretched.
 - Dental and medical facilities are also overstretched.
 - Room for wheelie bins is restricted, especially if we are going to be issued with even more bins.
 - There are cultural differences to be considered, especially considering particular businesses in close proximity to the proposed HMO: a vet, a dog rescue centre, a cinema and a dance school.
 - Parking issues are already a concern in this area,
 - Apparently, the owner of this property already has two approved sites for this kind of housing. Do we need another? Is Lowestoft going to be saturated with HMOs?
 - There has been much work in Kirkley to improve the area. This is a retrograde step and would discourage further efforts.
 - This application is, still, in Flood Zone 3 and I don't see that anything has changed in the proposal besides the number of bedrooms, with no plans to provide protection to the residents

besides putting them on an early warning list.

The members of the various councils have been elected to take care of the residents of their constituencies, not the residents of the world. The residents of Lowestoft, those who are trying to make a life for themselves and pay their taxes hoping that their government will facilitate that, should be able to trust that their elected officials put their concerns first. Not last. You are responsible for the welfare of your constituents. I urge you to act accordingly.

Thank you for your attention

3. This is the third time this application has been put forward for this particular property for change of use from a residential home into an HMO for Asylum Seekers, each time with a reduction in numbers of bedrooms.

The applicant has already obtained permission for change of use to HMOs for Asylum Seekers at properties in both Milton Road East and more recently at Beach Road and he seems intent on targeting Lowestoft with his business plan for HMOs housing Asylum Seekers to be managed by SERCO Ltd. It would appear that this is a money-making exercise for the applicant and SERCO Ltd with no economic benefit for Lowestoft that I can see. More it seems these applications in both Kirkley and Harbour & Normanston, the two most deprived districts in Suffolk, will only further degrade areas and be a retrograde step for areas where regeneration has been an aspiration.

This application is in Flood Zone 3 and still, despite the two previous applications, has not demonstrated the required exceptional circumstances in order for an application of this type to be considered. Simply reducing the number of bedrooms (2-persons per bedroom) does not address the reasons for the previous applications being refused.

There are still many reasons why it should be refused again on top of its being in Flood Zone 3, such as being in the Conservation and Heritage Action Zones, being adjacent to the Flat Saturation Zone, of no economic benefit to the wider area, safeguarding issues in relation to local residents and proposed HMO occupants, lack of resources as Lowestoft is a known "dental desert" along with other services being massively overstretched already, crime rates and antisocial behaviour are already very high in the area and HMOs are known to exacerbate both, fear of crime from Asylum Seekers which is well documented because they are unchecked in terms of criminal convictions, cultural differences negative to social cohesion, parking issues already at breaking point in the immediate area, real concerns about Serco's dubious track record, rising numbers of this sort of application to turn residential homes into HMOs with a lack of housing suitable for larger families already a problem, discrimination against native citizens needing housing with Asylum Seekers being prioritised over them, negative impact on neighbouring businesses, lack of space for sufficient wheelie bins and cycle storage, to name a few.

Numerous local residents have objected many times to these applications and their voices should be heard over and above out of town businesses and landlords seeking only to profit from the continuing and ever-growing number of government contracts being awarded to meet the needs of rising illegal immigration. When repeated applications for the same thing keep being processed, it feels like members of public in the local community are almost being dismissed as counting for little or nothing and that eventually will be worn down if the applications keep on coming.

We should be able to have faith in elected representatives to do the right thing for Lowestoft.