

Appendix II: Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Development Management Policy

- 1 HMOs, as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, provide an important component of the Borough's housing supply. They can meet the needs of a range of households, including single persons, people unable to access market housing, and other groups requiring flexible rented accommodation. The council's evidence indicates that the amount of HMOs has increased, with an emerging HMO SPD that is due to be adopted in June 2026, identifying a 68% increase in HMOs between 2021 and 2026.
- 2 HMOs can have different impacts from single household dwellings. The emerging HMO SPD identifies potential impacts through increased parking demand, refuse generation, pressure on infrastructure and public services, changes to housing balance and residential character, reduction in the supply of family homes, and poor living conditions for occupiers.
- 3 The council is considering the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for changes of use from dwellinghouses to small HMOs, where justified by evidence. This would require planning permission for such changes and allow proposals to be assessed against this policy, the HMO SPD and other relevant development plan policies.
- 4 The policy below applies to development requiring planning permission for the creation, extension, intensification or alteration of HMOs, including small HMOs within Use Class C4 where planning permission is required and larger sui generis HMOs. It should be read alongside the council's HMO SPD, relevant neighbourhood plan policies, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Draft Policy DM: Houses in Multiple Occupation

Proposals for the creation, conversion, extension, intensification or alteration of HMOs will be supported where they provide good quality accommodation, maintain an appropriate housing mix, safeguard local character, and avoid unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, highway safety and parking conditions.

Proposals will be permitted where:

1. The proposal would not result in an over-concentration of HMOs or undermine the housing mix and character of the area, having regard to:
 - (a) No more than 10% HMO concentration within 100 metres of the application property, measured from the front door, unless the site is in a commercial or mixed-use area with fewer than 10 residential properties, where a 30% threshold applies;
 - (b) No non-HMO dwelling should be sandwiched between HMOs, including horizontally or vertically within buildings containing flats.
2. The proposal would provide safe and suitable access and would not result in parking stress or severe highway impacts, having regard to any parking standards for HMOs that have been adopted by the Council.

3. The proposal would provide adequate, discreet and accessible storage for refuse and recycling, together with appropriate management arrangements where required. These provisions should accord with any supplementary guidance adopted by the Council;
4. Applications for HMOs must demonstrate that room sizes comply with the most generous applicable standard, including the National Standards, any replacement standards, or any local standards adopted by the Council's Private Sector Housing team.