



Key Decision: [Yes/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All Worthing

Referral of Motion on Notice from Worthing Borough Council

Report by the Director for Sustainability and Resources

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report sets out a motion (attached as Appendix 1) referred from the meeting of Worthing Borough Council on the 18 July 2023.
- 1.2. Members of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee are asked to consider and determine the Motion.
- 1.3. Members can either support the motion and ask for further work to be carried out in this regard, or, members can reject the motion.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee support the motion and determine how further work is carried out; or,
- 2.2. That the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee reject the motion.

3. Context

- 3.1. At its meeting on 18 July 2023, Worthing Borough Council received a motion from Councillor Heather Mercer, seconded by Councillor Kevin Jenkins, details of which can be found at Appendix 1.

3.2 The motion submitted to Council contained subject matter that requires a decision of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee, as defined in para 14.5 of the Council's Procedure Rules. Therefore, it was debated at full council and referred to the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee for further consideration and determination.

3.3 Where a motion has been referred by Full Council to the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee, the mover, or the seconder in the absence of the mover, shall be entitled to attend the relevant meeting of the Executive to further explain the motion (which has already been debated with a right of reply to the mover prior to the referral at Full Council). Councillor Heather Mercer has been made aware that the motion has been referred to this Committee.

4. Issues for consideration

4.1 The Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee can either support or reject the motion.

4.2 Should the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee support the motion, then the Committee should ask Officers to prepare a further report on the substantive issues to be presented at a future meeting of the WJSSC.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There may be direct financial implications in future depending on the course of action the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee wishes to take.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 Rules concerning motions are set out in the Council's Constitution under paragraph 14 of the Council's Procedure Rules.

Background Papers

Motion to Worthing Borough Council on 18 July 2023

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Sustainability and Risk Assessment

1. Economic

There may be direct financial implications in future depending on the course of action the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub Committee wishes to take.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

There may be Social Value implications depending on the decision of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee- these would be investigated in a further if the motion is accepted

2.2 Equality Issues

There may be Equality issues depending on the decision of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee- these would be investigated in a further if the motion is accepted

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

There may be Community Safety implications depending on the decision of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee- these would be investigated in a further if the motion is accepted

2.4 Human Rights Issues

There may be Human Rights depending on the decision of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee- these would be investigated in a further if the motion is accepted

3. Environmental

There may be Environmental considerations depending on the decision of the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee- these would be investigated in a further if the motion is accepted

4. Governance

The proposals in this report are in line with the Council Procedure Rules concerning Motions on Notice

Motion on Notice to Worthing Borough Council

Article 4 direction - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

In 2023 there is persistent and growing pressure for more housing in our town and this has seen many older and larger properties redesigned under permitted development rights or through a direct planning application, into Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) .

In Worthing our town has grown over a long period of time and the built housing stock, in terms of size and quantum reflects its period of construction. This means in many parts of East and Central parts of Worthing the Edwardian and Victorina era large houses are looked on favourably by developers as being ripe for conversion to Houses of Multiple Occupation.

It is recognised that HMOs can make a valuable contribution to the private rented housing stock. They provide an affordable type of accommodation and contribute to the mix of housing types and tenures available in Worthing. They are often suited as homes to young people and single people and those on low incomes or as a source of emergency or temporary accommodation to statutory authorities.

However, HMOs of all sizes can have a detrimental impact on residential character and community cohesion and high concentrations within neighbourhoods can result in imbalanced and unsustainable communities creating harmful impacts including:

- Divisions between social groups;
- Lack of interaction;
- Turnover of occupants;
- Poor upkeep of houses and gardens;
- Adverse impact on the affordability of rents;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Issues with parking provision and traffic congestion;
- Difficulties for the owners of remaining C3 dwellings selling their properties.

There is little sign of this demand abating and with that it brings pressures into our local communities when faced with the creation of significant numbers of HMOs in a close proximity to each other.

In the adopted Worthing Local Plan (2023) development management policies it states that :

DM1 Housing Mix (part extract)

f) When considering proposals for the conversion of dwellings into smaller units of self-contained accommodation, the proposal must provide a high standard of accommodation that complies with internal space standards and requirements for private outdoor space. In addition, the Council will

consider:

- i) the impact on the mix of dwellings locally*
- ii) the impact on the character of the area*

DM2 - Density (part extract)

c) The optimum density of a development should result from a design led approach to determine the capacity of the site. Particular consideration must be given to:

- i) the site context and character of the surrounding area in which it is located, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscapes;*
- iv) the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers*

In 2016 when the first stage consultation work was commenced that delivered the Local Plan 2023, the pressures on Council were not as acute and today's situation was not foreseen.

It is absolutely recognised that there is a need for accommodation of this type in our town, that is not in question. But often the question that is asked by residents is simply, is it the right place or has consideration been given to the impact of a concentration of HMOs in a road or neighbourhood.

Therefore with a demand landscape that has changed so dramatically this Council is called on to:

- Map the location and density of HMO's in our town
- Determine acceptable density or proximity issues
- Look at best practice across England to authorities who have introduced an Article 4 Direction in a preemptive manner to protect communities, so that development can be managed rather than responded to
- To consider the introduction of an evidence led article 4 direction under the 1995 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.

Recognising that the purpose of any Article 4 Direction is to continue to provide HMO accommodation to meet Worthing's housing needs, but in doing so manages the supply of new HMOs to avoid high concentrations in a particular area.

That this work should be prioritised and completed within 6 months.

Proposer - Cllr Heather Mercer

Secunder - Cllr Kevin Jenkins