

With reference to Agenda item 7, Annex E congratulations to all involved in completely disregarding the 16th December 2021 Full Council motion (attached) that attempted to encourage City of York Council to reduce the far too high HMO acceptability thresholds that were introduced when the HMO Article 4 Direction was reluctantly brought in by CYC in 2012.

I have consistently made the point that the York HMO thresholds were too high and that other local authorities including neighbouring authorities were working on lower thresholds with more detailed and restricted conditions around HMO placement to protect their communities and those policies should be studied and adapted for use in York.

The Leeds City Council approach (attached) of not using percentage thresholds and requiring each new HMO application to have a full assessment of all relevant planning matters on a site by site basis, without the pressure to approve an application within (high) percentage thresholds that we have in York ought to be considered.

I made detailed points many times in the past at CYC meetings and raised such concerns at the Local Plan Examination in Public hearings in 2022 when the Planning Inspectors running the inquiry stated that they were ready and willing to accept any amendment to Policy H8 and a reduction on HMO percentage thresholds.

The CYC Director overseeing the efforts of CYC at the Local Plan inquiry than continued to mislead councillors on various occasions on this matter - I should not need to remind members of this group, council leadership both political and staff that the webcast records of the relevant session of the Local Plan examination, Full Council of 14th July 2022 and subsequent Executive and Scrutiny meetings still exist as to what occurred in the efforts of CYC to bury the Full Council motion of the 16th December 2021.

The election of May 2023 saw a new Labour administration and moves to update Supplementary Planning Documents and I noted at the time the lack of any specific

mention of the HMO SPD only to be told this could be addressed within the review of the Housing SPD.

With further changes to the national planning system by Government I am concerned to see the emergence of the non-statutory planning guidance and in particular Annex E which offers nothing new other than reproducing the original 2012 HMO SPD wording.

Times have changed, the huge expansion of Purpose Built Student Accommodation in York which has consistently been promoted at planning stages to reduce the pressure on residential family homes for conversion to HMOs has clearly not had that effect, HMO conversions and the loss of residential family homes to the student let market continue at a steady pace.

If the percentage acceptability thresholds of HMOs in H8 are not actively being considered for reduction in the Housing SPD review then this group needs to instruct strategic planning staff to take away the Annex E paper and rewrite it to include significantly reduced percentage thresholds and adopt best practise for determining HMOs, and hopefully including AirBnB and holiday lets into the percentage mix as well.

I look forward to seeing what course of action this committee chooses to take - does the group want to try and protect the residents of York from the further spread of HMOs or protect those within CYC who clearly do not want to act and have consistently tried to frustrate the 16th December 2021 Full Council motion?

Councillor Mark Warters.  
2026.

3rd June