

H3 Houses in Multiple Occupation

The creation or conversion of a dwelling to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) must meet the following criteria:

- (a) the number of HMOs would not exceed one out of a row of five units;
- (b) it is supported by a design rationale based on an understanding and analysis of local context and character taking into consideration the adopted Harlow Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- (c) the development makes adequate provision for refuse storage and collection;
- (d) parking is provided at a level of one space per bedroom, plus one secure covered cycle space per bedroom, or set at the current adopted parking standards;
- (e) effective measures are proposed to minimise the effects of noise and disturbance.

The effectiveness of this policy and the one-in-five restriction should be reviewed two years after the adoption of this Local Plan.

Justification

14.13 HMOs provide an additional housing type which helps meet the needs of the community and provides more choice and mix. It is recognised, however, that HMOs can create a range of issues which cumulatively impact on the surrounding area. Evidence suggests that an excess of HMOs along a street can have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the area. This policy aims to minimise the loss of larger family housing, which is often used for HMOs and is in relatively short supply due to the type of housing stock originally built in Harlow.

14.14 Many areas of Harlow have limited off-street parking and open frontages, which reflect the original New Town design. The intensification of HMOs in a street can have a detrimental impact in the neighbourhood because of a lack of parking provision. As such, this policy aims to maintain the character of residential areas, protect the amenities of local residents and ensure sufficient off-street parking is provided.

Implementation

14.15 HMOs are defined as dwellinghouses which are inhabited by three or more unrelated people, as their only or main residence, who share one or more basic amenity (such as a kitchen). There are two types of HMOs:

- small HMOs, housing between three and six unrelated persons; and
- large HMOs, housing more than six unrelated persons.

14.16 Current national permitted development rights allow the change of a dwellinghouse to a small HMO without planning permission. The change of a dwellinghouse (or a small HMO) to a large HMO does, however, require planning permission.

14.17 Planning applications for HMOs will be assessed according to their impact on the character and street-scene of the area in which they are situated. A row is defined as five or more adjacent dwellings whose frontages face the same continuous section of highway between junctions. A row may include, but is not limited to, terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings, as interpreted by the Council.

14.18 The Council will ensure that such development will be of an acceptable and safe standard and that habitable rooms comply with the latest minimum size codes. Applicants should satisfy themselves that they have obtained the relevant consents and licenses from the Council before commencement.