

[REDACTED]

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Barnet Council Policy Team,

**Re: Objection to modified Local Plan policies**

I have 26 years of experience dealing with planning matters. My last local planning authority position was as Director of Planning & Building Control at the London Borough of Barnet for nearly 5 years, up until July 2016.

**My formal objection to Policy HOU03 is set out below.**

**Policy HOU03 Residential Conversions and Re-development of Larger Homes**

As confirmed by recent pre-application advice I have received the policy would provide in effect a blanket ban on all 1-bedroom dwellings in conversions (even in town centre locations), despite there being a huge demand for 1 bed dwellings and the inevitable consequential huge increase in demand for HMO accommodation in the Borough - I predict a huge increase in HMO applications as a consequence of this new policy ban on 1-bedroom units in conversions, and there will be limited scope to refuse HMO applications as a consequence.

It does seem illogical to me that the new draft planning policy bans 1-bed dwellings in conversions, yet the new policies allow a change of use of dwellings to HMO's (instead of good quality 1-bed dwellings).

The new policy in effect will lead to unbalanced communities, with those seeking 1-bedroom dwellings being forced into HMO's instead, or the more expensive 1-bedroom dwelling in purpose-built blocks of flats, which many cannot afford (converted flats are cheaper than new build flats).

In addition, the policy mainly seeks to protect the character and amenity of local areas, but character and amenity are protected by other policies. Therefore, to introduce a raft of criteria which does not allow common sense or meaningful assessment to be carried out should be rejected.

In particular, Criteria d) would prohibit the conversion of large houses, including those close to town centres. Most large houses are an inefficient use of floorspace and are only affordable to the very affluent (in Barnet). Large houses in the right locations should be seen as an opportunity to convert or redevelop in order provide much needed dwellings. Large houses can only be afforded by the very rich so protecting these types of houses would restrict the majority of people having access to decent housing – the policy as it is currently worded is discriminatory against all those except the very affluent.

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Yours sincerely

Joe Henry

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