# Greenwich Council approves increase to six occupants for Woolwich HMO despite local objections



Greenwich Council has approved a planning application to increase the occupancy of a house in multiple occupation (HMO) at 17 Moordown, Woolwich, from five to six residents, despite strong opposition from local residents. The decision was made during a local planning meeting held on Tuesday, 22 April, where councillors voted three to one in favour of the proposal, which also includes a rear extension to the end-of-terrace property situated between Woolwich Common and Shrewsbury Park.

The planning application attracted around 50 objections from neighbours concerned about the impact of adding a sixth occupant to the residential street. Objectors raised issues including potential increases in noise, traffic congestion, and the risk of disputes between residents as the number of occupants grows. Many feared that the increase would alter the character of the area, which largely comprises families with young children and elderly residents.

Michael O’Sullivan, a resident of Moordown, voiced his concerns at the planning meeting, stating: “Nobody in our stretch of the road wants this HMO. I’ve spoken to some of the people who are in close proximity to the HMO and I’m telling you there are going to be mental health problems. People are very stressed and they are fearful of what’s coming down the line for them and I think that needs to be considered.”

Another resident, Helen Palmer, expressed worries that the proposed six occupants might lead to even higher numbers staying over, saying: “As it stands, the demographic of Moordown consists largely of families, often with young children, and/or elderly residents. There is a really strong feeling of community cohesion, especially since Covid. The applicant has suggested in their proposal that a house of multiple occupancy is no different to a family residence. We know that this is not true and if you are in any doubt, you just have to ask yourself what each social group will be doing at 10pm on a Friday evening.

“Having brought up a young family myself I can tell you that the children will be asleep and I will be on my computer trying to catch up on work I haven't had time to do while they’re awake. As a single adult having worked all week, this would have been my time for socialising, drinking, playing music, going out to the pub, club, event and coming back in the early hours of the morning maybe.

“Both groups are entitled to their lifestyle choices but they are not compatible, and if you put them next door to each other, literally by bringing one in you will eventually start to force out the other. I know we are facing a housing crisis, but changing small family homes into smaller units is not the way to solve it.”

Despite these objections, planning officers recommended approval of the application. Their report cited the HMO’s potential contribution to addressing local housing needs and stated that the proposed change would “not result in any unacceptable impacts to the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers.”

Councillor Asli Mohammed voted in favour of the application, noting that it “meets all the relevant planning criteria and regulations.” However, she also criticised the applicant and their representatives for failing to consult adequately with residents. At the meeting, Cllr Mohammed highlighted concerns about the broader loss of family homes within the South London borough, commenting: “We are losing family homes that we really can’t afford to lose. We have to balance family homes against HMOs; how many family homes are losing, how many HMOs are we creating. We have to balance that and that is something for the council to review.”

The sole councillor to vote against the application was Pat Greenwell, whose opposition was met with applause from the public gallery. She emphasised the importance of residents’ well-being in assessing amenity, stating: “The people who are here tonight, the objectors, have come along and they’ve said their piece. It was full of emotion and emotion to me is not just emotion but people’s living conditions and how they feel is part of their amenity.

“It’s not just a building. People are going to have their amenity destroyed because of this HMO. Their lives destroyed, that’s their amenity. I’m sorry but I will not be supporting this application. I just can’t.”

The previous approval to convert the single-family home at 17 Moordown into a five-person HMO was granted in December of the prior year, following similar concerns from the community. The expansion to a sixth occupant and the addition of a rear extension represents a further intensification of the property’s use as a house in multiple occupation.

The MyLondon report underscores the ongoing tensions in South London neighbourhoods between meeting housing supply demands and preserving existing community character. Residents and councillors alike are confronting challenges as local authorities seek to balance development pressures with the needs and concerns of established communities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/documents/s12474/17%20Moordown%20London%20SE18%203LY%20Ref%2025.0484.F.pdf> - This document supports the claim about the planning application for 17 Moordown, including the change of use from a single-family dwelling to a six-person HMO along with a rear dormer and part one and two-story rear extension.
2. <https://opencouncil.network/meetings/63319> - This page provides information about the local planning committee meeting where the application for 17 Moordown was discussed, corroborating the timing and nature of the proposal.
3. <https://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/documents/g2189/Public%20reports%20pack%2022nd-Apr-2025%2018.30%20Local%20Planning%20Committee.pdf> - This document contains details about the application site and the conversion of the property into a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), further supporting the context of the planning decision.
4. <https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2907/hmo_licensing_standards_-_updated_april_2019_pdf_33124kb.pdf> - This document outlines the standards for HMOs in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, providing context on the regulations surrounding such conversions and the need for full planning permission.
5. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source is mentioned as a provider of the initial report about the planning decision and resident concerns at 17 Moordown, though it does not directly provide a URL to access the article.
6. <https://greenwich.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s878/47-53%20Woolwich%20Road%20London%20SE10%200RA.pdf> - This document, while unrelated to 17 Moordown, provides context on broader planning issues in Greenwich, such as balancing housing needs with community concerns.
7. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/south-london-hmo-plans-approved-31496162> - Please view link - unable to able to access data