# Brighton residents fear antisocial behaviour rise from planned large-scale HMO conversion



Plans to convert the former DMH Stallard offices at 47-48 Old Steine, Brighton, into a sizeable House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) have sparked considerable concern among local residents. The development aims to create 17 rooms, three kitchens, and a communal lounge area, accommodating up to 25 households until December 2027. However, residents living near the proposed site have expressed fears that such an influx of occupants could lead to a rise in antisocial behaviour and threaten the delicate fabric of the community.

Residents from Pool Passage, the narrow alley adjacent to the proposed HMO, have voiced their alarm over the potential consequences of the development. They outline a history of significant issues in the area, including vandalism, drug use, and sexual activity. In 2023, following persistent advocacy, the community successfully secured the installation of a gate that has since curtailed many of these problems, as highlighted by residents Hughie and Chris O’Neill. “The gate helped stop the majority of the antisocial behaviour, and we could once again live in relative peace and cohesion,” they remarked, expressing their dismay at the prospect of the HMO reopening the floodgates to previous troubles.

The residents are particularly worried about how the proposed layout is designed. The kitchens will be located in close proximity to the existing homes, which could lead to disturbances and increased foot traffic in Pool Passage. Hughie raised the point that “having a substantially higher number of people in the area will only add to the antisocial behaviour” and negatively impact community cohesion, suggesting that large HMOs tend to attract transient populations rather than nurturing stable, long-term residents.

Broader concerns about HMOs have emerged across Brighton, with many locals worried about the "creeping" impact of these conversions. In Portslade, residents opposed the conversion of family homes into HMO units, citing similar issues related to noise, parking, and overall community deterioration. These apprehensions resonate with existing fears about the balance in neighbourhoods becoming increasingly skewed towards transient, rental populations rather than families and stable residents.

As Brighton grapples with its growing housing demands, the local council has been considering new property licensing schemes aimed at regulating the expansion of HMOs. These proposed laws, including measures for additional licensing of smaller HMOs, could potentially enhance management standards and address the challenges rampant in the private rented sector, including poor living conditions.

The Pool Passage Residents Association is actively voicing its concerns with the Brighton and Hove City Council, aiming to influence the decision before comments close. The association has urged others to contribute their thoughts through the planning portal, thereby hoping to amplify their call for careful consideration regarding the HMO development. As the tension mounts between the necessity for accommodation and the preservation of community integrity, local sentiments underscore the complexity of urban living in Brighton amid evolving planning strategies.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25185495.residents-object-hmo-plans-former-brighton-offices/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2024/04/02/dozens-object-to-plans-to-turn-family-homes-into-shared-houses/> - Residents in Portslade have raised objections to plans converting two family homes into six-bedroom Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Concerns include increased noise, parking issues, and the impact on community cohesion. The council's policy permits such conversions if no more than 10% of homes within a 50-meter radius are already HMOs. The planning applications for 47 and 71 Eastbrook Road are under review, with residents encouraged to share their views through the council's planning portal.
3. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23292096.brightons-pool-passage-receives-gates-protection-order/> - Brighton's Pool Passage, previously a hotspot for antisocial behavior, has been secured with a lockable gate and is now under a public spaces protection order. This initiative follows increased police patrols and community efforts to address issues such as sexual activity and drug use in the area. The funding for the gate installation came from the sale of items seized by the police, highlighting a collaborative approach to community safety.
4. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18116287.hmos-destroying-communities-brighton/> - Residents in Coldean, Brighton, express concerns over the proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), fearing the 'studentification' of neighborhoods. They worry about the loss of family homes, increased noise, and pressure on local services. Despite plans for new student housing, residents are apprehensive that HMOs will continue to dominate, leading to the erosion of community fabric and a decline in property values.
5. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18642598.brighton-family-home-repurposed-despite-creeping-hmo-fears/> - Councillors in Brighton have granted permission to convert a family home into a shared house, despite concerns about the 'creeping' growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Local councillors expressed reservations about the impact on community balance and the potential for increased noise and parking issues. The council's policy allows such conversions if no more than 10% of homes within a 50-meter radius are already HMOs.
6. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2024/recommendations-introduce-property-licensing-schemes> - Brighton & Hove City Council is considering introducing two new property licensing schemes: an Additional Licensing Scheme for smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and a Selective Licensing Scheme for certain private rented homes in four city wards. These initiatives aim to improve property management and maintenance standards in the city's expanding private rented housing sector, addressing concerns about inconsistent quality and management of private rented homes.
7. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2024/city-wide-hmo-additional-licensing-being-introduced-july> - A new Additional Licensing Scheme for smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is set to be introduced across Brighton & Hove from July. This city-wide scheme will cover HMOs with two or more storeys and three or four occupiers. The initiative aims to improve conditions and management standards in the city's private rented housing sector, addressing issues such as poor management and property conditions in HMOs.