

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Pensioners' Forum

Thursday, 26 July 2018

The Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, St Giles' Street, NN1 5DE.

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

ATTENDANCE: Cllr Brian Oldham (BO, Chair), Roger Rumsey (RR, Chair), Ann Timpson (AT, Individual), Rita Bovey (RB, NBC), Tony Mallard (TM, Individual), Toby Birch (TB, Community Spaces Northampton), Norman Sharp (NS, Individual), Brian Nichols (BN, Individual), Veronica Male (VM, Northants Dementia Action Alliance), Marie Franks (MF, Home Instead).

APOLOGIES: John Rawlings, Dave Hewitt, Cllr Russell, Alan Wright, Geoff Sims.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

TM discussed with forum members about needing clarification between what NPH do and what Veolia do with regards to rubbish and fly-tipping.

BO anything on NPH land, Veolia aren't responsible for, this is the same as grass cutting.

AT Have we received any feedback from the call centre? And if not are we going to?

BO I also discussed with them why it could take up to 25 days to change a light in a wet room, especially in sheltered housing.

3. RITA BOVEY - DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Manager in charge of Development Management – planning applications come to this section in Planning

Facts about HIMO – it is usually people who are unrelated who will be living together with shared facilities.

A house with 2 lodgers still counts as a house but with 3 lodgers would count as a HIMO.

Houses can also be divided into flats but they are not HIMOs.

Under Planning Legislation, you can have 6 people living together as a family, and where care is provide, it will still be considered as a house and not a HIMO.

Planning permission is not normally required to change a house to a HIMO for up to 6 people, as that is what is considered to be "permitted development". However, as the Council is concerned about the cumulative impact of HIMOs, Article 4 Directions have been created means that in certain areas, planning permission will be required.

The first Article 4 Direction was created in 2011 for Sunnyside Ward because of the university. Now Abington and Castle Wards, Town Centre and Far Cotton areas are

covered by Article 4 Directions.

The university is moving to Waterside so Article 4 Direction was added to the Far Cotton areas where landlords would buy and rent out houses to students.

In addition to Planning Permission, some HIMOs also need to be licenced under Private Sector Housing.

Currently HIMOs in 3 storey buildings with 5 and more people would come under mandatory licensing. Also HIMOs in 2 storey buildings with 3 or more people in Sunnyside and Abington Areas would be covered by Additional Licensing scheme.

From 1st October, the mandatory licensing scheme will be extended to any property with 5 people or more.

In the eastern district, as it is not currently covered by an Article 4 Direction, you can have up to 6 people in a HIMO without planning permission.

Private Sector Housing's licensing scheme will look at room sizes, kitchen and toilet facilities and fire doors.

Loughborough University are doing some research on behalf of the Council to look whether the Interim Planning Policy would need to be revised, including impact of concentration and the change of character of an area.

Q: Does article 4 cover Headlands and Eastfield.

A: No, it does not cover there.

TM we are seeing a lot of these conversions and extensions happening and the parking on the main road is a problem now. NPH may be looking to add garages and with 6 schools in near proximity, this is causing some issues.

Q: Can it be monitored if more people (friends, partners etc.) come over to properties and stay overnight.

A: There is not enough resources to monitor unless there were complaints. There is normally restriction on how many occupants should be in a HIMO. Planning Enforcement Officers would go out and investigate to check whether planning conditions are complied with.

Q: How long are these licenses given out?

A: Some of the better managed houses will be licensed for 5 years and other will be licensed for less.

Q: Are Semilong and Kingsthorpe areas Article 4?

A: Yes they are.

Q: How would you deal with people who haven't followed the correct protocol?

A: They can apply for retrospective permission. If they have all the documents such as tenancy agreements etc to proof that the use has been established for over 4 years continuously, they can get retrospective approval.

If someone who has done this the wrong way and an area has already got over concentration problem, they may not get permission in the future.

Q: What happens if a landlord has permission but puts more people in?

A: We will gather evidence and if they do not stop, we can carry out enforcement action against breaches of planning control.

ANDY LEIGHTON - HIGHWAYS

5. COMMUNITY NEWS EXCHANGE

AT Pensioner with depression, received a letter saying his electrics need checking, he forgot, then a fortnight later he received a letter saying they had tried to contact him on multiple occasions. If he doesn't comply, they will follow legal action which he will have to pay which will cost thousands of pounds. This letter was from NPH. This same man has been treated badly regarding his garage rent that he had paid 10 weeks in advance, they gave him 7 days' notice and he needed to get his car out and they had to go to NBC to get NPH to follow the correct process.

Stephen Hibbert to be invited to the next forum.

TM There is an issued regarding the garages in Eastfield. Parking spaces are going to be replaced by flats, where are these 18+ cars going to go when all the main roads are already full?

Unity Dem project has moved – runs 3 days a week to the deco from the library. People are deferred normally through the memory clinic. Unity Dem are also looking for volunteers.

TB opening gym for disabled adults in goldings at lodge farm. Small numbers but each person will get individual help and personal support. Hopefully the community centre well get off the ground in the autumn. 1st sep rectory farm family day.

TM NFRA meeting to talk about cuckooing – vulnerable people are being targeted and their properties are being taken over for illegal activites.

BO has Steven Mold been invited?

MM yes, JW invited him with no response once again.

ACTION: Alternative ask Chief Constable to come – when the new one starts in September – see if they can attend the November meeting.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NS Greyfriars site plans was stopped last November, what is happening on that ground? Its 5 years where there isn't any money being made.

BO not sure as of now, it is virtually the same as it was after it was taken down, but it has just now been levelled off.

BN How do the borough council deal with complaints for excessive dog barking?
You would have to talk to the environmental section.

ACTION: MM to have environmental health officers come in to explain their services and how they deal with complaints – MM to invite Ruth Austen.

NS There are councillors who are NBC AND NCC. Some aren't really that active at all.

RR Cllr Russell could not make it today, she is head of the overview and scrutiny panel.

Q: Do they have a designated policeman to deal with homelessness?

A: I am not sure.

If we do discuss this, invite the hope centre, age uk etc.

AT twice the grass has been cut and twice they have failed to clear the paths afterwards.

What is in the contract about clearing rubbish in flats?

NS There are questions about the bus station which are being passed from NBC to NCC and vice versa and is not being answered.

BO Unitary will stop this back and forth.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified