

Agenda Item 7

Public Questions

Question Received from S. Smith
Context: <p>HMOs have been allowed to develop in Spelthorne with very little control. Developers have exploited this, producing housing of poor quality and standard. These companies are driven purely by profit, with no investment or interest in the local area. Commercial gain is prioritised over residents' interests and community cohesion.</p> <p>HMOs are not a blanket alternative to social housing. Many developers flout planning rules and show little regard for community impact. They are permitted to use private building control, which prevents proper checks on build quality and resident safety.</p> <p>Currently, there is no cohesive strategy. The council lacks a full list of licensed and unlicensed HMOs, and there are no annual or routine inspections. Residents are left to endure noise, excessive waste, disturbance, parking pressures, strain on already stretched services, and the consequences of poor design and delivery.</p> <p>Accessing support from the council is also extremely difficult. Services are fragmented, hard to navigate, and lack coordination between departments. This leaves communities feeling unsupported and frustrated.</p> <p>The introduction of Article 4 and the council's proposed action plan are welcome but far too little, too late. Without stronger oversight, clear accountability, and routine checks, poor-quality HMOs will continue to spread at the expense of residents' wellbeing and the cohesion of our neighbourhoods.</p>
Question: <p>Besides Article 4 and the Action plan the council have said they intend to publish in January, what other legislative powers do the council intend to use or bring in to stop and control HMOs including smaller unlicensed HMOs and those operating illegally within Spelthorne to the detrimental effect on existing Spelthorne residents?</p>