

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 May 2019 16:24
To: LDP
Subject: Consultation response

I do not want my name/contact details made public.

I wanted to write in connection with the LDP on housing, in particular student accommodation. Unfortunately your specific questions do not cover the specific points I want to make. In other words, I consider your questions biased to the presumption that action is needed.

Secondly your privacy statement does not provide assurance that my data will not be published. It merely states: By submitting a response to the consultation, you understand that ACC can use the information provided in this form, including personal data, as part of the review of the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. ACC will not share or disclose any personal data about you to any organization or person unless it is authorized or required to do so by law.

This provides a loop hole wherein you can say you are required to do so by law. I am not sure that is the case.

The proposed restrictions on HMOs are derived from an ongoing campaign driven primarily by the unrepresentative community council in old aberdeen. The percentage of students in the community council area is 70% yet until recently there have been no students on the body. There have never been contested elections to the community council.

The anti student campaign by the old aberdeen community council commenced in 2011 when the HMO legislation was modified to allow limits to be placed on HMOs. The HMO legislation was originally brought in to protect vulnerable people by ensuring an adequate standard of housing. A decade later it was modified because of an unproven belief that those living in HMOs were anti social. HMO legislation specifically includes students. There is no comparable legislation for any form of owner occupied property. There is no evidence that students are any more anti social than the population as a whole. The law is thus discriminatory. How would you like to be told you cannot live in a house but another person can?

The Old Aberdeen Community Council campaign is shown in the newsletters issued twice yearly. The claims against stuentns are false and not supported by evidence. Several consultations were conducted by the City Council as a result of lobbying by the old aberdeen community council. All consultations rejected any proposed HMO restrictions. This has now moved to planning legislation because it is perceived to avoid objections from students because of their lack of awareness of such matters.

There is no need for any HMO restrictions. Firstly they are discriminatory. The justification is baseless. There is no study which shows that the community is not sustainable without intervention. The community has lasted over 500 years of University existence. Why is there a problem now? Because a very very few people have gained control of a statutory body through uncontested elections to pursue an anti student policy despite living next to a University! As one student said: If you don't like seagulls don't live on the coast.

The reasons expounded by the old aberdeen community council are that student pressure to live next to university is driving out 'ordinary' residents - ie people like them: late aged well to do folk. In fact the

reason for what they observe is the same across the UK. Families want to live in the suburbs not inner cities next to busy roads & perceived pollution. Such inner city houses tend to be old and in need of refurbishment and insulation. Work that a family does not want to do. Hence the lack of families means that many inner city schools have closed eg Causeway end. This is nothing to do with students. They merely want to live next to University - a fact that the Council ought to support: It is more efficient having people located close to their workplace. Thus if a house becomes available it will be filled by demand. Since student demand is clear such vacant properties get used by students. Moreover in recent years a lot of property is for sale. So supply is clearly available. If families or others wanted the property they would be able to purchase it. Prices are even below rebuild costs.

However the national government has now introduced additional taxes for those who buy any property which is not for that person to live in. This is discriminatory as it does not apply to bodies which have 10 or more properties eg companies. The consequence is that the long established parental student house purchase has become more onerous. Indeed it makes the 3-4 year purchase lifetime uneconomic - unless it is made in the name of the student who does not yet own a property. Consequently properties which once would have been brought into use after a persons death now lie empty and unused. Properties which student parents are now trying to sell lie unused and on sale for years. So the action by national government which was introduced in order to bring more property available to first time buyers has the unintended consequence that property now lies empty. There are many houses around the university which have been on sale for over 3 years. Hence there is no issue to be resolved by planning restrictions.

If planning restrictions were imposed it would merely exacerbate the current situation. It would remove the only remaining element of the market interested in purchasing property next to the university and property around the university would eventually become derelict. That situation existed in the 1960s and I have photographs to prove it.

