

DRAFT Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Sandown

Ensuring Mixed, Safe, and Sustainable Communities

1. Purpose and Scope

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out how Sandown Town Council proposes to manage the location, density, and quality of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the town, in accordance with the Island Planning Strategy.

While HMOs play a legitimate role in the housing market, the Freedom of Information (FOI) data (July 2025) shows that Sandown and the wider Bay Area host a disproportionate concentration of HMOs compared to other Isle of Wight towns:

Sandown: 7 HMOs for a population of 7,250 (1 HMO per 1,036 residents)
Shanklin: 11 HMOs for a population of 9,188 (1 HMO per 835 residents)
Lake: 2 HMOs for a population of 5,117 (1 HMO per 2,559 residents)
Newport: 13 HMOs for 26,109 residents (1 per 2,008)
Ryde: 13 HMOs for 24,901 residents (1 per 1,915)
Cowes: 3 HMOs for 14,724 residents (1 per 4,908)

This means the Bay Area (Sandown, Shanklin, Lake), with only 20.56% of the Island's population, contains 36.36% of all HMOs. This concentration has led to increased reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB), pressure on local services, and declining amenity for residents. Unlike Portsmouth, where HMOs are predominantly student-led, Sandown's HMOs are occupied mainly by adults, often with complex needs, leading to community tensions, public safety concerns, and reduced housing choice for families.

2. Policy Context and Basis

This SPD supports and amplifies key policies within the Island Planning Strategy:

- Policy DM4: Maintaining Balanced and Mixed Communities – Limiting further HMO growth prevents overconcentration that undermines social cohesion.
- Policy H1: Housing Mix and Affordable Housing – High HMO density reduces availability of family homes, undermining Sandown's long-term housing strategy.

- Policy DM2: Design Quality and Local Character – Clusters of poorly managed HMOs harm neighbouring amenity through noise, waste, and neglect.
- Policy SP2: Sustainable Communities (Health, Inclusion and Wellbeing) – High HMO concentrations correlate with ASB (10.9% of crimes in Sandown and Shanklin are ASB-related).
- Policy SP3: Regeneration and the Economy – Oversupply of HMOs and hotel-to-HMO conversions conflict with Sandown’s regeneration and tourism-led economy.

3. Proposed SPD Mechanisms

3.1 Controls

Density - No new HMOs will be permitted in streets or neighborhoods in areas with greater than 1 per 3,000 residents

Proximity – No new HMOs will be permitted in streets or neighborhoods within a 100m radius of an existing HMO

Clustering - Prevention of HMO clustering (e.g. three or more HMOs in along a street).

3.2 Planning Requirements

- All new HMOs (including small HMOs with 3–4 unrelated individuals) to require planning permission in Sandown.
- Applications must demonstrate:
 - No adverse impact on neighbour amenity (noise, waste, parking).
 - Compliance with space standards for bedrooms and communal areas.
 - Adequate waste storage and off-street bin presentation arrangements.

3.3 Transparency and Oversight

- Creation of a public HMO register for Sandown, allowing residents to track licensed and planning-approved HMOs.
- Clear reporting channels for residents to raise issues.

3.4 Community Balance and Regeneration

- Consider HMO impacts in the context of Sandown’s regeneration strategy, ensuring that residential balance supports economic growth and a healthy town centre.
- Planning assessments to explicitly weigh HMO conversions against the need for family housing and sustainable community growth.

4. Implementation

- This SPD will operate as a material consideration in determining planning applications for HMOs in Sandown.
- Planning Authority Role – Isle of Wight Council will determine applications using the SPD criteria.
- Monitoring – Annual review of HMO concentration, ASB reports, and housing mix in Sandown.
- Collaboration – Ongoing liaison with police, housing, and adult social care services to align housing management with planning policy.

5. Expected Benefits

- Restore balance – Rebalance Sandown’s housing stock to support families, key workers, and sustainable communities.
- Reduce ASB and service strain – Lower the burden on police, health, and social services linked to unmanaged HMOs.
- Support regeneration – Protect Sandown’s image as a tourist destination and community hub.
- Provide clarity – Give developers, landlords, and residents a clear framework for acceptable HMO development.

6. Next Steps

Sandown Town Council will:

1. Endorse this draft SPD proposal.
2. Submit it to the Isle of Wight Council as the Local Planning Authority for adoption.
3. Engage the public and local stakeholders in consultation.