

Introductory Note

For transparency, this document contains a full record of all comments that were submitted on the original Falmouth NDP website (www.planforfalmouth.info). The text of the comments has been copied directly from the old site. No changes have been made to the wording or substance of the comments.

For accessibility, the comments have been reformatted (e.g. layout, headings, and style) so that they are easier to read, but the content remains exactly as it was originally submitted.

These comments represent the views of the individuals who posted them.

Comment

If you would like to tell us about any ideas or concerns you have about the Neighbourhood Plan, or suggestions as to what it might include, that aren't covered in the questionnaire, then please use the Comments form below:

29 thoughts on “Comment”

Kevin Burrows says:

14th April 2015 at 9:54 pm

When are the leaflets and questionnaires going to be delivered?

REPLY

Admin says:

15th April 2015 at 10:23 pm

Hi, the distributors have been delivering for a couple of weeks now. If you don't get it in the next couple of days please let me know and I'll make sure you get one. My number is 07786065245

Colin Pearce says:

11th May 2015 at 11:54 am

As a non-resident but a tourist and motorhome user who likes to visit new places, I wish to comment on the article relating to motorhome parking. I understand full timing or long stay in motorhomes may be causing some problems but I would suggest a ban on these vehicles parking to visit the area would be counterproductive.

I normally use campsites and then visit local attractions unlike a caravan user who can use their car from the campsite I need to use my motorhome as my transport and a ban would have meant being unable to visit and a lack of revenue for local businesses.

Better to perhaps follow the example of places like Lytham St Anne's where certain areas have day time parking but overnight ban. They also provide a large car park for overnighting up to three nights. Some councils even provide road signs directing to these car park. The extra revenue has proved this works and councils who are continuing with this plan

Kevin Burrows says:

21st May 2015 at 7:48 pm

This is a farce. One day to go and still no forms or leaflets in our area. When are the leaflets and questionnaires going to be delivered?

This survey means nothing, most residents don't even know about it. If they don't have Internet access they have no say.

REPLY

Admin says:

23rd May 2015 at 9:02 pm

Mr Burrows, I'm sorry you haven't received a hard copy of the questionnaire. We have had problems with our distributor, who claims to have completed a full distribution, yet we are still receiving information that this is not the case. Please let us know which street you live on, via our email address admin@s04.4ea.myftpupload.com, so that we can investigate.

Kevin Burrows says:

21st May 2015 at 8:16 pm

Just read this: "360 postal questionnaire responses have been received. Our website has had nearly 5,800 hits, with 585 online questionnaire responses". So out of thirty thousand-ish residents less than a thousand responses. Hardly representative.

REPLY

Admin says:

23rd May 2015 at 9:25 pm

Mr Burrows, We now have 788 online response and over 400 who replied by post. So that's about 1,200 responses from an adult population of 18,600. That's statistically sufficient enough for us to have a confidence level greater than 95% that the views of the community are fairly represented. And don't forget, the Plan will have to go through a full local referendum before it can boom part of the planning system, which is a good safeguard against anything unrepresentative getting through.

Sarah Smith says:

2nd June 2016 at 10:46 am

Where can I find the actual number of registered HMO's in Falmouth/Penryn in reference to Article 4?

Surely a St Ives style referendum regarding "Full-Time Principal Residence Housing" would be more effective whereby there will be a legal requirement to ensure that all new housing in the area is for principal residence., with the owners' status checked against the electoral roll and doctors' registers. While out-of-towners will still be able to buy second-hand houses as second homes or holiday lets, all newly built property will be reserved exclusively for the locals. Is this being developed in the wider neighbourhood plan?

REPLY

Admin says:

2nd June 2016 at 11:37 am

Hi Sarah. In September 2015 there were 125 properties in Falmouth licensed as HMOs under the mandatory system. However, many other HMOs could fall into the 'small' HMO category which are exempt from Mandatory licensing. In January 2015 there was a count which identified 153 unlicensed HMOs. Against the total of 278 licensed and unlicensed HMOS, there were 245 council tax exempted properties registered on the basis of student eligibility, which indicates there are probably more HMOs that were not identified at the time. As part of our Neighbourhood Plan work we will be updating this information and looking for additional sources of data. We do not have data for Penryn, as it is outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan area.

We think the St Ives approach is interesting but note that it only applies to new properties, so would have no impact on conversions of existing dwellings to HMOs, and the knock-on impacts from that, which is the nub of the issue being tackled. However it may be a useful way of balancing the new housing market for the benefit of local people, so it is something that will be examined.

REPLY

Sarah Smith says:

2nd June 2016 at 12:41 pm

Thank you for your swift response and the information is very useful. Does that mean that Article 4 can only be utilised to make an impact on licensed HMO's? Are amendments being made to consider the small HMO category within Article 4 as I can only imagine that the real problem lies here?

REPLY

Admin says:

2nd June 2016 at 1:56 pm

No, the A4D will cover all HMOs. It is currently only the larger HMOs which require Planning Permission (most of which also require licensing). This means that the HMOs which are smaller escape both licensing and planning control. Most of the older dwelling stock in Falmouth is two-storey and/or small, so conversion to HMO is largely uncontrolled. The effect of the A4D will be to require formal planning permission to convert these smaller dwellings, thus bringing them under planning control. We can then build planning policies into the Neighbourhood Plan which can be used by the Planners to exercise that control (over both the larger and smaller HMOs). These could be in the form of a reasonable limit on the percentage of HMOs in any particular area, and a set of criteria giving guidance on what the issues of HMO impact are and how they

might be considered/controlled. We are looking at the possibility of incorporating a 'Good Practice Guide for HMOs' into the Neighbourhood Plan as well. These measures would work alongside mandatory licensing to give a more complete set of management tools. I hope that helps to explain the position. Please come back if you have any more queries.

Sarah Smith says:

6th June 2016 at 4:49 pm

Hi, just a thought will the A4D have to consider all house shares? Wont this affect and be detrimental to an enormous amount of people, largely the under 35's, who have to rent a room in a shared house, particularly in Falmouth, because they cannot afford anything else? If these people are affected then I can only imagine that a lot of people could be made homeless by their landlords, as they will not want to comply, and will have to move out of the area because even as a professional they cannot afford to rent their own flat in this area. Does tackling all HMO's ultimately lead to more homelessness and affordability issues for single people who can only afford to rent a room? Let's face it, if you are under 35 and without employment, the government expect you to live in a shared room and will only pay the shared room rate. Even with a full time wage, most single people under the age of 35 can only afford a room in a house-share. Less shared accommodation for students and non students means more homelessness perhaps?

REPLY

Admin says:

6th July 2016 at 5:41 pm

Hi Sarah, sorry for delay in replying. A lot has been happening on these issues! Looking at what you say, I'd venture to say it is not quite like you suggest. The A4D isn't retrospective, so existing landlords won't have to comply. Furthermore,

a house where a couple who rent out a room to one other person won't be an HMO. Therefore, I don't expect the A4D will lead to many existing tenants being forced out. However, it is true that local young people already struggle in the private rented sector because the number of students seeking HMOs has driven up rents. Controlling the supply of additional HMOs in the face of increasing student demand might make this worse, but it will achieve the aim of preserving the proper community balance and managing impacts. Ultimately the solution lies in finding accommodation for the student growth elsewhere, i.e. on the Campus or in purpose-built accommodation in appropriate and acceptable locations.

Mike says:

26th July 2016 at 11:37 am

Hi Sara this is not in the plan but it should be. The plan does not really address affordable homes for Falmouth or the issue of second homes. I have spoken to the mayor of St Ives and theirs seems to be a plan for all the community. 1300 people responding to neighbourhood plan in Falmouth is not representative of the people of Falmouth.

REPLY

Admin says:

26th July 2016 at 8:17 pm

Hi. Actually the Falmouth Neighbourhood Plan isn't written yet – the team are doing that now – so it's a bit premature to say that affordable housing will not be addressed in it. We will be looking at the local evidence and seeing if there is anything further that can be usefully included that adds to the already quite strong affordable housing policies in the emerging Cornwall Local Plan. As to the response to our survey, 1308 responses from 9509 households is a response rate of 13.8%, which compares reasonably with St Ives, where the figures for

their survey were 1041 from 7000, or 14.9%. Statistically speaking, we calculate that our response size is sufficient for the answers to be 'statistically significant'.

Zac kohen says:

3rd June 2016 at 9:27 pm

I have mixed feelings on this subject because of single individuals who can't afford to live in their own home but share a property which would require a licence on one hand and if in the event of changing back to a family rental the licence would have to change. In this current climate young people would not be able to secure a dwelling because of all these new restrictions, landlords would be required by law to either house either one or the other which would reduce the availability even more

REPLY

Admin says:

6th July 2016 at 5:47 pm

Zac, please see my reply to Sarah. Hopefully that clears up your concern?

Sarah Smith says:

6th July 2016 at 7:26 pm

Not really helpful then for local people who can only afford to live in a room in a house share then and only forces younger people to move out of the area still. The area has become unliveable and unaffordable for locals because it's a desirable area to live with only the rich buying property to invest in or as second homes. Rents and house prices have risen because of holiday homes and second homes as well not just because of students, everyone seems to be forgetting that and not addressing that issue at all. Thanks for your response though. Shame the plan won't help younger people live in the area they grew up

in. Restricting HMO's won't bring house or rental prices down, infact those larger houses that can no longer operate without constraint will merely be at the mercy of wealthier people on London wages who can buy or rent the property outright. Houseshare are the only thing allowing local younger professionals to remain working and living in the area. Many Thanks.

Kevin Burrows says:

4th January 2017 at 10:59 pm

Please can you tell me where I can find the results of the questionnaire?

REPLY

Admin says:

5th January 2017 at 10:54 am

Hi please find the presentation here: <https://planforfalmouth.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FNP-Survey-Presentation-1015.pdf>

This is an overview, and the data can be more closely interrogated if there is a particular line of inquiry in which you are interested.

Gem says:

14th February 2017 at 3:49 pm

Approaching this from a local resident's view and the view of a professional working in the housing sector in Falmouth, the following questions need to be answered after months of trying!

We have been petitioning the Council for some time now for further information regarding the Article 4 Directive. We have also been along to the Drop-in session on the Moor on Saturday afternoon but they couldn't really answer any of our

questions and just told us that Article 4 is happening basically and to comment on the online plan, so here we are!

How will Article 4 affect properties that historically are holiday let or owner occupied through the summer and then student let 10 months of the year?

How will Article 4 affect a property that has a HMO licence but is used for holiday let / owner occupied during the summer months but student let for 10 months.

How long can a property with existing HMO use be left empty for renovation works etc before reverting if at all to C3 use.

The control of HMO's using Article 4 will affect available accommodation for non-students and local companies that rent small HMO's. There are a number of local companies that rent small HMO to house their workers and groups of professional workers that rent a house together as a way of affording local housing or saving for deposits etc. The restriction could influence local businesses and could lead to an increase in 'sofa surfing' and in some extreme cases rough sleeping. How will the planning policy meet the needs of these groups of people?

Are the residents/homeowners aware of the likely impact Article 4 may have on residential house prices, especially in heavily populated student areas. Some Article 4 cities have reported a 20% decrease in residential property prices.

How long can a property be empty i.e: for refurbishment where existing established HMO use already exists before it would not count as a C4.

How will the Council/Town monitor unlicensed/smaller HMO's?

REPLY

Admin says:

16th February 2017 at 11:26 pm

Hi, and thank you for your enquiries. These are questions that need a response from Cornwall Council so I have asked that Council's Community Liaison Officer to investigate and respond. I will post the reply as soon as it is available.

REPLY

Admin says:

20th February 2017 at 10:38 am

Hi, and thank you for your enquiries. These are questions that need a response from Cornwall Council so I have asked that Council's Community Liaison Officer to investigate and respond. I will post the reply as soon as it is available.

REPLY

Admin says:

22nd February 2017 at 1:30 pm

I have received the following response from Cornwall Council:

1) How will Article 4 affect properties that historically are holiday let or owner occupied through the summer and then student let 10 months of the year?

2) How will Article 4 affect a property that has a HMO licence but is used for holiday let / owner occupied during the summer months but student let for 10 months.

The Article 4 only affects new uses, existing premises can apply for a certificate of lawful use if they wish to have proof of their existing use

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-advice-and-guidance/lawful-development-certificates/>

3) How long can a property with existing HMO use be left empty for renovation works etc before reverting if at all to C3 use. Professional planning advice should be sought for any premises in this situation to establish the lawful use of the premises and to avoid the loss of that lawful use.

4) The control of HMO's using Article 4 will affect available accommodation for non-students and local companies that rent small HMO's. There are a number of local companies that rent small HMO to house their workers and also groups of

professional workers that rent a house together as a way of affording local housing or saving for deposits etc. The restriction could have an effect on local businesses and could lead to an increase in 'sofa surfing' and in some extreme cases rough sleeping. How will the planning policy meet the needs of these groups of people?

The policy does not apply retrospectively. The local plan seeks to provide alternative student accommodation thereby freeing up existing HMOs to meet the needs of the wider population.

5) Are the local residents/homeowners aware of the likely impact Article 4 may have on residential house prices, especially in heavily populated student areas. Some Article 4 cities have reported a 20% decrease in residential property prices.

Because there are a range of factors affecting property prices it is impossible to make specific comments on property values. Arguments have also been made about an uplift in values as a consequence of a direction.

6) How long can a property be empty i.e: for refurbishment where existing established HMO use already exists before it would not count as a C4.

The question relates to whether the existing use is abandoned or not (similar to the question asked above) expert advice should be sought to ensure the existing use is recorded protect any existing use rights. However, a properties use isn't usually abandoned when it undergoes a short period of building works.

7)How will the Council/Town monitor unlicensed/smaller HMO's

Any new HMOs reported to the Council will be investigated by the enforcement team <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/enforcement/report-a-breach-of-planning-control/>

Martin Dalton says:

17th February 2017 at 12:52 pm

In my opinion this plan is seriously flawed because sites within the town have been identified as 'possible Student accommodation'. Once this plan is adopted it will be impossible for the council to object to any student accommodation

development proposals in these locations as they will form part of the accepted plan. Is this what the council really want to happen? Will they say " Sorry our hands are tied, it is in the plan and the public did not object!" It was significant that it was ONLY the plan references to the possible student blocks that was omitted from the large display boards presenting the proposals at the public viewing venues! Throughout the plan there are so many references to maintaining the historical character of Falmouth and maintaining community cohesion and yet the plan as it stands would allow huge, high density purpose built student blocks right within the very area where the plan also says it will restrict the continued growth of HMO conversions. Falmouth knows only too well how damaging large concentrations of student residences have been to the community. How can the Council justify this inclusion? Surely it is not thought that large blocks of students will have less impact than scattered HMOs and smaller student houses! The plan also suggests some of the identified car park sites will be suitable for mixed accommodation, where students and local-needs residents can have purpose built homes provided. Who would choose to buy or rent in such a development? Apart from Landlords of course! The reason why huge areas of Falmouth have become 'student land' is because local residents have moved out to avoid the disruption caused and landlords have happily bought the vacant houses. If mixed developments are built it will not be long before all the properties are in the hands of landlords and the most likely tenants will be students. If private landlords own the properties, any restrictions envisaged by the Council, such as limiting to students only, will be void and homes will then become available to the lucrative summer holiday-lets market, which is likely to have a knock-on effect on small hotels and B&B businesses which, if they become uneconomic, will then only be affordable as HMO developments.

Please think again and remove the inclusion of any possible student accommodation from the plan.

This would protect Falmouth from irreparable damage to both community cohesion and developments that are not in the character of our beautiful historic town, whilst also forcing the University to allow developers to build accommodation on campus where it really should be!

REPLY

Admin says:

20th February 2017 at 10:41 am

Hi and thank you for your comments. Along with the many others made, I will ensure that it is considered by the Stakeholder Group and Town Council when they meet to consider the changes to the Plan that need to be made in the light of consultation feedback. Please watch out for announcements.

REPLY

Admin says:

10th August 2021 at 9:00 pm

The final version of the Plan, now going to referendum, no longer proposes student accommodation, and restates the Cornwall Council Local Plan Sites Allocation Document that no more purpose built accommodation should be provided in the town, beyond current planing permissions.

Chris Snell says:

10th August 2021 at 12:53 pm

We live in a block of purpose-built residential flats the lease of which specifies: "... not to carry on there any trade or business ... but to use the same for the purposes of a single private residence only". Three flats are registered on a gov.uk website as businesses (Furnished Holiday Lets – FHL) and one pending. The residents' association is legally challenging it. My point is two of these have already posed a serious risk. One – no exaggeration – a Grenfell Tower type risk in that an escape of gas was not detected until it penetrated the stairwell of the four/five storey building. The other, a handle on a fire door broken off by an unsupervised child, of a holiday maker, swinging on it. The absentee owners – by that very definition – do not monitor any of the comings and goings of clients, trade workmen or other personnel associated with their FHL. These FHLs decrease the properties available to local families either to rent or buy. Also

these absentee owners are claiming Small Business Rate Relief which we as taxpayers are subsidizing – financial fraud(?)/malpractice(?).

REPLY

Admin says:

10th August 2021 at 9:12 pm

A worrying situation for you and fellow residents. Unfortunately, the Neighbourhood Plan can only legally be concerned with town planning matters, and not property law, so it cannot be of help to you. Neither can the Plan do anything to prevent future similar situations from arising. Have you reported the situation to CC local taxation team, they may be able to assist?