

## STATEMENT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

**LOCATION: 85 Ruby Street, Bristol BS3 3DW -REFERENCE NO: 22/06070/F**

I write on behalf of the applicant Mr James Bessell, in support of the above application, which is recommended for approval by officers. Since the application was submitted in December 2022, the house has been issued with an HMO licence for 5 people, and is now occupied as such. Whilst it was not my client's intention to commence use until permission had been secured, we were first informed in September 2023 that the application would be recommended for approval, however it has taken another year for this application to reach committee, some 21 months after it was first submitted. The applicant therefore recently took the decision to occupy the property, as he could simply not afford for it to sit empty any longer, the building works having been completed (under permitted development) several months ago. The following addresses points made by local residents.

Parking - The house is now occupied, and it should be noted that none of the occupants have cars, and so are not adding to parking pressures in the area. This is unsurprising as shared housing occupants are three times less likely to own cars than family-occupied dwellings. A survey for Bath and Northeast Somerset Council in 2020 found that the average car ownership for shared housing in Bath was 0.9 cars per dwelling (not per room). In any case, the occupants are not eligible for parking permits.

Standard of accommodation - The property meets all the licensing space standard requirements, as evidenced by the recently issued HMO licence, and provides a high standard of accommodation in a highly sustainable location.

Loss of family housing – The vast majority of houses in the neighbourhood area (94%) are occupied by families or individuals. Most people under 35 cannot afford to buy a house or rent one individually, and therefore shared housing is their only option. The “City of Bristol Local Housing Needs Assessment Report of Findings” (November 2023), predicts that, for the period 2020-2040, single person households will represent almost a third of the overall household growth (15,000, 32%), couples without dependent children will represent almost a further third of the growth (13,600, 29%), whilst families with dependent children will make up approximately one fifth of the overall household growth (9,000, 19%). Pertinent to the application, the need for shared households (9,400, 20%) exceeds that for families with children. This gives further weight to the need for shared accommodation in the city, particularly in areas where numbers are generally low. Failure to provide this accommodation in the right locations will only drive up rents in Bristol, which are already the highest anywhere outside London.

Bin and bike storage – bins will be stored in the front forecourt (like for every other property in the street), and bikes in the back garden. Several recent appeal decisions have confirmed that it is acceptable to carry bikes through the house in terraced streets where this is the only option.

Summary – we ask that Councillors support this application, which will provide accommodation for five young people who otherwise would remain living at home or sleeping on friends couches whilst they look for suitable accommodation.