

I am writing on behalf of myself, Councillor Becky Chambers and Councillor Angela Gartside, in response to planning application 136551/FO/2023, for retention of use of former Hotel (C1) as Temporary Living Accommodation for Single Homeless People (Sui Generis) at 393 Wilmslow Road (commonly known as the Ram's Lodge).

This site started use as temporary accommodation in 2020, as part of the government-sponsored "Everyone In" initiative during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, we have often had contact from local residents raising concerns about antisocial behaviour. We have met with the management team at the Ram's Lodge, as well as with the Deputy Leader with responsibility for Homelessness, to share these concerns. We have also linked up local residents with the management team so that they can speak to them directly. This has helped to dispel some misconceptions about the Ram's Lodge, as not all antisocial behaviour occurring in the area originates from residents staying there. Nevertheless, we are aware that there is opposition from residents' groups to the continued use of this site as temporary homeless accommodation.

Fallowfield Lodge, located on the other side of Wilmslow Road, is also being used as temporary homeless accommodation. We therefore recognise the huge challenges and pressures facing the local area. However, we also recognise that there is a huge shortage of accommodation for people across Manchester. The Council's long-term aspiration is to have specifically tailored accommodation for those experiencing homelessness. This is an aspiration we fully support. However, in the meantime, we recognise that there is a need to make use of what resources are available to support the most vulnerable in the city.

Therefore, we do not oppose this application. However, we are asking that a number of conditions are attached should the application be granted. We believe these conditions are necessary to ensure that the Ram's Lodge is properly managed, and that there is full and constructive work with the local community, and with relevant individuals and agencies.

Our conditions are as follows:

- 1) That the Ram's Lodge continues to be staffed 24 hours a day, every day;
- 2) That there is comprehensive CCTV provision, particularly facing on to Mitford Road where there have been repeated reports from residents of drug-dealing;
- 3) That there is continued dialogue between the management team at the Ram's Lodge and local residents;
- 4) That there is also be joined-up work, and dialogue, between the management team at the Ram's Lodge and local councillors, the Neighbourhoods team, the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Action Team, and Greater Manchester Police;
- 5) That this joined-up work and dialogue should include notification of any incidents that occur in relation to residents at Ram's Lodge;
- 6) In addition, that the management team works closely with local businesses, and in particular those businesses that sell alcohol as part of their offer. Recently, an alcohol licence was granted to the Londis outlet at the Shell petrol station at 377-385 Wilmslow Road. This was of concern to us, to local residents, and to the Council's Licensing team,

due to the outlet's proximity to the Ram's Lodge, and resulted in objections from all three parties. The licence was nonetheless granted with conditions. We would therefore want to see close work between the management team at Ram's Lodge and the manager of the Londis outlet. A number of those who are temporarily housed at Ram's Lodge have long-standing substance issues.

This is an extremely difficult planning application for us. As a matter of principle, we cannot oppose any move to guarantee accommodation for some of the most vulnerable members of society. However, we also cannot ignore the tensions that have arisen in the local community in the last few years. We hope that, with the above conditions in place, a balance can be struck to ensure that staff at the Ram's Lodge do necessary work in giving accommodation and support to those who need it, whilst also safeguarding the community as a whole.

Councillors Chris Wills
Withington Ward