

Agenda HRA Committee Meeting Tuesday 7 October 2025

Highfield Church Halls 19:00h



Annex i. Chair's spoken submission OSMC 5b

Annex.ii. Agreed Recommendations following the OSMC Meeting 5b

Annex.iii. Councillor Finn full report 6a

Annex iv. HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group Report 8a

Annex v. Shop lifting in Boots – HRA member report 8b

Annex.vi. Planning 25/00862/FUL 256 Burgess Road -extract from Officer's Report 9b

Annex.vii. Digital Communications Report 10c

Prof. Roger Brown will chair the meeting

1. Welcome: Introductions (introduce Sonia Cottrell Chief Executive SUSU and Gagandeep Bedi, the recently appointed Associate Director for Corporate Engagement SU)
2. Apologies:
3. Declarations of interest
4. Approval of the Minutes: 16 September Committee Meeting
5. Matters Arising, not covered elsewhere
 - a. Steering Group letter (attached .pdf)
 - b. OSMC Meeting (Annex.i. Chair's spoken submission; Annex.ii. Agreed Recommendations)
 - c. ASB Meeting arranged with Cllr Allen
6. Information from Councillors
 - a. Councillor Finn (Annex.iii.): Student Residences; Parking in Oakmount Triangle; Traffic calming in Brookvale Road; Westwood Road bus; Clean Air outside schools
 - b. Councillor Barbour
 - c. Councillor Savage
7. University Liaison
 - a. Students and the beginning of term (SC)
 - b. University Accommodation Avenue Campus – revised plans:
<https://uos.your-feedback.co.uk/our-proposals/>
[Research document \(background\)](#) (Ed Hill)
8. HRA Crime WhatsApp group for Highfield (NJ)
 - a. Report (Annex iv.)
 - b. Shoplifting in Boots – HRA member report (Annex.v.)
9. Planning
 - a. 25/01165/ELDC - 53 Roselands Gardens Southampton SO17 1QJ
 - b. 25/00862/FUL | Change of use from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a house in multiple occupation (HMO, Class C4) | 256 Burgess Road Southampton SO16 3AU. **Planning Refused** (Annex.vi.)

10. Reports

- a. Finance (MB) – income/expenditure for the last period
- b. Membership (NM) - renewals; new members; not renewed
- c. Digital Communications (NJ) Report (Annex.vii.)

11. A.O.B.

- a. Next meeting AGM Wednesday 11 November 2025 (49th)
- b. Tree replacement Donnington Grove
- c. Autumn Newsletter
- d. HRA Hosted Open Studios event (MB)

End of Committee Meeting

Next meeting 11 November AGM

12. Reserved Business Committee Only

- a. AGM Preparation – outline Agenda and Financial Statement attached (Cttee Members only)
- b. Financial Report (to follow for Committee Members)

5b. Annex.i. HRA Scrutiny Panel Spoken Submission Prof. Roger Brown

Thank you for allowing me to address the Panel and for circulating and considering the HRA paper.

I speak from the unenviable position of being both Chair of HRA and also, in an independent capacity, Chair of the Steering Group advising on the implementation of the scheme.

I had a colleague once who always advised that you should never say 'I told you so'. Well this is an 'I told you so' moment.

I should explain that HRA did not oppose the scheme but we did express scepticism about it. That scepticism has been borne out by events.

The officer's report gives a clear account of the difficulties that led to the decision to pause the scheme but if anything it understates them.

The objectives were never clear and indeed the Steering Group worked with the officers to produce appropriate performance indicators and measures. There was never any proper risk assessment or, if there was one, it has never been published. From the start, the claimed benefits were constantly reiterated whilst the potential detriments and loss of amenity were underplayed. The stock of available social capital – in terms of local knowledge and expertise – was never fully exploited. There were a number of communications problems and these have continued to this day. We only heard that the Panel was meeting today to discuss the project by accident and there has still been no statement of the Council's intentions for the project and the Steering Group in spite of repeated reminders over the summer.

The report only deals with part of the legacy of the project. There was of course the waste of a million pounds of public money at a time when public resources are under severe pressure. But there is more traffic in local residential streets than there was before the trial. The trial has certainly contributed to the stream of local businesses closing. Above all, there has been a considerable loss of trust in the Council which will take some while to rebuild.

HRA therefore hopes that the Panel and the Cabinet member will take seriously the recommendations in our paper.

In spite of all this, HRA remains keen to work with the Council to improve the Broadway and the surrounding area. In this context I would make two final points.

First, the Council would in my view be very unwise to proceed with another such scheme without at first having a proper plan for arresting the decline of the Broadway as an important District Centre.

Second, whilst the attractions of physical changes are understandable, any such changes will only work if the resources and the determination are available to make them work, and in particular to properly enforce things like parking restrictions and 20 mph zones. HRA has always maintained that much of what the scheme was trying to achieve could have been achieved through better enforcement, and this remains our view.

Thank you for listening to me.

RB

5b. Annex.ii.

The agreed recommendations from the Portswood Broadway discussion 18 September OSMC meeting:

1. That, moving forward, clear lessons are learnt from the Portswood Broadway Scheme, that will improve the Council's approach to communicating and engaging with local communities.
2. That, reflecting concerns raised by residents about the inability to state 'none of the above' when consulted on scheme options, the Council reviews how it designs surveys and questionnaires
3. That, whilst recognising the data limitations as a result of the premature ending of the bus-gate pilot, to help inform future initiatives a more detailed report, to be shared with the Committee, is developed on the Portswood Broadway scheme. The following areas of additional focus were requested:
 - The impact on Portswood Broadway businesses
 - The impact on pollution and traffic flows
 - The impact on bus journey times
 - The impact on road safety
 - The impact of the Active Travel Zone
4. That the principle of improving journey times for all transport modes is included within the criteria for determining future TCF schemes for the Eastleigh to Southampton corridor.
5. That the proposed future TCF schemes for the Eastleigh to Southampton corridor are considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee prior to determination by the decision maker
6. That the composition of the Steering Group is reviewed to reflect the extended geography of the programme along the Eastleigh to Southampton corridor

The Executive's response to the recommendations will be published with the Monitoring report when the [23 October](#) Agenda is published.

Mark Pirnie
Scrutiny Manager
Legal & Governance
Chief Executive's Office
Southampton City Council

6a. Annex.iii. Councillor Finn HRA Report October 2025- Issues relating to Highfield.

1. Student residences. Thanks for copying me in on information about the student development proposed on the Avenue Campus. I plan to attend the drop in at the Turner Sims to understand what they are proposing and have already been hearing from residents that they are very unhappy about this. On a similar issue, the developers of the proposed project at the Iceland site have invited John and myself to a Teams call as they have made changes to their proposal. They will also be getting in touch with local groups soon and I don't know as yet whether what they are suggesting will alter our objections or not.
2. Parking in Oakmount Triangle. I have been approached by a resident who is asking for parking permits in Oakmount Triangle. I suggested she talk with OTRA but she said Pete Thomas is no longer the Chair. I have agreed to give her information about this process but it would also be good to know who I should ask her to contact in OTRA. She is finding that parking is very hard and thinks this relates to students parking even before a new development happens.
3. I have continued to chase up the start of the consultation on the traffic calming in Brookvale Rd and have asked for a meeting with the cabinet member and officers on the subject. I will let you know as soon as I hear.
4. I have been talking with residents on Westwood Rd ahead of the bus partnership meeting about there being no buses on Westwood Rd. I have tried asking for the U1A to alternate between Winn Rd and Westwood Rd before with no luck. Some residents have been to the surgery and asked about this but other people living on the road like it being quiet and bus free. It is usually older people in the middle of Westwood who struggle as it is a long way to the end of the roads to catch a bus. I will enquire with Blue Star whether a once an hour bus would be possible or even better, if we can make use of the hopper bus suggestion and have bus deserts like Westwood Rd and upper Highfield Lane served by a minibus to get them into Portswood. We can only keep pushing....
5. There was a deputation on Clean Air and engine idling outside schools at Full Council. Highfield school has already been working on this theme and the clean air/safe school streets team have approached Portswood school to be involved in their schemes. John is also taking some actions related to this via his Cabinet brief so I will let him report on those.

8a. Annex. iv. HRA Crime information sharing WhatsApp Group

1. Reported incidents since the last HRA Committee Meeting of 16 September - (4)

There have been 4 reported incidents since the last HRA Committee Meeting on 16 September. This is a decrease of 34 incidents since the previous period. However, the previous period covered 2 and a half months (from 1 July to 16 September) compared with approximately 3 weeks now.

(i) Anti-social behaviour incidents in Portswood Broadway - (1):

- Man was shoplifting at Boots, Portswood, putting items into his rucksack. An alarm went off telling everyone they were being visually recorded. This goes off whenever a suspect shoplifter is seen in the shop. The alarm connects to a national centre where every Boots store is monitored for theft. Boots staff have been told that they must not intercept anyone who might be stealing. The man filled his rucksack and left.

(ii) Incidents reported away from Portswood Broadway - (3)

- Car was broken into and items taken - Richmond Gardens;
- Abandoned bike - Cranford Way, off Highfield Lane;
- Wild, noisy student party with anti-social behaviour - corner of Hartley Road and Welbeck Avenue.

All crime and anti-social behaviour incidents are listed here: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/crime-incidents/>

2. Community updates from Portswood Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) on the anti-immigration protests outside the Highfield House Hotel

I continue to receive Key Information Community Network updates from the Portswood Neighbourhood Policing Team. These are often once a week sent to us by Inspector Maidment or A/Inspector Richards. They continue to be posted on the News page of the HRA website: <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/news/>

Nadine Johnson
Digital Communications

8b. Annex.v. Shoplifting in Boots, correspondence from HRA member

Hello Barbara

It has been a while since you heard from me and I am back in touch about something that I know lots of local residents have commented upon - anti-social behaviour in Portswood. I cannot remember if there is a particular link or website where we are supposed to report incidents?

Today my husband and I went to Boots in Portswood at 11am for our flu jabs. Just before we arrived, apparently 2 people came in and stole lots of items from the shelves. Whilst we were waiting for the pharmacist a man came into the shop with a rucksack which he filled with 8 -10 items from the shelves. My husband confronted him about his stealing to which the response was that he wasn't 'stealing from the staff but from Boots'. An alarm went off that informed us all that we were now being visually recorded; the alarm is set off whenever a shoplifter is seen in the shop. The alarm connects to a national centre where every Boots store is monitored for theft! The staff have been told by Boots that they must not intercept any individual stealing from the shop. Anyway, the man finished filling his rucksack despite my husband's best efforts to stop him (without any physical contact) and then left. According to the staff in Boots they have 14 - 15 incidents of shoplifting by the same people each day. The police usually arrive hours after any reported event and cannot do anything.

The reason for highlighting this is that without a solution shops will stop selling goods in Portswood. Private owners could not afford this level of theft and I imagine that companies like Boots will eventually choose to move elsewhere or will stop dealing in anything other than prescriptions thus diminishing yet further the local facilities. I am now beginning to understand why Portswood replaces each empty shop with a food outlet which will not be attractive to shoplifters. Sadly, we can look forward to another empty unit with the bridal shop leaving before much more time goes by.

Sadly yours

SS

Annex.vi. 9b 25/00862/FUL 256 Burgess Road Extract Delegated Report

HMO Threshold Assessment

In March 2011 the Council made an Article 4 Direction that removed permitted development rights to change the use of a C3 dwelling-house to a C4 “House in Multiple Occupation” (“HMO”). The Article 4 Direction did not come into effect immediately. In March 2012 the Article 4 Direction became effective.

There is still a need for HMO accommodation in the city but nonetheless it is very important to protect areas of the city from an overconcentration of HMO accommodation.

The Development Plan explains, amongst other things, that:

In order to meet the projected supply of housing residential development will be permitted through, amongst other ways, the conversion, where appropriate of existing dwellings.

Planning permission will only be granted for conversions to HMOs where the criterion in Policy H4 are met.

The Council understands in some areas a concentration of houses which are shared has led to social and environmental problems as balanced residential communities have been eroded.

The Council will provide a mix of housing types and more sustainable and balanced communities through the control of HMOs, particularly those properties which provide accommodation for students.

In response to concerns about the concentration of student accommodation within parts of the city, the Council will work in partnership with universities and developers, to assist in the provision of suitable, affordable accommodation for students to relieve the pressure on local housing markets. The Council will also consider other forms of control such as areas of restraint and setting thresholds for HMOs where appropriate. This might include action in areas of the city where there are concentrations of HMOs and where further sub-division of family homes could badly affect the character and balance of the neighbourhood.

Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document advises that HMOs provide much-needed housing accommodation. However, a large number of HMOs in one area can change the physical character of that residential area and this can lead to conflict with the existing community.

The Council formally consulted on the SPD. One of the aims of the SPG is to reduce the impact of HMOs on established communities. The SPD’s aims were supported by over 90% of persons responding to the consultation exercise carried out before the SPD was adopted.

The main changes in the SPD from the earlier version adopted in March 2012 are:

- To apply a consistent 10% threshold throughout the city,
- To address the issue of ‘sandwiching’ where a residential property is sandwiched between two HMOs, and
- To clarify the policy on exceptional circumstances.

The exceptional circumstances explain that where 80% of existing properties surrounding a site where planning permission is sought to change the use from C3 to a HMO, the applicant should submit a supporting statement with the planning application to demonstrate that there is no reasonable demand for the existing residential property to continue as a C3 use. No reasonable demand would be demonstrated by a period of

at least six months on the property market offered at a reasonable price (based on an assessment of the property market in the local area) or rental level to be verified in writing by a qualified person in a relevant profession such as estate agent.

Planning permission will not be granted to change the use of a C3 dwelling-house to an HMO where:

- i) The proportion of dwellings in an HMO use (within a specified radius of the application site) would exceed 10% of the total number of dwellings, or
- ii) The change of use would result in any C3 residential property being 'sandwiched' between two HMOs.

The proposal would not result in a neighbouring C3 residential dwelling being sandwiched between to HMO's

Where the 10% threshold has already been breached, planning permission will only be granted in the exceptional circumstances explained above.

The HMO SPD states at paragraph 4.1.1 that the Council will calculate the number of HMOs in an area and that the applicant should undertake their own assessment and provide supporting data.

The HMO SPD advises that applicants should undertake their own assessment of the number of HMO's within the vicinity of the application site. No evidence has been submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that this has been undertaken.

The Council has undertaken its own assessment. Following an investigation of the Council's Planning, Council Tax, and HMO Licensing records, for properties within the 40m radius surrounding the application site, it has been found that the 10% threshold has already been breached:

Percentage of properties that are HMOs as existing:	21%
Percentage of properties that are HMOs as proposed:	29%

The proposal would, therefore, exceed the threshold of 10% that seeks to protect against the saturation of HMOs in an area, but fall short of the 80% exception threshold.

Mak Taylor Planning officer

Planning Refused 01.Unsustainable mix and balance of households
02.Parking Layout

10.c. Annex.vii. Digital Communications

Facebook/Website

There are 1180 followers on the HRA Facebook page. This is unchanged since the meeting of 16 September 2025.

Thank you to two HRA Members and Barbara for photos and news items.

Local News

One of the shop units vacated on 28 September by Brides of Southampton is 'under offer'.

Croma Locksmiths have now moved from Portswood to merge with Shirley Croma Locksmiths.

Atlantic Cleaners are closing at the end of November 2025 and they will not be relocating.

Nadine Johnson
Digital Communications