



Contact:
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Rt Hon. Shabana Mahmood MP
Home Secretary
By email

Dear Home Secretary,

I am writing regarding the governments asylum dispersal policy which is creating community tension, unrest and concern in our Borough. Whilst the national context and pressure is understood the current policy of securing properties via Serco in communities is divisive and creating fear. The council's role as community leader has been significantly undermined as residents believe that the council works with Serco in the identification of properties and placement of occupants. There needs to more transparency and honesty about the consultation that takes place with councils at the start of the procurement process and the fact that the grounds on which a council can object against a procurement are so narrow that it renders any influence virtually impossible .

This council has made a statement back to Serco on each proposed property to be procured to say we **do not agree** due to housing pressures and community cohesion concerns, **but this is ignored**. I have seen in other areas Serco using this consultation process to imply that councils have a say and are involved – this is incorrect and is **passing responsibility onto councils who have no jurisdiction on this policy**.

Communities are increasingly able to identify Serco-procured properties online due to the scale of works taking place to convert them into HMOs, and because multiple acquisitions are being made within the same neighbourhoods. This level of visibility and the pattern of clustering demonstrates a dispersal model that is ill-conceived and poorly managed, with little consideration for local context, cumulative impact, or the pressures facing host communities. **As a result, community tensions are rising, and the ease with which these properties can be identified means they are at growing risk of becoming focal points for unrest.**

Recent events in this borough, including inflammatory social media posts, the circulation of a petition aimed at stopping Serco acquisitions, and an emerging narrative that links these properties to wider public safety concerns illustrate how quickly community sentiment can escalate when the dispersal model lacks transparency and appropriate safeguards. The combination of heightened anxiety, visible property conversions and a dispersal process that offers councils virtually no role or influence is creating a volatile situation that demands **urgent** attention.

This is not a reflection on those who may ultimately be accommodated, but on a delivery model that is driving division, undermining community confidence, and placing councils in an untenable position where responsibility is implied but no authority or influence exists.

I therefore call on the Home Office to stop any procurement of properties in this borough, including those underway and those in the pipeline. I also request an urgent meeting with myself and senior council officers to discuss how residents' concerns will be addressed and how the Council's position as community leader will be restored through a more transparent, collaborative, and properly managed approach.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart Bray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Councillor Stuart Bray

Leader of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council