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Wandsworth Council to Convert New Tooting Hotel Into Temporary Housing Before Opening

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A newly built four-star hotel in Tooting is set to be converted into temporary accommodation just before its official launch, sparking concerns over transparency and the future use of commercial properties across London. The hotel, developed by the London Hotel Group (LHG), had initially been approved to support visitors to St George's Hospital, business travelers, and local families. That purpose now appears to be shifting before a single guest has checked in.

The hotel was granted planning permission by Wandsworth Council following a public consultation, where it was pitched as a commercial hospitality asset. However, at a

council meeting held last night, members were expected to greenlight a proposal to lease the entire building for use as temporary accommodation for vulnerable residents, including homeless individuals and possibly migrants with indefinite leave to remain.

LHG, which owns the property, is led by Gauhar Nawab, a businessman who has previously been linked to numerous hotel conversions for housing purposes. His group has operated several Best Western hotels across London that have been used in emergency housing arrangements. The Tooting location remains listed under LHG's "Coming Soon" section online, complete with four-star marketing language and promises of modern amenities.

Reactions from the community have been mixed. Some residents have expressed frustration that the original use case presented to the public appears to have changed without sufficient transparency. Others, however, recognize the severe strain on London's housing infrastructure and see the council's decision as a practical response to growing local demand for temporary shelter.

In a joint statement issued to *GB News*, both Wandsworth Council and LHG defended the move. They emphasized that the property will not function as an asylum hotel and that its purpose is to support local families experiencing homelessness. The council argued that having stable, quality accommodation within the borough could save up to £6 million over the course of the agreement, benefiting both families in need and taxpayers.

Labour-affiliated councillor Aydin Dikerdem, who oversees housing for the borough, framed the decision as both cost-effective and compassionate. However, some online users noted that this type of last-minute shift in hotel use has reportedly occurred in other parts of London, raising broader concerns about long-term planning, accountability, and the impact on local communities.

The Home Office has reiterated that the site will not be used to house asylum seekers but did acknowledge that individuals granted indefinite leave to remain could be accommodated at the hotel. With public trust in local development decisions already under strain, the move has intensified calls for clearer communication and more rigorous consultation processes when repurposing commercial property for public use.