
Leicester City
**local
development
framework**

**Supplementary
Planning Document**



STUDENT HOUSING SPD

Adopted June 2012

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	5
2. Criteria For New Purpose Built Accommodation	7
3. Shared Housing In Existing Residential Areas	12
4. Other Non-Planning Issues	14
Appendix A: Existing and Future Student Housing Provision	15
Appendix B: Analysis of Need/Demand	17
Appendix C: Relevant City Council Planning Policies and Guidance	21
Appendix D: Contact Details	22
Appendix E: Glossary	23

Cover Photograph: CityBlock Student Housing Scheme, Peacock Lane, Leicester.

Other languages and large print

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی وضاحت چاہتے ہیں، یا اگر آپ کو اپنی آرا لکھنے کیلئے مدد چاہیے تو براہ مہربانی (0116)2527000 پر ٹیلیفون کریں

আপনি যদি চান - এই ডকুমেন্টটি (দস্তাবেজ) আপনার কাছে ব্যাখ্যা করা হোক বা আপনার মন্তব্য লেখার জন্য সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে, অনুগ্রহ করে (0116)2527000 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

જો આ દસ્તાવેજ તમને સમજાવવાની જરૂર હોય, અથવા તમારી ટીકાઓ લખવામાં તમને મદદ જોઈતી હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી (0116)2527000 ઉપર ફોન કરો.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ (0116)2527000 ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

如果你需要有人給你解釋這文件，或如果你需要人協助填寫你的意見請致電 (0116) 2527000

Haddii aad u baahan tahay in dokumentigan lagu sharxo, ama haddii aad u baahan tahay in lagaa caawino qoraalka wixii fikrad dhiibasho ah fadlan soo wac telefoonka ah (0116)2527000

Eğer bu belgenin size açıklanmasını istiyorsanız, ya da yorumlarınızı yazmada yardıma ihtiyacınız varsa lütfen (0116) 2527000'e telefon ediniz.

ئەگەر پێویستت کرد شروڤه کردنی ئەم دوکیومەنتە، یان پێویستی یارمەتی بۆی بو نۆسینی هەر شتێک تکایه پهیوهندی بهم ژماره تهلهفونه بکه (0116)2527000

Jeśli chcesz by ten dokument tobie wytłumaczyć lub potrzebujesz pomocy z napisaniem twoich uwag proszę dzwonić pod numer (0116) 2527000

اگر نیاز دارید که این مدرک برای شما توضیح داده شود یا اگر برای نوشتن نظراتتان نیاز به کمک دارید لطفاً با شماره (0116)2527000 تماس بگیرید.

If you require this document in large print, audio cassette, Braille or languages other than English please telephone (0116) 2527000 or email planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk

1. Introduction

1.1 Leicester is home to two major Universities - the University of Leicester and De Montfort University.

1.2 Latest figures (Appendix A) show that in 2010/11 the University of Leicester had 16,580 students (12,530 full time) and De Montfort 22,665 students (16,155 full time). Both universities are cautious about future growth projections in light of the introduction of higher tuition fees in 2012.

1.3 Students at the two universities make up to 13% of the City's total population.¹

1.4 Most students in the City either live in purpose built accommodation, shared housing or in their parental home. A large proportion of students live in the Castle and Westcotes wards, in addition to Clarendon Park and west Stoneygate. An analysis of the general locations in the City where the majority of students live can be found in Appendix B.

1.5 The universities and their students have a very positive impact on the local economy, boosting Leicester's national and international profile, providing local companies with skilled graduates and seasonal/part-time workers and purchasing local goods and services. The construction and occupation of student accommodation also creates employment and supports local business, and often delivers physical regeneration on disused sites and buildings.

1.6 High concentrations of students in a particular area potentially has negative impacts which can substantially change the nature of a neighbourhood and can increase the demand and pressure on some services (e.g. open space, parking), reduce demand in other services (e.g. schools), and potentially create late night noise and environmental nuisance. In recent years, serious concerns have been raised by residents about the concentration of students in traditional residential neighbourhoods both through purpose built accommodation and through the cumulative impact of shared housing on some streets.

1.7 The City Council has sought information from the universities and private developers and investigated other sources to gather together available information on the provision of student accommodation. This has enabled us to gain a better understanding of accommodation types and locations. However, the availability of comprehensive information on current student accommodation is limited - in some cases due to commercial sensitivities. Appendix B provides an analysis of available information.

1.8 From the information that is available (See Appendix A) we estimate that:

- Approximately 11,000 student bedspaces (40% of total bedspaces) now exist in purpose built accommodation;
- Approximately 8700 students occupy bedspaces in other student-only households in the City (mainly shared housing);
- An estimated 9000 students either live with their parents or other non-students, or live in shared housing outside the City boundary.

1.9 The student housing sector is one of the few that has continued to be active in the City during the recent economic downturn. In the last few years there has been a significant increase in the number of planning applications for purpose built student accommodation both received, and approved, by the City Council. The number of schemes approved has risen from 4 in 2007/8 and 5 in 2008/9 to 16 in 2009/10 and 20 in 2010/11. These schemes range in size from less than 10 bedspaces to over 600 bedspaces.

1. Based on 2010 Office for National Statistics mid year estimate of a total City population of 306,600.

1.10 This activity seems to be at least partly due to changes in student preferences. There appears to be a growing trend for students to spend more than just their first year in en-suite purpose built accommodation. This seems particularly to be the case with many international students, but also growing numbers of British students. En-suite single rooms in self-catered halls are now the most common form of purpose built student accommodation nationally, accounting for some 48% of bed spaces in purpose built student accommodation complexes.²

1.11 Of the applications approved, many have been, or are being built. Appendix A notes a significant number of bedspaces currently under construction (1,567) in addition to 2,534 which already have the benefit of planning permission but where development is yet to commence. If all of these schemes were built this would represent some 36% of all existing purpose built bedspaces. A further 425 bedspaces are subject to planning applications that are yet to be determined, and if all these were approved and then built it would mean there would then be enough capacity in purpose built accommodation for 55% of all full-time students.

1.12 It is unlikely that all currently planned schemes will be built as they are competing to meet a finite demand from students who will choose to live in this type of accommodation. However, notwithstanding the considerable number of new student bedspaces in the development “pipeline” as outlined above, there may be a need for additional student accommodation in the future serving specific needs/demands and potentially responding to future growth in student numbers.

1.13 It is important therefore, in light of specific concerns about concentrations of purpose built accommodation and shared student houses, that clear planning controls are put in place for new proposals. This will provide greater clarity to developers, universities, local residents and other stakeholders on how the council will manage the development of new student accommodation.

1.14 Proposals to redevelop or improve older existing purpose-built accommodation schemes will be encouraged where they meet all of the criteria set out in this SPD.

Purpose of Supplementary Planning Document

1.15 The Council’s current policy on new student accommodation is contained within Policy CS6 of the adopted Core Strategy (See Appendix C). This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides more detailed guidance to support the criteria set out in Core Strategy Policy CS6.

1.16 Section 2 of this SPD outlines the criteria against which planning applications for new purpose built student accommodation will be considered. This is to ensure that any proposals for new purpose built student accommodation are needed, appropriate in size and scale, directed towards suitable locations within the City, do not have an unacceptable cumulative impact upon existing residential neighbourhoods and includes suitable facilities and management arrangements.

1.17 Section 3 considers issues resulting from additional shared housing in residential areas. This includes identifying current planning powers available to the City Council and options for strengthening these in the future, through the use of an Article 4 Direction.

1.18 Section 4 considers non-planning issues relating to managing student housing.

2. NUS/Unipol Student Accommodation Costs Survey 2009/10 - <http://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/8304/Accommodation-Costs-Survey-PDF.pdf>

2. Criteria for New Purpose Built Student Accommodation

2.1 To demonstrate compliance with the Core Strategy policy, all planning applications for new purpose built student accommodation will be considered against the following criteria:

A. The development meets an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed.

2.2 From the information that is currently available, the Council considers that the provision of purpose built student accommodation in the City is likely to be nearing capacity particularly if a significant proportion of the current approved schemes are built. However, there may be a limited need for some additional student accommodation that meets specific needs/demands.

2.3 All proposals for new purpose built student accommodation will therefore be required to provide clear evidence to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the City Council, that the development would meet an identified need at the time it is submitted. The Council will require that this evidence includes details of the following:

- What specific need the proposal is aimed at and why this need is currently unmet;
- The type of existing accommodation the potential student occupiers are likely to be drawn from;
- If the proposal is to meet a recorded increase in student numbers.

2.4 This can be supplemented with additional evidence, such as proof that bank funding is in place or evidence of a waiting list for another site in the same ownership in the city. However, this additional evidence alone will not be considered sufficient to demonstrate an identified need.

2.5 The Council will expect this evidence to be available during pre-application discussions, and to be submitted at the same time as the planning application.

B. Development will be encouraged within reasonable walking distance of the two university campuses.

2.6 To promote sustainable means of travel and minimise car use, the City Council will encourage new purpose built student accommodation to be located within reasonable walking distance of the two main University campuses.

2.7 The Government's Manual for Streets³ document defines a walkable neighbourhood as typically having a range of facilities within 10 minutes (up to about 800m) walking distance. However this is a general guide and is not considered to be an upper limit – particularly where good quality pedestrian and cycle routes are available.

3. 'Manual For Streets' publication (DfT, 2007) www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/.

C. The scale of the development, including height and massing of the buildings, should be designed to not adversely conflict with adjacent properties or the general residential environment of the surrounding area.

2.8 If purpose built developments are to be successful, they must be located and designed to minimise adverse impacts on their surroundings, in addition to being in locations which will be attractive to students.

2.9 The Council's principal policy on designing quality places is Core Strategy Policy CS3. All proposals for new student accommodation are required to fully comply with this.

2.10 Taller, higher density purpose built student accommodation will not normally be appropriate within or adjoining existing residential neighbourhoods. Any new development in these areas should be generally in keeping with the existing character, massing and height of the area, having regard to the local residential environment.

2.11 Taller, higher density purpose built student housing schemes are likely to be more appropriate in City Centre locations where there is less potential for conflict with existing low-rise residential accommodation.

2.12 Specific guidance on tall buildings is set out in the Council's Tall Buildings SPD, and specifically Chapter 5 of that document – 'Criteria For Assessment'.

D. When considered with existing nearby student housing provision, the development should not have an unacceptable cumulative impact upon surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

2.13 Unacceptable cumulative impact will be assessed taking into account:

- a) the number and size of purpose built accommodation schemes in surrounding residential neighbourhoods;
- b) the number of students living in shared housing in surrounding residential neighbourhoods and;
- c) whether the development of further student accommodation would introduce a demographic imbalance (in terms of numbers) or place an unacceptable strain upon local amenity (e.g. noise, parking, litter) or local facilities (e.g. open spaces, other recreational facilities).

2.14 Some areas of the City have seen a large increase in the number of purpose built accommodation schemes in the recent past, in addition to existing shared housing. The cumulative impact means that further large scale purpose built schemes in these areas, particularly in the neighbourhoods to the west of Western Boulevard and to the south of Jarrom Street/Grasmere Street, are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

2.15 Cumulative impact is less likely to be an issue in many other areas, particularly within areas of the City Centre where there are no well-established residential neighbourhoods.

2.16 The Council may seek to limit the number of bedspaces in purpose built schemes in those areas where they would otherwise have an unacceptable cumulative impact.

E. The layout, standards and facilities provided in the development ensure a positive living experience.

2.17 Although the average period of time that students will occupy a particular residence for will generally be less than for the non-student population, it is still important for the long term viability of any student scheme that the layout, standards and facilities provided are of a high standard to provide occupants with a positive living experience. The Council has a range of planning policies and guidance which will be used to consider this as outline below.

Open space Provision

2.18 The availability of, and ability to enjoy, open space is very important to both students and other members of the local community. Proposals for new student accommodation will be required to meet identified needs for greenspace, sport and recreation provision arising from the development, taking account of local qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

2.19 In Castle and Westcotes wards in particular there is already great pressure on the existing open space available, with limited opportunities to further improve the quality or capacity in these areas. For all new purpose built student accommodation, the Council will therefore expect adequate provision of open space to be provided on-site, together with any off-site open space contributions required.

2.20 Details of the green space, sport and recreation requirements are set out in the Council's Greenspace SPD.

Layout and Size of Bedrooms

2.21 Developers will be encouraged to provide, wherever feasible, a mix of studios, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom flats/apartments within any new scheme. Individual bedrooms should be of sufficient size to meet inclusive design requirements (See paragraph 2.22 below).

Inclusive Design and Accessibility

2.22 Any proposals for new purpose built student developments will need to incorporate a high level of accessibility and inclusive design. This not only includes within individual study bedrooms but also within the accommodation as a whole and along key access routes to and from the site (in line with Core Strategy Policy CS3). For further advice on accessibility and inclusive design, please contact the City Council (See Appendix D).

Parking

2.23 The Council has existing car parking standards for new student accommodation (Set out in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan). Cycle parking, powered two wheeler and disabled parking should also be provided as set out in the existing parking standards.

2.24 The issue of parking and student accommodation is one of a range of issues being looked at through a City-wide Parking Strategy currently being undertaken. The current parking standards will be reviewed and updated.

Flexibility

2.25 Developers should aim to design all new purpose built accommodation in such a way that it can be capable of being re-configured through internal alterations to meet general housing needs in the future.

2.26 Student accommodation can sometimes have standards of residential amenity that differ from properties designed for longer-term occupation, in terms of minimum floorspace standards, open space provision, parking requirements etc. New purpose built student housing is also not required to contribute to affordable housing. It is for these reasons that all applications for student accommodation will be conditioned to limit occupancy to students.

2.27 In order to get approval to remove this condition at a later date, it will need to be demonstrated at that time that all of the policy requirements for general needs housing, including amenity standards, can be met.

Energy Efficiency & Sustainable Construction

2.28 All new student developments should be designed using best practice energy efficiency and sustainable construction methods – as set out in Core Strategy Policy CS2. Further guidance on this can be found in the Council's Climate Change SPD.

Other Non-Residential Uses in Student Accommodation Schemes

2.29 Where other uses are proposed as part of a purpose-built student accommodation scheme – such as retail outlets, gyms or restaurants – they will be considered against all other relevant national and local planning policies and guidance.

F. Appropriate management is in place to minimise potential negative impacts from occupants or the development on surrounding properties and neighbourhoods, and to create a positive and safe living environment for students.

Management Plan

2.30 A well-managed student scheme can significantly minimise potential negative impacts on surrounding areas. The Council will expect all new purpose built student accommodation schemes to have a management plan to ensure a satisfactory residential environment for existing residential neighbourhoods. Examples of the types of measures that will be expected include the following:

2.31 New purpose built student accommodation should be designed to incorporate appropriate levels of security. Measures such as security doors, CCTV, lighting and intercom systems can all help to make the local environment safer and reduce the opportunities for crime.

2.32 The lifestyle of students can be - at times - more boisterous than that of other sectors of society, and so noise is an issue that will need to be addressed within the Management Plan. Appropriate soundproofing should also be included within the scheme design.

2.33 New build student accommodation is also likely to require a travel plan which addresses both staff and student travel issues.

2.34 A Travel Plan should consider:

- Staff and Student travel issues;
- Control of beginning and end of term traffic;
- Travel packs for students at the beginning of each term (including appropriate routes to and from university);
- A Car Parking Management Plan.

3. Shared Housing in Existing Residential Areas

3.1 Despite the significant increase in purpose built accommodation in recent years, shared housing (which can sometimes also be referred to as Houses in Multiple Occupation) continues to play an important role in providing accommodation for students in the City. The Council will continue to support private sector landlords to supply high quality shared housing. However, it is also important to ensure that potential conflicts with other housing and their occupiers are minimised.

3.2 The table in Appendix A on Page 16 shows the current distribution of student households in the City by ward. The student-only dwellings column consists mainly of shared student houses, and gives an indication of their spread across the City.

3.3 Issues can arise from an over-concentration of shared housing within a particular area. Unlike purpose built accommodation there are little or no management arrangements in place. Increased levels of burglary and crime can also occur within these areas, as thieves target homes shared by students. This is in addition to a change in the demands upon local facilities.

3.4 It is also important to note that shared housing plays an important role in housing other individuals and not just students, especially at the lower cost end of the housing market.

Current Planning Powers

3.5 The City Council is limited in terms of options available through the planning system to prevent over-concentrations of shared housing in particular areas of the City. It is only able to influence future changes to shared housing and has no power over the number of homes already used as shared housing.

3.6 Under national legislation introduced in October 2010, only the change of use of a house to shared housing (defined as Houses In Multiple Occupation, or HMOs) occupied by more than 6 people requires planning permission.

3.7 The City Council seeks to ensure that the impacts of any future HMOs to be occupied by over 6 people are not unacceptable through Core Strategy Policy CS8 (See Appendix C). This has identified that within the 'Inner Areas' of the City – which includes Westcotes and Clarendon Park – further development of these types will not be permitted where they would result in a local over-concentration.

3.8 'Over concentration' will be assessed having regard to the following:

- a) the number of students living in shared housing in surrounding residential neighbourhoods and;
- b) whether the introduction of further student accommodation would introduce a demographic imbalance (in terms of numbers) or place an unacceptable strain upon local amenity (e.g. noise, parking, litter) or local facilities (e.g. open spaces, other recreational facilities).

Use of Article 4 Direction

3.9 Since October 2010, changes to national legislation mean that under normal circumstances planning permission is no longer required to convert a family house into a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for up to 6 people. This means that at present Core Strategy Policy CS8 cannot be applied to consider

the acceptability of changes of use to shared housing occupied by between 3 and 6 people.

3.10 To address this issue, the City Council is proposing introducing an Article 4 Direction. This is a legal mechanism which removes permitted development rights within a defined area meaning that planning permission would be required to change the use of any further homes to Houses in Multiple Occupation. This would allow all new proposals for shared housing to be occupied by between 3 and 6 people to be subject to Core Strategy Policy CS8, and the criteria set out in Paragraph 3.8 above.

3.11 The City Council is proposing to implement the Article 4 Direction in four wards: Castle, Westcotes, Freeman and Stoneygate. These are the areas where concentrations of shared housing are at their highest and where in some specific locations further development of similar properties may be considered an 'over concentration'.

3.12 The implementation of the Article 4 Direction, including the boundary adopted, will be subject of a separate statutory consultation exercise.

To Let Boards

3.13 The Council is aware of amenity issues arising in some residential areas as a result of the long-term use of lettings boards on rented properties, and will be investigating options available through the planning process to try to address these.

4. Non-Planning Issues

4.1 There are a number of other issues concerning the impact of student housing (both shared housing and purpose built accommodation) which cannot be directly addressed by planning policy or guidance e.g. policing matters and environmental nuisance. The City Council will continue to work with the two universities, purpose built student accommodation providers, shared housing landlords, local residents, the Police, and others to manage potential conflicts between students and other sectors of the community.

Appendix A: Existing & Future Student Housing Provision

(Based on latest available data at April 2012)

Number of Full Time Students

		Data Source
University of Leicester	12,530	HESA – 2010/11
De Montfort University	16,155	HESA – 2010/11
Total	28,685	

Existing Supply

		Data Source
University Owned or Nomination Rights Leicester University (inc. Oadby Halls) De Montfort University	4,688 3,076	University Website University Website
Bedspaces In Purpose Built Accommodation	3,575	Planning Application data April 2012 & Council tax – April 2011
Bedspaces In Student-only Households	8,768	Council tax – April 2011
Total	20,107	
These figures do not include students who: a) Live with parents or other non-students; or b) Occupy shared housing outside the City.	Approx. 9,000	Estimated from total no. of students (28,685) minus purpose built/student only households (20,107). n.b. excludes p/t students.

Potential Future Supply

		Data Source
Bedspaces Under Construction	1,567	Planning Application data
Bedspaces With Permission but not yet started	2,534	Planning Application data
Bedspaces submitted but not yet determined	425	Planning Application data
Total	4,526	

HESA = Higher Education Statistics Agency (See www.hesa.ac.uk)

Council Tax and Planning Application Data supplied by Leicester City Council

Student Households by Ward

Ward	Units in Purpose Built Accommodation*	Other Student-only dwellings (including shared housing)*	Total Properties**	Percentage that are Student Properties
Abbey	0	89	6,404	1.39%
Aylestone	0	34	5,005	0.68%
Beaumont Leys	0	70	6,614	1.06%
Belgrave	1	27	4,044	0.69%
Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	0	88	6,991	1.26%
Castle	1,214	1,934	10,339	30.45%
Charnwood	0	51	4,627	1.10%
Coleman	0	40	4,892	0.82%
Evington	0	30	4,264	0.70%
Eyres Monsell	0	23	4,885	0.47%
Fosse	0	135	5,711	2.36%
Freemen	117	162	4,438	6.29%
Humberstone & Hamilton	0	94	7,044	1.33%
Knighton	36	149	7,033	2.63%
Latimer	0	36	4,302	0.84%
New Parks	0	59	7,096	0.83%
Rushey Mead	0	18	5,783	0.31%
Spinney Hills	3	140	7,600	1.88%
Stoneygate	1	439	6,447	6.82%
Thurncourt	0	15	4,246	0.35%
Westcotes	94	565	5,186	12.71%
Western Park	0	106	4,532	2.34%
Wards Total	1,466	4,304	127,483	
Un Geocoded	3	73		
Grand Total	1,469	4,377	127,483	4.59%

* Supplied by Local Taxation

** Supplied by Land and Property Gazetteer

Source: Leicester City Council Information Services

Appendix B: Analysis of Need & Demand

The City Council has undertaken an information gathering exercise to inform its analysis of the future need and demand for additional purpose built student accommodation. Working with the two Universities and private developers, all the available information has been drawn together. However due to commercial sensitivities and only partial availability of some data sets, it has not been possible to obtain a comprehensive picture of all existing student housing provision by type.

Based on the data that is available, we have analysed the following:

- **Location of Existing Provision**

With the exception of Oadby Student Village, accommodation for students (both purpose built and shared housing) is generally concentrated in the neighbourhoods closest to the two university campuses.

For De Montfort University this means the majority of students live in the Castle and Westcotes wards (30% of the properties in Castle are student households – see Appendix A). There are concentrations of shared student houses to the west of the University campus, in the area bordered by Upperton Road and Narborough Road. Many properties in this area which were formerly occupied by families have now been converted to shared housing.

A large percentage of the purpose built student accommodation that serves De Montfort is located within the City Centre, particularly around Newarke Street and Grange Lane. However over the past few years an increasing number of large private purpose built schemes have spread out to the West of the campus along Western Road and Upperton Road.

Many University of Leicester students live in either Oadby Student Village, or in the number of University managed halls and Opal Court which are located a short distance from the main campus. Others live in City Centre purpose built schemes, but fewer students live in purpose built schemes to the West of the City.

Many of the remaining University of Leicester students live in shared housing around the London Road, Clarendon Park and Stonegate areas. These are mainly converted former family homes.

- **Existing Levels of Provision**

Details of the existing level of provision can be found in Appendix A.

One purpose built student accommodation provider operating in Leicester told us that they generally only invested further in a City if there was currently capacity for less than 35-40% of full time students to live in purpose built schemes. Including those bedspaces already under construction, there is now capacity for 45% of full time students to live in purpose built schemes in the City. If all the other schemes with permission or with already submitted applications were built this figure would rise to 55.3%.

Comparison with other cities is difficult due to lack of data. Information is available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), although the dataset is not directly comparable to the City Council's own data. From their information, in 2009/10 the UK average number of students living in institution maintained property (i.e. owned and/or operated by a University) and private-sector halls (which includes some purpose built student accommodation but not all) was 23%. Using the HESA definitions this figure for Leicester was 26%, above the UK average. If the bedspaces built since 2009/10 and those already under construction all become occupied this figure would rise to 30%.

- Impacts of Student Housing By Type

Shared housing generally exists in traditional residential neighbourhoods, usually in dwellings formerly in use as family homes. The increase in residential density that can result from change of use to shared housing can put pressure on the existing services and infrastructure of an area, and can change the character of the neighbourhood. There is no clear evidence to suggest that properties return to general-needs housing, or family homes, once they have been converted to shared housing.

Purpose built student accommodation (both traditional halls of residence and more recently studio or cluster flat developments) has less impact on the private housing market and potentially, if of a high standard of design and suitably located, on the structure of communities. They have scope to build in physical and administrative measures to discourage noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour. However they can also significantly increase the density of the population of an area, which can in turn increase the demand for recreational facilities, open space and parking spaces, as well as causing increased levels of noise disturbance. In addition, there is often less interaction between students and the local community.

- Occupancy Rates

Occupancy rates data is very useful in assessing the level of spare capacity in student housing, and to establish whether new schemes are actually meeting a pent-up demand or whether they are resulting in vacancies in other similar schemes in the City.

Availability of data on occupancy rates of purpose built student accommodation is limited. Information is available via Council Tax for schemes that are classified by the Valuation Office as 'Class N' for Council Tax purposes (mainly shared housing and studio or cluster flats), but is not available from this source for Halls of Residence or many of the other larger purpose built student schemes.

Commercial sensitivities mean that some operators of these larger schemes, including the Universities, will not release occupancy rates data. This means that we are only able to get a partial understanding of the levels of vacancies and where these are.

Of those operators who were willing to release this data, two companies - both of whom have developed significant numbers of bedspaces in the City in recent years - stated that all their purpose built accommodation schemes were 100% occupied and had no voids.

- Recent Changes In Student Housing Preferences

Whereas students traditionally looked for purpose built accommodation in their first year then moved to shared housing for the remaining years of their study, recent demand suggests that more and more students, and particularly international students, are seeking to reside in purpose built accommodation for more than one year, and even all of their university life. Availability of high quality purpose built accommodation in the right locations is therefore increasingly important to many prospective students. Ensuite single rooms in self-catered halls are now the most common form of purpose built student accommodation nationally, accounting for some 48% of bed spaces in purpose built student accommodation complexes.⁵

5. NUS/Unipol Student Accommodation Costs Survey 2009/10 - <http://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/8304/Accommodation-Costs-Survey-PDF.pdf>

This shift means that some of the shared housing traditionally occupied by students is now available to other groups of people. Shared housing performs an important role at the lower end of the price range in the housing market for many individuals, not just students. However we have found little clear evidence of shared houses previously occupied by students returning to their original use as family homes.

• Future Needs and Aspirations of Students

The cost of purpose built student accommodation has risen rapidly in recent years (13% above inflation between 2006/7 and 2009/10).⁶ While the demand for new purpose built accommodation has grown during the same period, it is unclear as to whether in the future the costs may be prohibitive for greater numbers of students.

Shared housing is typically cheaper than purpose built accommodation, and its continued availability is important in providing students with a choice of accommodation which reflects their range of needs, aspirations and financial means.

• Potential Future Growth in Student Numbers

The Higher Education sector is in a state of change, and the impact in particular of higher fees payable by students from 2012/13 is, at present, very difficult to judge. Neither of the Universities was able to provide us with predicted future student numbers, although evidence suggests that, so far at least, interest in university courses nationally is not down. However growth in student numbers nationally is not expected at the same rate as over the past 10 years.

• Student Schemes With Planning Permission

Details of the number of schemes either under construction, or with planning permission and not yet started, are set out in Appendix A.

If all these schemes are developed, then there would be enough additional bedspaces to house over half those students currently living in shared housing in the City. In reality, this is unlikely to happen as the majority of students who live in shared housing do so through choice, either because of costs or because they enjoy the independence that living outside purpose built accommodation brings.

However, the increase in supply that would occur if even just a proportion of these schemes were to be developed would be significant, particularly if overall student numbers do not change.

• The Student Housing Market

During the recent economic downturn, new purpose built student accommodation has been one of the very few sectors that has continued to thrive. Planning applications have continued to be submitted, and many of the approved schemes have been, or are currently being, developed. The fact that so many schemes have actually been built indicates that some developers have still seen student schemes in the City as viable development proposals.

6. NUS/Unipol Student Accommodation Costs Survey 2009/10 - <http://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/8304/Accommodation-Costs-Survey-PDF.pdf>

How long this will continue for is unclear. There is some anecdotal evidence that some developers and operators are starting to exert more caution and are no longer looking to increase their portfolios in Leicester, particularly for De Montfort University students. This is as a consequence of a higher than average supply demand imbalance (i.e. less students per purpose built bedspace), a relatively good quality of existing accommodation and a high proportion of students who live in reasonably priced alternative sources of accommodation.

- Conclusion

Having analysed all the data that is available, and acknowledging the limitations of some of the information, the Council considers that the provision of purpose built student accommodation in the City is nearing capacity, although we cannot say that the present supply has exceeded demand. Of particular importance is the high number of potential additional bedspaces in the pipeline which already benefit from planning permission. Although it is unlikely that all of these will come forward, even if a significant proportion of these are built, and assuming student numbers do not increase significantly, then this may well be adequate to meet current demand.

In light of this, it will therefore be important to judge the level of need at the time of submission of any future applications for purpose built schemes. We consider that developers should be required to demonstrate, through the production of clear evidence, that any future proposals would meet specific identified need at the time of submission.

Appendix C: Relevant City Council Planning Policies and Guidance

Core Strategy Policy CS6 - Housing Strategy

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides further detailed guidance to support the Council's current policy on new student accommodation, which is contained within Policy CS6 of the adopted Core Strategy as follows:

'The City Council will work in consultation with the Universities to assess the needs for student housing, to identify appropriate locations and to devise appropriate design and management standards. Proposals for purpose built student housing will normally be accepted if they meet identified needs, are well designed and managed and can be well integrated with local built form and existing communities within walking distance of the main campuses.'

Core Strategy Policy CS8 – Existing Neighbourhoods

Core Strategy Policy CS8 is relevant to proposals for any additional Houses In Multiple Occupation (shared houses). Within 'Inner Areas' of the City it requires that:

'New hostels and Houses In Multiple Occupation requiring planning permission will not be permitted where they would result in a local over-concentration.'

Other relevant Core Strategy policies are:

- Policy CS2: Addressing Climate Change and Flood Risk;
- Policy CS3: Designing Quality Places;
- Policy CS13: Green Network;
- Policy CS14: The Transport Network;
- Policy CS15: Managing Demand For Car Use;
- Policy CS18: Historic Environment;
- Policy CS19: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions.

Other Supplementary Planning Documents

There are a number of other adopted Supplementary Planning Documents that are relevant when determining applications for new student housing. These are:

- Tall Buildings SPD – Adopted April 2007
- Green Space SPD – Adopted April 2011
- Climate Change SPD – Adopted January 2011

Local Plan

The City of Leicester Local Plan (2006) contains the Council's existing Parking Standards.

Appendix D: Contact Details

The Planning pages on the City Council website contain a large amount of information for applicants and developers.

These can be found at:

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/planning/planningapplications/planningapplications/adviceforapplicants/>

You can also contact:

Planning

(The first point of contact for any development enquiries, pre-application discussions or planning application requirements – including queries on accessibility and design)

Telephone: 0116 252 7000

Email: planning@leicester.gov.uk

Appendix E: Glossary

Article 4 Direction	A means by which a Local Planning Authority can remove permitted development rights, meaning planning permission would be required for the change of use from a Dwelling house to a House in Multiple Occupation.
Bedspace	The number of bedspaces in a property is the number of people that it sleeps.
Core Strategy	The City Council's Core Strategy was adopted in November 2010. Policies contained within it have been subject to independent Inspection at an Examination in Public.
Dwelling house	This is either: Those living together as a single household (basically a 'family'); Those living together as a single household and receiving care, or Those living together as a single household who do not fall within the definition of a House in Multiple Occupation. For planning purposes this is defined as Class C3.
Full time students	This is defined as students who are on a course of education lasting for at least one academic or calendar year, where the normal requirements are to attend for at least 24 weeks out of the year and participate in 'study, tuition or work experience' for at least 21 hours per week during term time.
General Needs Housing	Housing where occupation is not restricted to a particular sector of the community – sometimes also referred to as family housing.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	There are two main types of HMOs: Shared dwellings occupied by 3 to 6 unrelated people. These are now in their own 'Use Class' – C4. Before 2010 they were treated no differently to 'dwelling houses' which are in Use Class C3. Shared houses occupied by more than 6 people. HMO's of more than 6 people require planning permission and are not within a defined Use Class.
Nominated	Bedspaces allocated to students by the Universities through agreement with third-party private suppliers.
Purpose-built student accommodation	Accommodation built, or converted, with the specific intent of being occupied by students – either individual en-suite units or sharing facilities.
Shared Housing	Usually housing built as family housing, which has changed its use to be occupied by a number of separate individuals sharing the same kitchen and bathroom facilities behind the same front door.
Student Housing	A generic term that covers both Shared Housing and Purpose-Built Accommodation.
Student-only household	Defined for Council-tax purposes, any household that contains students only is exempt from Council tax requirements. This can be either shared housing or purpose-built accommodation.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	A planning authority may prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to provide greater detail on the policies in its higher order planning documents. This SPD provides greater detail on the policies contained in the Council's adopted Core Strategy.
University campus	For the purposes of this SPD, the University campuses are defined as the areas covering the sites of the principal teaching facilities of the two universities.