

Student Accommodation

The Council commissioned a Student Accommodation Study in 2005 in order to investigate the likely needs and impacts arising from two expanding universities. At the time of the study a number of concerns had been expressed in some inner-city communities about high concentrations of student housing, which could upset the balance of the local area, jeopardising local services and causing problems for non-student residents (through a reduction in demand for schools and local services, noise, anti-social behaviour, demand for parking space and the poor management and maintenance of houses and gardens). Such concerns continue to be raised today through consultation exercises. In contrast, there has also been recognition from key stakeholders of the positive benefits which the two universities and their students bring to the city as a whole.

The Study showed that there were approximately 24,500 full time students at the cities two universities in 2005. More recent evidence shows that this had increased to approximately 38,000 full time students with more than 50,000 students in total in 2014. The 2005 study showed that approximately 10,500 (43%) of all full-time students from both universities were in managed accommodation. Although the number of available bed spaces across the city has increased by 26% since 2005 (meaning there is now a sufficient number to accommodate in excess of 13,300 students) the proportion of bed spaces to full time students has not kept pace with the continued growth of the universities.

The 2005 study highlighted that a number of opportunities had been taken since the turn of the century, especially on sites close to Coventry University, to provide new purpose-built student accommodation. The supplementary evidence has identified the continuation of this trend, with in excess of 3,500 bed spaces currently with extant planning permission. Market drivers, in terms of planning applications and the completion of new student bed spaces suggest continued developer interest in purpose-built student accommodation, with a strong viable market, especially within the city centre. The continued delivery of these purpose-built schemes, and those similar in nature, will be supported by the Council as they:

- make significant contributions to the Council's housing land supply;
- meet specific housing needs within the city's population;
- offer modern and high-quality accommodation to support both universities;
- support and facilitate urban regeneration; and
- help minimise the uptake of family housing by students in the private rented sector.

Policy H10: Student Accommodation

1. Purpose-built student accommodation and conversions of residential and non-residential properties to student accommodation will be encouraged where:
 - a. It is directly accessible from the universities:

- b. Such development can play a part in the regeneration of the immediate neighbourhoods without disadvantage to local services.
 - c. It will not materially harm the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties; and
 - d. It will reflect and support or enhance the appearance and character of the area.
2. To support the intended use of the proposals the specified tenure will be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

To be considered directly accessible to either university sites for new student accommodation should be situated within easy walking distance of the university's, or easily accessible by cycling or public transport. This will predominantly mean they are situated either within or adjacent to the city centre or the University of Warwick campus. This will reduce the reliance on car travel, encourage active travel, and reduce congestion and pollutants and the need for onsite parking spaces within such schemes. In the case of the city centre it will also contribute towards further increases in city centre living.

In terms of new student accommodation reflecting the appearance and character of its surroundings, this will again be of particular importance within the city centre. This recognises the 7 Conservation Areas and range of other heritage assets that are present within the city centre and the need to protect their setting and historic character.

The changing face of student accommodation means that it now sits within a variety of use class categories. In terms of creating living environments specifically for students within existing residential provisions this policy will only relate to schemes that will occupy more than 6 students. Where proposals relate to purpose-built student accommodation or the conversion of non-residential properties to student accommodation however the policy will apply in all cases.

The tenure of student accommodation will be secured through a Section 106 agreement. This reflects the fact that should the properties be occupied by other aspects of the city's population then it would be required to contribute affordable housing and potentially other Section 106 or CIL contributions. Should the tenure change to general market or affordable housing then such contributions will need to be considered through a variation of the Section 106 agreement and/or planning permission.