

## **Planning Committee 18 December 2013**

<b>Title of paper:</b>	City Centre Student Accommodation - Position Statement/Update Report	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Sue Flack – Director for Planning and Transport  David Bishop – Corporate Director of Development	<b>Wards affected:</b> City Wide
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<b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>		
World Class Nottingham		<b>x</b>
Work in Nottingham		<b>x</b>
Safer Nottingham		<b>x</b>
Neighbourhood Nottingham		<b>x</b>
Family Nottingham		<b>x</b>
Healthy Nottingham		
Leading Nottingham		<b>x</b>
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>		
This report concerns student accommodation and is for information only.		

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Following a number of applications brought to Planning Committee, members will recall querying the current position in terms of outstanding/unimplemented student accommodation schemes within the city centre.
- 1.2 Consultation has recently taken place on the Land and Planning Policies (LAPP) Document which will replace the current Local Plan, alongside the Aligned Core Strategy. The LAPP sets out planning policies for managing development and allocating sites for new development across the city. Of relevance to the housing theme in this report, draft planning policies seek to protect and promote family housing as well as encouraging purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) in appropriate locations i.e. the city centre, university campuses, allocated sites.
- 1.3 In addition, Unipol (a charity working nationally to improve student housing standards) is due to publish a report in December titled 'Assessment of Student Residence and Housing Market Conditions in Nottingham'.

### **2. City Centre Student Accommodation**

- 2.1 Council tax data from November 2013 shows there are currently over 2,500 student households<sup>1</sup> in the 47 Census Output Areas approximating the City Centre area. This

<sup>1</sup> Households which are exempt from Council Tax due to being comprised solely of students, plus purpose built student 'households' (using an average of 6 purpose built bedspaces to equate to a 'household').

equates to approximately a third of all households in the area, and is an increase of over 500 on October 2012.

- 2.2 The increase includes a number of new large purpose built schemes, notably Byron House and Gill Street at Nottingham Trent University (around 900 bedspaces, equating to approximately 150 student 'households'), Curzon Street on the edge of St Ann's (8 student 'households') and Shakespeare Street / Peachey Street (52 studios equating to approximately 9 student 'households'). The table below provides an overview of City Centre student schemes as at December 2013.

**Bedspaces complete for 2013/14 (ready for September 2013 occupation)**

Site	Reference	Bedspaces	Units	Office Grade
Byron House, Shakespeare Street	11/01686/PFUL3	559	67	n/a
Gill Street	11/01687/PFUL3	352	42	n/a
3 and 4 Poultry	11/03791/PFUL3	16	2	n/a
32-44 Castle Gate	12/01688/PFUL3	125	17	A
35 Curzon Street	12/02112/PFUL3	46	8	n/a
Adult Education Centre, 14-22 Shakespeare Street / 8-10 Peachey Street	12/02811/PFUL3	52	52	C
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,150</b>	<b>188</b>	

**Bedspaces complete for 2014/15 (ready for September 2014 occupation)**

Site	Reference	Bedspaces	Units	Office Grade
Odeon, Angel Row	10/04106/PFUL3	449	109	n/a
95 Talbot Street	11/01989/PFUL3	65	52	n/a
Former Police Warehouse, North Sherwood Street / Shakespeare Street	12/01581/PFUL3	44	44	n/a
Equitable House, 5-7 South Parade	12/01647/PFUL3	20	9	B
Catherine House, Woolpack Lane	12/02339/PFUL3	48	17	n/a
31 Huntingdon Street	12/02755/PFUL3	46	9	n/a
Minerva House, Spaniel Row	12/03487/PFUL3	155	153	C
Halley House, 33-37 Hounds Gate	13/01072/PFUL3	61	61	C
<b>Total</b>		<b>888</b>	<b>454</b>	

**Bedspaces complete for 2015/16 (ready for September 2015 occupation)**

Site	Reference	Bedspaces	Units	Office Grade
1 Hockley	12/00640/PFUL3	127	37	n/a
Talbot House, Talbot Street	12/02660/PFUL3	389	255	C
B Siegel, 1 Maiden Lane	12/03334/PFUL3	113	92	n/a
Winchester House, 39 Hounds Gate	13/00620/PFUL3	10	10	C
5-13 Upper Parliament Street	13/01148/PFUL3	47	24	C
Perry's Factory, Russell Street*	13/02213/PFUL3	78	78	n/a
<b>Total</b>		<b>764</b>	<b>496</b>	

**TOTAL 2,802 1,138**

\* Applications currently pending a decision

**Other possible future schemes**

Site	Description	Office Grade
Maid Marian House, Hounds Gate/Maid Marian Way	76 bedspaces	C
Victoria House, Milton Street	Withdrawn planning application (13/00725/PFUL3) for 130 bedspaces	C
Curzon Street/St Mark's Street	200+ bedspaces	n/a

Table 1. City Centre student schemes as at December 2013.

- 2.3 The number of student households in other areas of the City does not appear to have decreased since 2012, despite last year's data on student numbers showing a small fall following the rise in tuition fees. Further analysis will be undertaken, but one reason for

this may be due to the size of student households falling, which is likely to be the case for smaller flats in the City Centre area.

### **3. Current approach**

- 3.1 Maximising the supply of PBSA to reduce demand on traditional housing suitable for family occupation is a priority for the council, and the recent Council Tax information noted earlier supports the approach that further provision is required. It is clear that the city centre should continue to be the focus for such provision to stem the growth of students occupying HMOs in neighbourhoods close to the universities, being accessible and convenient for users, coupled with compatibility and regeneration potential. High levels of market interest and investment in city centre PBSA, along with buoyant take up of new places, provide good evidence of deliverability. The high quality transport network, particularly with the extension of the tram network, further supports this.
- 3.2 The LAPP document identifies an oversupply of poor quality office floorspace in the city and this is evident in the 2012 Nottingham Commercial Office Market Review, quantifying available office space and the dominance of grade C (poorer quality) stock:

- Grade A – approximately 71,000 sq ft
- Grade B – approximately 166,000 sq ft
- Grade C – approximately 595,000 sq ft

PBSA assists with wider regeneration aims, making a significant and important contribution to the recycling of poorer quality redundant office/building stock. Of particular relevance in Table 1 is that 8 of the 10 PBSA city centre developments at former office sites involve the regeneration of poorer grade C quality stock.

- 3.3 It is important to recognise that students have a varied range of housing needs / preferences and diversity should therefore exist amongst PBSA provision to account for this and provide attractive alternatives to the general housing stock. Positive engagement with developers and operators ensures that not only does new development provide choice amongst provision, but also that existing stock is reviewed and refurbished appropriately. It is expected that should new accommodation result in vacancies within older stock, market forces would encourage operators to invest/improve the desirability of their existing property.
- 3.4 Although further PBSA provision is required, the council's Article 4 and letting board directions are beginning to have a tangible effect. Planning applications for additional HMOs in areas of high concentration have been resisted that would have otherwise developed unchecked, with successful dismissal of a number of subsequent appeals. These initiatives have enabled the council to proactively manage and control HMO properties such that retractions in the number of HMOs, particularly on the fringes of 'highly concentrated' areas have been noted by both officers and landlords, as have improvements to the appearance, character and quality of the neighbourhoods. The introduction next year of additional licensing for HMO properties will also positively contribute to this.
- 3.5 There is currently opportunity to input into the planning policies of the emerging LAPP document. The inclusion of additional justification text in support of policy for new PBSA will be pursued to help to raise accommodation standards and promote diversity in accommodation format in order to be more attractive to returning students. Protecting family homes, managing HMOs, directing PBSA to appropriate locations and ensuring

high standards of design (both internally and externally) are all supported and promoted in the current version of the LAPP document.

#### **4. Conclusion/next steps**

- 4.1 The situation in relation to completed PBSA is noted, as is the need for further provision. There is no evidence that identifies an 'oversupply' of PBSA in response to existing planning policy objectives and the current approach will continue in order to assist reducing demand on traditional housing suitable for family occupation and aid regeneration.
- 4.2 The emerging LAPP document reaffirms the council's approach and provides an opportunity to encourage greater diversity amongst PBSA stock, particularly improving desirability of such provision to returning students. The document identifies sites suitable for new PBSA development and this contributes to the management of student accommodation distribution. Reviewing good practice elsewhere in other core cities is also considered to be appropriate.
- 4.3 Continue to monitor/review the effects of planning policy objectives and initiatives, particularly with regard to vacant properties, recognising potential difficulties and reluctance of landlords to replace student residents with family/residential households.
- 4.4 The forthcoming publication of Unipol's report on the 'Assessment of Student Residence and Housing Market Conditions in Nottingham' is acknowledged and the research welcomed. A number of the suggestions in the report support the council's current approach, whilst other elements are beyond the planning remit. It is expected that the council will fully respond to the content and recommendations of this report in due course.