



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Update on research into Economic Impact of Students in the City and Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Lead Operations Officer, Health and Environmental Services, ext 3281
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<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Belfast currently has 5 Higher Education Institutions across the city and by 2018 will have 2 major University campuses close to the city centre. There is also a growing international student market which presents a significant opportunity for Belfast in terms of international marketing, tourism and knowledge research.
1.2	International and UK research has shown that students studying and living within cities make a significant contribution to local and regional economies. To inform Council's ongoing work with partners on developing Belfast as a 'Learning City' and in developing a coherent strategic approach to student housing in the city, supplementary research to identify the economic impact of students in the city of Belfast has been completed. This report requests that Members note the research findings, a summary of which is provided in Appendix I.
1.3	Members will be aware of a number of key workstrands that have been taken forward by the Council over recent years which have identified the need to develop Belfast as a Learning city and destination of choice for students, to harness the potential for economic growth, recommending a number of key actions for Council and its partners in relation to future provision of student accommodation in the city. Related workstrands have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) <b>Draft City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment framework</b></li><li>b) <b>Belfast City Masterplan Review.</b></li><li>c) <b>Anchor Institutions Research</b></li><li>d) <b>Integrated Economic Strategy.</b></li></ul>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>e) Holylands and Wider University Area Strategic Study</b></p>
1.4	In taking forward the Strategic Study report recommendations, Belfast City Council has been leading a Joint Team (including DSD, NIHE, DoE, SIB), to develop a coherent strategic approach to provision of student housing within the city.
1.5	Members will recall as part of this work, Council published a ' <b>Framework for Student Housing and Purpose Built Student Accommodation</b> ' in April 2014 (developed with partners on the Student Housing Joint Team with input by HEIs and other stakeholders) which sets out the need for purpose built student accommodation in Belfast that is high quality, safe, secure, well managed and properly accredited accommodation. The Framework proposes a range of proposed planning criteria regarding the location, design, management impact of, and need for future proposals for student accommodation (Appendix III).
1.6	As agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 March 2014, support for these criteria are highlighted in responses from Belfast City Council to planning consultations by Planning Service on PBSA planning applications in the city. This approach aims to ensure that emerging PBSA developments deliver the standard of accommodation and accredited management required, to meet the needs of the 'Learning city', attracting more local and international students to the City and managing impacts on communities.
1.7	To strengthen this approach, the Framework document proposes that these criteria could form the basis for a future revised planning policy for PBSA (HMO Subject Plan, Policy HMO7) after 2015, following transfer of planning powers under Local Government Reform).

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>The research into the <i>Economic Impact of Higher Education Students on the Economy of Belfast</i> commissioned by Belfast City Council earlier in 2014 and undertaken by Viewforth Consulting identified that students coming to Belfast from outside the city (33,397 students in total) were estimated to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute £384.5million off campus expenditure (excludes tuition fees) to the Belfast economy,</li> <li>• Create over 4,000 full time equivalent jobs and</li> <li>• Contribute £192.32million to GVA. (A summary of key findings of this research is provided in Appendix I)</li> </ul> <p><b>Emerging PBSA proposals in Belfast</b></p>
2.2	Members will be aware of a number of recent proposals for PBSA developments in the city through a number of sources including news stories in the media, planning applications or developer contacts. A summary of known proposals in the city is provided in Appendix II.
2.3	As proposals for PBSA developments progress through community engagement and planning application phases, Members will need to consider the merits of such developments within the context of aspirations previously endorsed by Council to develop Belfast as a learning city and the potential for city regeneration and economic growth, arising from the contribution of the higher education sector and students. Additionally, Members are advised to refer to the

	proposed planning criteria as endorsed by Council and the Student Housing Joint Team partners, outlined in the 'Framework for Student Housing and PBSA' (Appendix III).
2.4	As previously outlined to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 March 2014 work is continuing with key partners including SIB, DSD and DEL, to explore the feasibility of options for the facilitation of purpose built student accommodation. A report outlining the outcome of this work will be brought to committee once this has progressed further.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<u>Financial</u>
3.1	Costs for development of the student housing strategy have been allowed for in existing revenue estimates.
	<u>Human Resources</u>
3.2	Council input to joint working arrangements with Joint Team partners is met from existing staffing arrangements.
	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u>
3.3	None

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	There are no equality or good relations considerations in relation to this report – (information for noting only)

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the research into Economic Impact of Students in the City and the contents of this report on purpose built managed student accommodation.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	PBSA – Purpose Built Student Accommodation PBMSA – Purpose Built <b>Managed</b> Student Accommodation GVA – Gross Value Added is a measure of the value created by the sector (a measure of the net change in wealth or prosperity in the economy as a whole over the year.) SIB – Strategic Investment Board NIHE – Northern Ireland Housing Executive DSD – Department of Social Development DoE – Department of the Environment

DEL – Department for Employment and Learning  
DFP – Department of Finance and Personnel  
HEI – Higher Education Institution

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Appendix I – Summary of research findings – Economic Value of Higher Education students to the economy of Belfast

Appendix II – Summary list of current PBSA proposals within Belfast

Appendix III – Planning Criteria proposed in the 'Framework for Student Housing and Purpose Built Student Accommodation'



## APPENDIX I - Summary of Research findings

### The Economic Impact of Higher Education Students on the Economy of Belfast, Report prepared for Belfast City Council by Viewforth Consulting, 2014

Key findings for Belfast economy:

- Belfast's share of Higher Education Institution staffing is 6019 FTE (out of 7205 FTE in NI).
- Belfast's share of the direct output of the HEIs was £485 million, directly generating £321 million GVA\*.
- Knock-on/additional output created in the city economy (in other industries) is £368 million, creating an additional 4525 fte jobs and contributing £187 million to GVA.
- Total impact of the HEIs on the city economy is output of £853 million, 10,544 fte jobs and £508million contributed to GVA.
- Impact of off campus expenditure of students coming to Belfast from outside the city (33,397 students in total) is estimated to be £384.5million output generated, 4212 FTE jobs created and £192.32million contribution to GVA.
- **The total output generated by Higher Education and HE students in Belfast is £1.2 billion, creating 14,756 fte jobs, and contributing £700.3million to GVA.**
- Impacts per student (per capita) –

Type of student	Average per capita output generated in Belfast Industries	Average per Capita jobs generated in Belfast	Average per capita GVA generated in Belfast Industries
Non-EU students	£21,081	0.22 fte jobs	£10,704
Rest of EU students	£15,802	0.16 fte jobs	£7,749
Rest of UK students	£15,365	0.15 fte jobs	£7,376
Rest of NI students	£17,573	0.18 fte jobs	£8,394

*\*GVA or 'Gross Value Added' is a measure of the value created by the sector – GVA is the industry level measure of GDP (O). GDP(O) is a production measure of the net change in wealth or prosperity in the economy as a whole over the year.*

Copies of this research report can be obtained by contacting Michael McKenna, Urban Development Officer on extension 2551.

APPENDIX II - Summary of Purpose Built Student Accommodation proposals in Belfast

Location	Potential bedspaces	Status/Comment
<b>Full Planning Applications</b>		
1A College Square East (former Belfast Met College building)	414	Full Planning application submitted by Watkin Jones/Lacuna Developments 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2014 Z/2014/1172/F. Developer previously issued press releases June 2014, and hosted a community engagement event in August 2014.
1-7 Lennoxvale and site of 52 Malone Road	172	QUB submitted full planning application 24 October 2012 – Z/2012/1210/F. QUB currently making amendments to scheme (reduced scale) for consideration by DoE Planning.
55-63 University Street and 101-111 Botanic Ave	71	QUB submitted planning application 21st December 2012 - Z/2013/0012/F. Awaiting decision.
<b>Outline Planning Applications</b>		
Land at Wellwood Street/Glenalpin Street	391	Outline planning application submitted 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2014 - Z/2014/1032/O
Land at York Street	200	Outline planning Application submitted 9 <sup>th</sup> April 2014 - Z/2014/0479/O
<b>Pre Application Enquiries</b>		
Lands at York Street (including Philip House)	489	Pre application Enquiry submitted to Planning Service (August 2014)
28-30 Great Patrick Street	550	Pre application Enquiry submitted to Planning Service (August 2014)
<b>Approvals</b>		
Mark Royal House, Donegall Street	45	Planning permission approved 19/12/13 for conversion of offices to 45 beds student accommodation.
<b>TOTAL BEDS</b>	<b>2332</b>	

APPENDIX III – Planning Criteria proposed in the ‘Framework for Student Housing and Purpose Built Student Accommodation’

The proposed planning criteria set out in the document are:

- i. Proximity: the development is within 15 minutes walking distance of a university/college campus or on a high frequency public transport route.*
- ii. Design: the nature, layout and design of the development are appropriate to its location and context and would not result in an unacceptable impact on local character, environmental quality or residential amenity. The development should be designed to deter crime and promote personal safety.*
- iii. Management: an appropriate Management Plan is in place to minimise potential negative impacts from occupants and the development on surrounding properties and neighbourhoods and to create a positive and safe living environment for students. This may require an Article 40 Planning Agreement with the relevant authority prior to the issue of planning permission (or Article 76 of the 2011 Planning Act);*
- iv. Impact: the development would not result in an unacceptable impact upon surrounding residential neighbourhoods in itself or when considered alongside existing and approved student housing provision.*
- v. Need: the development meets an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed.*

As agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 March 2014, support for these criteria are highlighted in responses from Belfast City Council to planning consultations by Planning Service on PBSA planning applications in the city.