



Subject:	<i>Student Housing - Planning and Place Advice Guidelines</i>
Date:	<i>20 October 2015</i>
Reporting Officer:	<i>Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Keith Sutherland, Development Planning and Policy Manager</i>

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	This report seeks Committee endorsement of new internal guidelines the Council to consider when assessing current and future planning applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast City Centre.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Agree the adoption of the draft Planning and Place Advice Note on Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast attached at Appendix 1.
2.2	Note that a future report will be brought to committee in relation to associated new Best Practice Guidelines.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>On 18 August 2015, this Committee agreed a series of steps to be undertaken to provide the Council with appropriate tools to deal with the recent influx of planning applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast City Centre. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term (3-5 years) – The inclusion of new policies to address any policy deficiencies within the New Local Development Plan;• Medium-term (6-9months) – The preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance to address gaps in the existing policy framework; and• Short-term – the preparation of two guidance documents based on the existing policy framework as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Technical, internal ‘guidelines’ to ensure a consistent approach when determining

	<p>planning applications for PBMSA; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A 'Best Practice Guide' to encourage the development of good quality PBMSA in the right locations. <p>3.2 This report relates to the first of these short-term actions and committee are requested to approve the adoption and immediate use of the draft 'Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Advice Note' contained at Appendix 1.</p> <p>3.3 As technical internal guidance, this document is intended to the Council with advice for considering proposals for PBMSA in Belfast. It represents non-statutory planning guidance and gives detailed advice around the City-wide approach to PBMSA and how to pro-actively encourage good quality development in the right locations. It contains a summary of the current context an existing planning policy framework and sets out guidance in relation to six key criteria that will be considered when assessing applications for PBMSA, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The development should be at a location which is easily accessible to university/college campuses by sustainable transport modes; B. Policy designations specific to the City Centre; C. Layout, design and facilities provided within the development are of high standards; D. The development should be designed in a way that does not conflict with adjacent properties or the general amenity of the surrounding area; E. The development has appropriate management in place to create a positive and safe living environment for students whilst minimising any potential negative impacts from occupants; and F. The development meets and identified need for the type of accommodation proposed. <p>3.4 The document also provides guidance in relation to the use of planning conditions and/or legal planning agreements to mitigate perceived problems, such as noise or anti-social behaviour, etc. arising from student occupation.</p> <p>3.5 It should be noted that these guidelines are not a statement of policy as to where PBMSA can or cannot take place, but rather articulate the Council's position on student accommodation in the city, highlighting the relevant planning policies and other material considerations to be referenced when considering proposals for PBMSA. It should therefore be read in the context of the existing Planning Policy framework, including the new Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for NI (published September 2015), the suite of other relevant regional Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015.</p> <p>3.6 It should also be read alongside an associated 'Best Practice Guide' which is currently being drafted to encourage the provision of good quality PBMSA in suitable locations by providing prospective developers with guidance to help shape proposals from the earliest opportunity. This related Guide will be brought for endorsement to a future committee meeting.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
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4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Advice Note, October 2015