



Subject:	<i>Student Housing - Planning and Place Good Practice Guide</i>
Date:	<i>15 December 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 a new Best Practice Guide for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast City Centre. It builds upon the Advice Note following Committee endorsement in October 2015 and helps articulate the Council's vision for PBMSA in the city to prospective developers.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Agree the adoption of the draft Planning and Place Best Practice Guide on Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast attached at Appendix 1.
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 the 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 planning applications for PBMSA; and○ A 'Best Practice Guide' to encourage the development of good quality PBMSA in the right locations.

3.2	<p>On 20 October 2015, the first of these short-term reports entitled 'Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Advice Note' was approved for adoption and immediate use by this Committee. This report relates to the second of these short-term actions and the Committee are requested to approve the adoption and immediate use of the draft 'Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Best Practice Guide' contained at Appendix 1 for publication.</p>
3.3	<p>Whilst the Advice Note aims to consolidate the existing policy framework for use internally, the Best Practice Guide has been produced to assist applicants and agents in their understanding of the Council's aspirations with regards to PBMSA in Belfast. It seeks to encourage the development of good quality PBMSA in the right locations by explaining how new developments can be best planned and designed prior to submitting planning applications. It is structured around the eight key areas containing best practice guidance in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application considerations – Encouraging early engagement with the Council and local communities; • Locational considerations – Promoting suitable locations within the City Centre as preferred locations for PBMSA; • Policy designations – Outlining relevant planning policy constraints; • Design Considerations – Encouraging good quality, well-designed PBMSA in terms of layout, accommodation mix, open space, parking, facilities, waste and recycling, safety and crime prevention and energy reduction; • Considering impact – Helping reduce negative effects whilst capturing any positive impacts of PBMSA development; • Management considerations – Ensuring effective management arrangements to deliver a safe and positive environment for students, whilst reducing the risk of potential negative impacts on the local community; • Considering need – Ensuring the right balance between meeting student housing needs and preventing an over-supply of PBMSA; and • Planning Agreement and Developer Contributions – Summarising issues in relation to PBMSA where the Council may consider the use of planning agreements. <p>3.4 The Guide is designed to be referenced by developers when first considering proposals for PBMSA developments and it is hoped that the correct application of the guidance will ensure an appropriate supply of good quality PBMSA in the right locations, helping the Council deliver an integrated approach to the management of student accommodation across the city.</p> <p>3.5 It should be noted that the Guide is not a statement of policy as to where PBMSA can or cannot take place, but rather articulates the Council's view on student accommodation in the city to be referenced when considering proposals for PBMSA. It should therefore be read in conjunction with the wider planning policy framework, as well as the associated Planning and Place Advice Note.</p> <p>3.6 <u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.</p> <p>3.7 <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Best Practice Guide, January 2016</p>