

Leeds Housing

A Strategy for Housing Students in Leeds

2005 – 2010

**1st Draft
26th September 2006**

Leeds
City
Council

UNIPOL

University
of Leeds

Leeds
Metropolitan
University

Leeds
Property
Forum

Leeds
HMO
Lobby

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This strategy is being drawn up to ensure that accommodation of students in Leeds is developed and managed in a way that does not dominate and cause difficulties for residential and often long-standing populations. The development of such a strategy has become a major priority for the City Council, the Universities, community groups, the Student Unions and housing providers.

National targets to increase the number and proportion of people entering higher education linked to a desire to improve economic competitiveness, have led to a large-scale expansion in the numbers of young people seeking higher education. Leeds has proved a popular location for students and now hosts over 50,000 students.

Over many years students have tended to congregate in the Leeds 6 area (Woodhouse, Hyde Park, South Headingley, Central Headingley and Far Headingley). Many Halls of Residence and Student Flat complexes are in the area along with a large private rented sector traditionally based on back-to-back houses, terraces and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) but increasingly spreading into semi-detached and detached homes coming onto the market. This has had a significant impact on the residential communities of those areas.

There has recently been substantial private sector investment in purpose built accommodation blocks for students that are complementing new purpose built accommodation provided by the two Universities. This will add a significant amount of new accommodation for students over the coming years and has implications for the amount of viable housing for students given the expected 'smoothing out' of applications from students and the prospects of surplus of housing for students. This along with the licensing of HMOs and the requirements of compliance with the Home Health and Safety Rating may have an impact on the supply of private rented shared housing in the Leeds 6 area.

Action on shared housing in the Leeds 6 area and on neighbourhood management in inner NW Leeds needs to take place through other strategic processes, in particular relating to the North West Leeds District Plan has so far been coordinated through a Shared Housing Action Plan (SHAP which tried to coordinate action being taken in Leeds 6 to mitigate the problems arising from the dominant student population. It was successful in this but did less in terms of addressing issues of balance and sustainability. While this strategy can deal with the issue of housing students and seek to The Leeds HMO Lobby has been promoting the Headingley Renaissance, a long term solution for the issues facing Leeds 6 and its metamorphosis into 'Leeds Left Bank'.

What will happen in the student housing market over the coming years is far from clear with many providers both entering and leaving the market. Collation of research and intelligence on student housing need to be drawn together and approaches to tackling emerging issues need to be developed and coordinated.

The purpose of this Strategy for Housing Students in Leeds is to set out a strategic framework for the provision of good quality, well-managed, affordable housing for students coming to Leeds; avoiding concentrations of students in one particular part of the city and ensuring effective management of areas of the city with student populations. It aims to identify a clear set of objectives, priority themes and roles and responsibilities for delivering them and is accompanied by a robust second iteration of 'SHAP' with clear priorities and short-medium and long-term objectives and measurable 'SMART' targets.

1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

Purpose

To provide a strategic framework for interventions aimed at housing appropriately the students coming to Leeds, achieving a balance in provision for students within neighbourhoods and management of areas containing student populations.

Objectives

- a) To welcome students to come to Leeds to study and remain in the city and support the role of the Universities and other higher and further education facilities in Leeds in meeting the needs of competitive national, regional, city-regional and local economies
- b) To ensure provision of high quality, well-managed and affordable housing for students in a number of areas with a good range of facilities and amenities
- c) To monitor the provision of new housing for students to establish quality and affordability of provision
- d) To encourage a mix of purpose build accommodation for students with well-managed shared or self-contained housing provided by accredited private landlords and Registered Social Landlords and other public or not-for-profit housing providers where appropriate
- e) To encourage a strategic and planned approach to the development of new purpose built housing for students
- f) To ensure provision of housing for students is available across the city within a clear strategic framework and reduces the concentration of students in the Leeds 6 area
- g) To enable the regenerative contributions of students and the 'student pound' to benefit a wider range of areas
- h) To ensure that agencies providing housing to students engage in and support neighbourhood management initiatives in areas where students live and to help ensure that neighbourhoods accommodating student populations are well managed, free from nuisance and have levels of crime no higher than for the city as a whole.
- i) To support all housing providers to improve standards of tenancy and housing management and to ensure that the behaviour of students as residents is not injurious to those they live alongside
- j) To encourage students to be active members of the communities in which they live.
- k) To ensure that this strategy contributes to wider strategic approaches to improve the stability and sustainability of neighbourhoods in inner North West Leeds

Links

This strategy forms part of the range of housing strategies that support and form part of the overall Leeds Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010. It links to the Vision for Leeds, the Leeds City Growth Strategy, Leeds Regeneration Plan, the Leeds Strategy for Private Rented Housing and local strategies such as the Headingley Renaissance.

2. KEY DRIVERS, ISSUES AND NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

The intention to increase the numbers of young people entering higher education is being developed to improve the skills base of the British economy and enhance the knowledge economy that will form one of the driving forces of future economic growth. However, the increase in the numbers of young people entering higher education brought issues of how and where to house the increasing numbers. This led to the emergence of 'studentification' in the towns and cities with large student populations, where students and shared housing in multiple occupation dominated residential areas.

However, over the last two years there are signs of change. Student numbers have been stabilising; new purpose built housing and the impact of HMO licensing are beginning to change the structure of housing provision for students and there are surplus homes and bedspaces in the 'traditional areas' of student concentration. Now alongside concerns relating to the concentrations of students living in Inner North West Leeds, there are emerging concerns over what the impact of any continuing 'destudentification'. This brings with it some tangled and difficult issues relating to the future balance and composition of the communities comprising inner North West Leeds.

It is clear that continuing monitoring, research and evaluation will need to take place over the coming 18 months to track and monitor the impact of the expansion of new purpose-built student housing; the impact of HMO licensing and the Home Health and Safety rating on the private rented sector; any significant changes in student demand patterns that may further influence future provision and how the composition and balance of housing and population in the various parts of inner North West Leeds.

NATIONAL DRIVERS

There are a number of national, regional, sub-regional and local drivers to the development of a student housing strategy and action plan.

Higher Education Targets: the current Government has set targets for at least 50% of young people to gain access to higher education as part of its drive to improve skills levels amongst the UK workforce, provide high levels of skilled graduates for private and public sector enterprises and thus improve economic competitiveness. The Government has also introduced tuition fees to help pay for expansion. It is not yet clear what impact this may have for the numbers of students entering higher education and on where they may live.

The Communities Plan: Building for the Future (2004) outlined the Government's aim to create and maintain sustainable communities through promotion of 'decent housing' across tenures; or of tackling low demand wherever it occurs; and through ensuring the provision of sufficient affordable housing to meet needs and requirements. The ODPM's Five-year plan '**Homes for All**' (2005) sets out the intended implementation of the Sustainable Communities plan. The Government is also concerned to ensure **mixed communities** exist especially where one housing tenure or social group is dominant.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL DRIVERS

The **Regional Economic Strategy** sets the continued attraction of people to Yorkshire and Humberside's universities to study, increase the number of graduates able to contribute to economic growth and in particular the retention of graduates within the region as a key priority in meeting the demands of a competitive economy.

The **Regional Housing Strategy** places the creation and maintenance of 'better places' as a key priority, striving to ensure the sustainability of neighbourhoods, ensuring fair access to housing for all those in need, the creation and maintenance of community cohesion and the linkage of housing provision to support economic growth

The **Leeds City Region Development Plan**, with Leeds at its heart, also recognises the need to improve the skills base of people within the area and achieve more graduates working in the region if the economic potential of the economy of the Leeds City Region is to realise its potential. The plan identifies the attraction of undergraduate and post graduate/overseas students to the Universities in the City Region area (Huddersfield, Bradford, Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan and York) and the retention of graduate students as being integral to its plans to achieve increased economic growth and Gross Value Added (GVA).

LOCAL STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Ensuring that Leeds has a flourishing 'knowledge' economy is a priority of Vision for Leeds and the Councils **Economic Development Strategy**. The requirement for a highly skilled workforce is crucial to the continued success of Leeds economically. Attracting undergraduates and postgraduates to Leeds and retaining graduate students provide an important basis for future economic growth. Locally, the 'student pound' can be important as a regenerative tool. However, the rapid increase in numbers of students coming to Leeds has driven a growing need for housing both for new and returning students. Although, there is now evidence of a 'flattening' of student numbers which may have implications for future housing demand.

[Figures on student numbers and trends]

The **Vision for Leeds**, the Community Strategy for Leeds has among its priorities ensuring 'Thriving Places' and 'Harmonious Communities' and the creation of sustainable, mixed communities is a key objective of national, regional, sub-regional and local housing and regeneration strategy.

The **Leeds Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010** identifies the creation and maintenance of decent Places as one of its key strategic themes and promotes the housing of students in decent affordable housing but in a way that does not counter its overriding aim of creating and maintaining sustainable communities.

The **North West Leeds District Plan** sets out the priorities for implementation of the Leeds regeneration plan in north west Leeds and the local priorities for action to provide effective neighbourhood management and service improvement. It includes actions relating to student housing and the management and improvement of inner North West Leeds.

LOCAL ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

There are a number of specific local issues relating to student housing provision, the diversification of student populations and housing provision and the future development of the various neighbourhoods comprising inner North West Leeds.

Decent, well-managed and affordable housing for Students

Ensuring that is available and accessible to students is a key aim of those involved in housing students in Leeds

Changing Universities accommodation policies

The University of Leeds currently provides xxxx bedspaces for students. Xxxx of those are head leased from other providers. The University has been reviewing its policy towards accommodating students. Existing halls of residence are being maintained but the University is selling some assets including the Tetley Hall residence, increasing some existing 'buying in provision' through partnership agreements with private providers and [redeveloping/remodelling St Marks and Charles Morris Hall].(See Appendix ?)

LMU housing policy has been to withdraw from direct provision. Its residences were sold off and leased back in xxxx and LMU is buying in provision through partnership agreements with private providers (UPP). The movement of teaching to the Becketts Park campus was accompanied by the closure of the halls of residence on the campus leading to students seeking housing in the surrounding Becketts Park and Far Headingley. However, LMU is now proposing moving some teaching back to the city-site and proposing provision of purpose-built accommodation on campus at Becketts Park. LMU are now able to offer university accommodation to all 1st year students, with potential impact for demand for shared housing in the surrounding area.

UNIPOL

UNIPOL provide over 1,000 bedspaces in purpose built schemes such as Mill Street and Carlton Hill along with a range of accommodation directly as well as providing a 'clearing house' for private rented shared accommodation provided by private landlords.

UNIPOL have seen strong demand for all their accommodation but recently it has been hard to let properties on the fringes of the Headingley/Hyde park axis such as Meanwood. UNIPOL are mindful of the potential challenge to shared private rented housing posed by the new private sector purpose built accommodation, but hold strong concerns about the affordability of such provision and accordingly its long term future. They along with other are concerned that there could be a future oversupply similar to the concerns surrounding the volume of city-centre apartments.

Purpose build housing

There has been a huge expansion of purpose-built accommodation for students in the form of direct provision by Universities; commissioned facilities by Universities with private providers, UNIPOL provision and market derived private sector provision (UNITE, Liberty Park, Opel Court). This has largely been in the form of self-catering halls in cluster units with communal facilities and '24/7' management/support provision. By summer 2007 private sector provision may be in the region of 4,000 bedspaces and it is anticipated that private provision will be in excess of 5,000 bedspaces by 2009. (see Appendix ?)

There has been a huge expansion of supply especially in area between Burley Road and Kirkstall Road adjacent to Little Woodhouse offering en-suite bedrooms, high degree of security; all-in deals; hospitality services (hotel services) and internal facilities (gyms, swimming pools, communal areas with plasma screens etc). There has been strong criticism of the lack of infrastructure and amenities especially parking in the Burley Road/ Kirkstall Road complexes although UNITE and the other providers are clearly requesting students NOT to bring cars and have negotiated bus service to city site and Becketts Park campuses.

While University provided or commissioned facilities have been targeted at 1st year students only, the provision by private providers is targeted at all students. The scale of the new building brings with it the possibility of combined University-provided and private sector provision exceeding the numbers of 1st year students. This would leave space to fill and pressure on providers to market accommodation to returning students currently living in shared private rented housing. Unite and others are aiming for a 3 year stay by students and are robustly marketing to returning students as well as to 1st years. There is already some evidence of 3rd year students moving into the new purpose build complexes seeking quiet and safe surroundings for their final year. Unite and Liberty Living have also been marketing at overseas students and have agents in Cyprus and Greece.

There are concerns over the affordability of the purpose-built accommodation and that high rent levels may lead to a higher drop out rate as students are unable to afford to meet all outgoings. However, some complexes are offering fuel bill payment and internet use as part of the rental payment bringing rents closer to the combined costs of rent and living costs in private rented housing.

Private rented sector

There are currently xx,xxx bedspaces in private rented housing in inner North West Leeds. Substantial private rented provision will inevitably continue for students in inner NW Leeds and there are few signs of students moving to access private rented housing in other areas where there is a significant private rented sector.

However, some landlords are becoming less confident in continuing strong demand from students and that competition from the purpose-built student accommodation will further reduce demand. Some landlords have begun to sell properties onto the market already. Other landlords have ceased purchasing properties for HMOs and some are gradually selling off parts of their portfolio. One landlord has estimated selling 20-30% of holding. Selling of properties may be at the margins (i.e. outside the 'epicentres of student housing' such as Meanwood, Armley, Kirkstall etc) or would be 'pepper-potted' throughout the area.

Landlords are also facing significant costs arising from compliance with HMO licensing and the introduction of the Home Health and Safety Rating System under the Housing Act 2004. Large portfolio landlords face putting into effect substantial alterations to their properties while the sorts of alterations that are required (e.g. replacing 'traditional doors' with flat fire doors and installation of basins in each bedroom) may provide 'de-conversion' costs to any would be 'residential' purchasers in the future. Landlords offering shared housing that could be classified as HMOs could take one of a number of routes

- Cover the costs of compliance and carry on as usual
- Reduce capacity of houses accommodating 5 or more students to escape licensing
- Reduce capacity of houses, convert bedrooms to bathrooms/communal lounges
- Let to young professionals or other groups (homeless households, Asylum seekers, economic migrants from the EU accession states)
- Sell up

With house prices continuing to rise and the age of 1st time buyers increasing there is an increasing market from young professionals sharing housing. Some landlords are already letting to young professionals and workers and see this part of the market expanding and there is a view that some larger properties sold back onto the market by landlords may be converted into flats aimed at young professional couples or sharers seeking to rent.

Leeds City Council have an active policy of leasing private rented housing for housing homeless households as an alternative to provision of hostel accommodation or other temporary accommodation, while accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees with leave to stay has also been into private rented housing in other parts of Leeds with private rented housing stock.

The large numbers of migrants from the EU accession states taking up jobs in the construction, service, retail and leisure sectors in Leeds do not currently qualify for access to social housing and are currently prone to sharp practice and sub-standard, overcrowded housing conditions. They consequently provide a source of potential demand for surplus properties.

Surplus bedspaces

Concerns are being expressed about likely surpluses in bedspaces in the range of student provision. arising from rapidly increasing supply of housing for students (through new purpose-built housing and an expanding investment sector) combining with lower increases in student numbers than in past years.

UNIPOL are currently reporting a surplus of 3,000 bedspaces in the private rented sector which should be compared to a surplus of 1,500 bedspaces when the market is in equilibrium. This equates to up to 900 homes unlet. While most expect the surplus to be in the private rented sector, it could be that there could be surplus places in purpose built or university provided or commissioned accommodation, and indeed 150 surplus places have been reported in University of Leeds accommodation currently. The surplus may well become higher if predictions of a levelling out in student numbers to 2010 do materialise.

Diversifying the locations of housing for students throughout the city

A key concern of local residents and community groups has been over the impact of the concentration of students in inner north west Leeds. Studentification (Dr Darren Smith) was coined as a description for the dominance of residential neighbourhoods by students living in shared houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

Location of students

Data collected from the two universities shows a continuing concentration of students in the various communities inner north-west Leeds. The only change has come with more students resident in or close to Leeds City Centre in purpose-built student accommodation 'halls' run by Leeds University, UNIPOL or private sector providers. This confirms anecdotal evidence from stakeholders that:

- little significant movement will have taken place;
- development of purpose-built housing in city centre fringe locations may bring some gradual future spread into areas outside inner NW Leeds;
- the movement of students into Becketts Park and Far Headingley was partly driven by the shift in teaching by LMU from the city centre to the Becketts Park campus and the accompanying closure of the campus based Halls of Residence. It was also partly driven by the attractiveness of housing in the area (in both physical and investment terms) to parents buying to house their child for their duration at university. However, with LMU proposing to move some teaching back to the City Site and with an ability now to offer all 1st year students university accommodation, this may lead to movement of students from the Becketts Park area over the coming years;
- some students, especially those based at the LMU city sites, have increasingly moved back towards Hyde Park with those at Becketts Park campus seeking housing close to the campus.
- there has been some movement of students from the Kirkstall Brewery complex to the adjacent area suggesting that movements of students may take place from purpose built housing to adjacent areas;
- recent research by Leeds University Union showed a continuing preference to live either in Hyde Park or Headingley. However, there appears to have been a switch in student preferences. Darren Smith's research in 2003 showed 51% of students preferring to live in Headingley and 22% in Hyde Part. The recent Leeds University Union research showed 49% preferring Hyde park and 36% Headingley.
- There is some evidence of students choosing to live at home while studying, either in Leeds, or in surrounding towns and cities, in order to save money or as a result of concerns over tuition fees and costs of housing and transport.

Map

Further analysis of student locations including analysis of which particular parts of inner North West Leeds have the highest concentrations of students is underway. Research will also be taking place to track those entering purpose built accommodation and chart their moving intentions.

Area of Housing Mix

A planning policy proposed in the Leeds UDP review to restrain the development of purpose built housing or conversion of residential housing to HMOs in a defined area – the Area of Student Housing restraint (ASHORE). In his judgement on the Leeds UDP review the Planning Inspector rejected the ASHORE policy and instead recommended there be an Area of Housing Mix covering most parts of inner North West Leeds aimed at enabling through planning policy a mix of housing that can accommodate students while not unacceptably reducing the number of families living in the area and avoiding unreasonable impacts on residents. In particular, the Inspector proposed through purpose-built student accommodation rather than shared private rented housing could better meet student housing needs without taking up family residential housing. While the Planning Inspector's report raised concerns amongst local residents representatives and local authority officers, it is felt that the recommended policy could achieve the same ends as ASHORE was intended to do.

Alternative provision

Plans had been pursued to create alternative 'student villages' for example in Holbeck and Little London) but these have not materialised and work is needed to establish which types of area and what sort of mix of facilities may attract students to live there and where a 'critical mass' of students could be established to develop alternatives to Leeds 6. It is commonly agreed that the possibility of an 'alternative student village' is off the agenda for the foreseeable future.

New, large-scale purpose-built accommodation

The significant private sector investment (by businesses such as Unite) in developing new, large-scale purpose-built accommodation close to the city centre is diversifying provision to areas outside the central Headingley/Hyde Park axis. This is being developed from a commercial basis in terms of the choice of sites and type of housing. Applications have been assessed on case by case basis rather than within a clearly defined strategic framework and the cumulative impact on surrounding areas, in Little Woodhouse for example may have been underestimated..

Student Demand and Preferences

All indications are that student numbers will not rise at the rate they have over recent years and that numbers will stabilise. It is not yet known what impact tuition fees will have on numbers of students coming to Leeds or of any variation given the decision by LMU to charge fees lower than the 'national' £3000 figure, Student preferences in terms of types and location of housing appear at the moment to be the same as has been evident in past research

There appears to be a slight reduction in student numbers coming to the University of Leeds offset by an increase to Leeds Metropolitan University (possibly due to their charging lower fees than other universities).

Stabilising or even falling numbers has brought a slowing of demand for housing. Some landlords and UNIPOL have reported difficulties in letting properties especially in areas on the fringes of the Headingley/Hyde Park core. Some landlords bought in the expectation of continually growing demand and may be fuelling some of the current surplus.

Student Preferences

Surveys of students (Studentification: Dr Darren Smith, LMU study 2004 and Leeds University Union study 2006) have indicated that preferences are for

- the traditional model of 1st year in halls of residence/student flats and subsequent years in shared housing 'in the community' remains the most popular and that most students see living in shared housing as a key part of the 'student experience'. UNITE and other private providers have suggested increasing popularity of purpose built housing amongst 3rd years/finalists;
- areas with significant numbers of other students. Other research (JRF research on Rising Housing markets in Yorkshire and Humberside) has shown that households have a tendency to segregate themselves to live with people of similar characteristics, lifestyles and norms/values. LUU research suggests that current preferences for Leeds 6 will not change while students continue to promote them to other students

- areas which are close to the Universities campuses (in Leeds case both city sites and Becketts Park) as this reduces transport costs and delivers proximity
- areas with a good range of facilities and amenities that students would want to use (including shops, leisure and entertainment facilities).

Accordingly, if significant numbers of students are to move away from inner NW Leeds and Headingley/Hyde Part in particular then it will only be to areas with a 'critical mass' of students and the types of infrastructure currently in existence in Headingley. Students are unlikely to move in ones or twos to other areas

Facilities and Amenities

Recent Leeds University Union research shows security and standards of housing were both very important to students. The continuing vulnerability of students and student housing to burglary, vehicle theft and other crime will continue to be a factor in determining where students live. While the quality of shared private rented housing has clearly improved, there are still poor quality housing for let. With the impact of tuition fees some students may be forced into poorer quality cheaper housing. Concerns about security and quality may 'push' some students into the private sector purpose built accommodation offering safety, security and high specification accommodation with '24/7' support.

Cost issues

While the costs of housing are important to students, cost of housing is not as important as other factors. The LUU research showed that while costs of accommodation were considered to be important or very important to 90% of students, it was very important to 50% compared to 76% ranking housemates as very important ; 73% the standard of property; 69% the location and 61% security. Issues relating to cost tend to depend on whether students pay rent themselves. It is not clear what impact the introduction of tuition fees will have on the housing choices of students (or their parents). There will be a balance between the costs of accommodation and meeting living and studying costs.

Attitudes to debt and ability to pay in future may influence choice of accommodation. Research by Claire Callender has indicated that students, especially those with affluent backgrounds, are becoming more comfortable with debt but ability to meet loan repayments and afford living costs depended largely on socio-economic background and levels of parental income and contribution.

Clearly parental view and financial input will be influential on student choices on accommodation. Parental input could be limited though by tuition fees (i.e. if they have to meet cost of fees and support to living costs then they may economise on assistance with accommodation costs). Rising house prices coupled with tuition fees/loans and assistance with living costs could reduce the number of parents buying property to house student children.

While rents in purpose-built housing may be high they may offset by lower transport costs (Car running costs, bus fares etc) and fuel costs (although many are concerned by the implication of 'all inclusive fuel payments' on use of energy) and internet costs. The purpose built accommodation may also provide other cost-related benefits (safety, no burglary, less need for insurance?)

Issues Relating to Inner North West Leeds

The huge increase of students into Leeds brought with it a range of issues and problems and issues for the various communities comprising inner North-West Leeds where the vast majority settled. Local community groups and associations covering Leeds 6 have long been pressing for action to reverse studentification, encourage diversification of the student population, tackle the negative impact of a large student population and a plan to restore inner North West Leeds as a balanced community containing but not dominated by students and young adults.

Studentification

Research by Dr Darren Smith in 2003 highlighted the problems of a dominance of students living in shared houses in multiple occupation and the impact on residential neighbourhoods. He noted that this was taking place in many cities and towns with large student populations. Many of the problems identified were evident in inner North West Leeds:

- Increased purchase of residential family housing by investment landlords to provide shared housing for students, and by parents of students buying as an investment while also providing accommodation for their children, pushed up property prices. While this provided benefits for existing residents, it also priced out starter households forming in the area and new households wanting to move in to the area;
- Reduction in the numbers of families in the area reduced the numbers of school age children threatening local schools;
- Problems of anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance and environmental blight;
- Proliferation of leisure and retail provision aimed at students and young adults and a loss of 'traditional' retail outlets supporting the residential population;
- Increased traffic volume and parking issues arising from higher car ownership among students than in the past;
- inadequate housing or tenancy management by some private landlords, leading to uncontrolled anti-social behaviour by some student tenants.

The Shared Housing Action Plan has aimed to address these problems and issues but more is needed to be done to restore balance to the area and develop an agreed long-term strategic plan for the area to deliver long-term sustainability.

The replacement of ASHORE by the Area of Housing Mix is yet to be tested and defining what is meant by the sometimes ill-defined terms used in the policy or the balance that should be sought for the various communities comprising the Area of Housing Mix has not yet been undertaken.

'Destudentification'

In the meantime, there are clearly some changes occurring in terms of the balance between purpose-built and shared housing provision for students which have a potential impact on Headingley and other areas with large student populations. There has been some movement of students into new purpose built accommodation and clear evidence of landlords selling on properties to the market coupled with buying fewer properties especially in higher priced areas. There is also some evidence of students attending the Leeds universities are choosing to live at home either in Leeds or in the surrounding cities and towns and commuting to Leeds.

With some students moving out of the area and with the apparent end of the continual increased flow of students into the area, then other problems may emerge from what could be termed 'destudentification'. The surplus HMO properties coming onto the market and the changing demand patterns in inner NW Leeds that seem evident raise questions as to what opportunities may exist to rebalance the housing markets and demographic composition of the various communities containing student concentrations.

It is by no means certain that properties put up for sale by landlords will automatically be bought by families, bringing balance back to the area.

- Families are unlikely to buy where they will be overwhelmed by student households and where they feel they will be affected by noise and anti-social behaviour
- Where balance between student and other households is better, the costs of de-converting HMOs back into family homes may be considerable and additional to the high house prices in the area.
- It is likely that young professional single people and couples will continue to settle in the area attracted by proximity to the city centre and the amenities and infrastructure that Headingley and its adjoining areas offers. This may include people moving from the 'city centre housing'.

A number of options exist for facilitating the reuse of surplus properties but will require the development of some innovative partnerships, including locally operating housing associations, landlords, property developers, re'new and the emerging Headingley Development Trust:

- Developing a partnership between Headingley Development Trust and a Registered Social Landlord to acquire, refurbish/de-convert and offer for rent to households on the Leeds Housing Register or student families
- Encouraging direct purchase by Registered Social Landlords for rent to households in need
- Developing a partnership with re'new to acquire, refurbish/de-convert and offer for discounted sale/shared equity to households wishing to buy unable to afford full market prices
- Using the Headingley Development Trust as a vehicle for acquiring properties for resale

Investigation is also needed as to the medium to long term demand for housing in those areas, which types of household may want to live there and how to remodel or renew these areas should students permanently abandon them.

Housing and tenancy management

Many of the problems associated with HMOs in inner North West Leeds have arisen from the behaviour of some tenants and the lack of effective housing management by some landlords. A majority of landlords letting in inner North West Leeds are members of the UNIPOL Code of Standards or the Leeds Landlords Accreditation Scheme and provide good standards of service to their tenants and good management practices.

The UNIPOL and Leeds Landlords Accreditation schemes have done much to improve standards of housing and tenancy management of the housing that accommodates students. Continuing emphasis on this is needed along with continuing efforts to bring more landlords under the accreditation schemes.

Neighbourhood management

The SHAP has implemented various elements of neighbourhood management in the Leeds 6 area to address some of the issues arising from the high student population. The development of the Intensive Neighbourhood Management approach being proposed currently for parts of Leeds may be required in both Leeds 6 and those areas where student populations may develop. The North West Leeds District Plan outlines the key priorities relating to the management of neighbourhoods in inner North West Leeds and the improvement of locally provided services.

The approaches and initiatives adopted in inner North West Leeds can be utilised to manage any neighbourhood where students live.

Clearly, there are a range of variable and forces that could change the nature of the student housing market, student preferences and actual use of housing options and nature of provision. There are also a number of factors that can or will impact on the various neighbourhoods comprising inner North West Leeds. These will need tracking and monitoring if this strategy is to be able to guide future provision for students and other plans to be able to ensure effective management of those neighbourhoods.

Research is also needed to establish the best or most likely future role and function for the various communities in inner NW Leeds that can take account of the existing strategic direction and planning and the often ambitious visions set out in the Headingley Renaissance and the HMO Lobby's 'Leeds Left Bank proposal.

3. Existing Strategic Approaches

The various agencies and organisations involved in providing housing for students have all been developing and implementing strategic approaches towards the housing of students.

Leeds City Council

- Has worked with UNIPOL and landlords to ensure that private rented sector accreditation schemes are in place to improve standards of provision and management
- Has established the Shared Housing Group and the development and implementation of the Shared Housing Action Plan
- Developed and promoted the Areas of Student Housing restraint with the aim of redressing the balance between student shared housing and the residential population.
- Promoted and enabled the development of purpose built student accommodation schemes

Leeds Housing Partnership

- Had recognised the necessity to develop a coordinated strategic approach to housing students and has sponsored the development of this strategy
- Has incorporated the Shared Housing Group within the overall Leeds Housing Partnership structure

University of Leeds

- Has developed and implemented a formal Housing Strategy developing a 'mixed economy' of directly provided accommodation, head-leasing of spaces in purpose built accommodation schemes and support to students living in shared housing in the community
- Has positively engaged in the Shared Housing Group and the implementation of the Shared Housing Action Plan
- Has promoted the UNIPOL accreditation scheme

Leeds Metropolitan University

- Has implemented a strategy towards housing its students combining leaseback of its directly provided accommodation, commissioning of bedspaces in private sector purpose built accommodation and support to students living in shared housing in the community
- Has positively engaged in the Shared Housing Group and the implementation of the Shared Housing Action Plan

UNIPOL

- Has provided leadership on student housing issues nationally
- Has positively engaged in the Shared Housing Group and the implementation of the Shared Housing Action Plan
- Has provided directly housing for students in purposed built and shared housing
- Has administered and operated the 'clearing house' for shared private rented housing by private landlords
- Has provided a range of information to students on housing options and locations
- Has operated the UNIPOL Code of Standards and ensured increasing coverage

The University Unions

- Have provided support and advice to students on housing issues
- Have liaised with the Universities, Community and residents groups and the Council over student housing issues
- Have positively engaged in the Shared Housing Group and the implementation of the Shared Housing Action Plan
- Promoted positive and responsible student residence and promoted and facilitated increasing student involvement in community projects in inner North West Leeds

Leeds HMO Lobby and Community and Residents Groups

- Have positively engaged in the Shared Housing Group and the implementation of the Shared Housing Action Plan
- Have highlighted the studentification of various neighbourhoods of inner North West Leeds
- Have lobbied on the need for change and action to restore balance
- Have contributed ideas and proposals for assuring the longer-term sustainability of the area

However, these actions have been undertaken individually and focused upon inner North West Leeds and while it is absolutely important to have a strategic approach to managing the issues relating to students and neighbourhood sustainability in inner North West Leeds, it is also vital that there is also a strategic approach to the housing of students during their time of study as part of the wider aim of attracting students and retaining graduates.

There has for some time been the need for better coordination of the various plans and provisions of the various organisations involved in providing for students.

There is a need to continually improve understanding of changes in the student housing market and of preferences of, and use of housing by, students.

There is a need to collectively develop an agreement to questions of balance in areas where students live; responses to 'studentification' in some areas, and increasingly 'destudentification' in others.

4. KEY STRATEGIC THEMES

The strategy seeks to set out a strategic framework for provision, management and regulation of housing for students and the management of neighbourhoods where students live and sets out the roles and responsibilities of the range of organisations and agencies involved. It is based on a firm intention to welcome students to Leeds and then encourage them to stay in Leeds and contribute positively to the Leeds economy and become part of the communities in which they live.

Vision

To ensure that students coming to Leeds have access to affordable, well managed and decent accommodation, while achieving a balance in provision for students within neighbourhoods and effective management of neighbourhoods containing student populations.

The Vision of this Strategy will be achieved through three priority themes:

- A. *Providing affordable and decent accommodation for students:*** through encouraging a coordinated approach including the two universities, UNIPOL, private sector providers, private landlords and the students unions to ensure that students in Leeds have access to good quality housing, that can be afforded and which is managed according to acceptable codes of standards.
- B. *Encouraging the diversification of the locations of housing for students throughout the city:*** through encouraging the location of new student housing in other areas than Leeds 6; location of new purpose built housing on the fringes of Leeds City Centre but close to the university campuses and the promotion of private rented housing in areas adjacent to new purpose built student housing complexes.
- C. *Ensuring better management of the communities in which students live:*** through effective neighbourhood management; tackling 'crime and grime issues' and anti-social behaviour and seeking imaginative solutions to the 'destudentification' that may occur as students move away or landlords dispose of surplus properties.

These will be supported by actions to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategy and to undertaken continuing research and intelligence gathering to track changes in housing provision, student preferences and landlord attitudes and behaviour.

Theme 1: Providing affordable and decent accommodation for students:

This theme aims to encourage a coordinated approach including the two universities, UNIPOL, private sector providers, private landlords and the students unions to ensure that students in Leeds have access to good quality housing, that can be afforded and which is managed according to acceptable codes of standards. The objectives of this theme are to:

- ensure students have access to decent, affordable and well-managed accommodation;
- enable choices and preferences to be met while recognising the impact that studentification has on residential neighbourhoods;
- ensure that students live in housing that is accredited through the UNIPOL Code of Standards or the Leeds Landlords Accreditation Scheme;
- provide advice and assistance to students to find and retain accommodation;
- help students resolve problems with landlords, housemates and neighbours.

Role of the University of Leeds

- ◆ Implementation of its Housing Strategy (priorities);
- ◆ Ensuring places for all 1st year students;
- ◆ Ensuring students are aware of housing options open, costs, benefits and potential drawbacks;
- ◆ Assuring quality and affordability of directly provided or head-leased student housing;
- ◆ Encourage students to seek only rented housing accredited by UNIPOL or Leeds City Council.

Role of Leeds Metropolitan University

- ◆ Developing and publish a housing strategy or formal housing provision plans?;
- ◆ Ensuring places for all 1st year students;
- ◆ Ensuring students are aware of housing options open, costs, benefits and potential drawbacks;
- ◆ Assuring quality and affordability of directly provided or head-leased student housing;
- ◆ Encourage students to seek only rented housing accredited by UNIPOL or Leeds City Council.

Role of UNIPOL

- ◆ Administering and promoting the UNIPOL Code of Standards;
- ◆ Administering the 'letting season' for student housing;
- ◆ Providing advice and assistance and information through website and paper based information
- ◆ Assuring the quality and affordability of UNIPOL student accommodation.

Role of Private landlords/Suppliers

- ◆ Assuring the quality and affordability of housing let to students;
- ◆ Joining and maintaining membership of the UNIPOL Code of Standards or Leeds Landlords; Accreditation Scheme;
- ◆ Complying with HMO licensing and Home health and Safety Rating System;
- ◆ Dealing with anti-social behaviour of their tenants.

Role of the Students Unions

- ◆ Providing advice and assistance to students on finding accommodation;
- ◆ Providing advice on landlord- tenant issues and help find resolutions;
- ◆ Providing advice and assistance on resolving problems with housemates or neighbours;
- ◆ Monitoring complaints about student and seeking resolutions.

Role of Leeds City Council

- ◆ Developing a strategic approach to the development of purpose-build student accommodation;
- ◆ Ensuring the coordination of activity by various providers and organisations to ensure enough housing and accommodation is provided to support student numbers across the city;
- ◆ Monitoring the quality of student housing and compliance with HMO licensing and the Home, Health and Safety rating System (HHSRS);
- ◆ Monitor costs and affordability of new purpose built housing and private rented shared housing. rents

Role of Community and Residents Groups

- ◆ Welcoming students and encouraging membership;
- ◆ Monitoring lack of compliance of landlords with HMO licensing

Role of Students

- ◆ Living responsibly in their accommodation and complying with the Student Community Code?

Outputs:

- ✓ *All 1st year students to have an offer of university provided/leased accommodation*
- ✓ *Increasing number of landlords who are members of UNIPOL code of standards/LLAS*

Theme 2: Encouraging the diversification of the locations of housing for students throughout the city

This strategy will have as one of its aims the reduction of the studentification of inner North West Leeds. It is recognised that this has to be a long-term aim as it will not be easy either to create the critical mass of students in other areas that will enable diversification to occur, or to persuade students to move from their 'traditional heartland' of 'Leeds 6'. This will both ease burdens on the communities of inner NW Leeds and spread the benefit of 'the student pound' to other areas. The objectives within this theme are:

- Establishing an agreed balance of student and residential population in neighbourhoods
- Establishing a strategic approach to new purpose built student accommodation to ensure that over-supply does not occur
- Encouraging the location of new purpose built housing on the fringes of Leeds City Centre but close to the university campuses within such a strategic framework
- Promoting private rented housing in areas adjacent to new purpose built student housing complexes.
- Establishing other locations that could be potentially attractive to students and the potential for encouraging students to move to different locations.
- Promoting private rented shared housing markets from purpose built student accommodation in city centre fringe locations.

Role of Leeds City Council

- ◇ Working with the range of partners to reach agreement on the balance of student and residential population in neighbourhoods ;
- ◇ Considering the cumulative impact of new purpose built student accommodation in the areas they are located when considering planning applications;
- ◇ Operating the Area of Housing Mix to avoid any further erosion of the residential population in the defined area;
- ◇ Promoting the Leeds Landlords Accreditation Scheme amongst landlords operating in potential alternative areas of student occupancy.

Role of UNIPOL

- ◇ Ensuring that the UNIPOL 'tabloid' and other communication mechanisms provides information on other potential areas that students could live in
- ◇ Building in information on crime rates, housing costs and other relevant data to UNIPOL information to enable students to consider potential benefits of other areas
- ◇ Promoting shared private rented housing in areas adjacent to their purpose built accommodation schemes

Role of the Universities

- ◇ Considering the locations of any future new accommodation and seek to locate outside of inner North West Leeds wherever possible

Role of the Students Unions

- ◇ Providing information to students on alternative places to live
- ◇ Promoting the benefits of areas outside inner North West Leeds

Role of Community and Residents Groups

- ◇ Working with other residents groups and the Leeds Tenants Federation to develop a strategy for welcoming students to areas outside of inner North West Leeds.

Outputs

- ✓ Increasing number of students living outside of inner North West Leeds
- ✓ Reductions in % of students in the inner North West Leeds where % is over xx%

Theme 3: Ensuring better management of the communities in which students live

It is far from certain what impact the increasing provision of large purpose built student housing complexes, changing student preferences, and requirements of HMO licensing will be. However there will still be a substantial student population and increasing numbers of young professionals and other young people in inner NW Leeds which will continue to need management while conversely the apparent 'destudentication' of the various parts of the area will also need to be managed. Effective neighbourhood management and coordinated activity will be needed to manage the 'transition' of Leeds 6. The objectives within this theme are:

- Managing the transition of inner North West Leeds and the effects of 'destudentification' including identifying likely demand for housing in areas vacated by students and considering alternative uses for surplus housing;
- Supporting private landlords who have surplus bedspaces and properties to find positive, long-term solutions;
- Encouraging landlords to encourage responsible behaviour of the students living in their housing;
- Ensuring adherence of students to the Community code of conduct and the Universities Code of Conduct
- Increasing the number of landlords operating in inner NW Leeds who are members of the UNIPOL/LLAS accreditation schemes;
- Addressing street-scene issues in North West Leeds arising from student housing;
- Promoting community cohesion and involvement of students in community associations;
- Considering the longer-term future of inner North West Leeds including the measures identified through the Headingley Renaissance and 'Leeds Left Bank' proposals

Role of the Council

- ◇ Ensuring the effective management of neighbourhoods in inner North West Leeds through the North West Leeds District Plan;
- ◇ Working with community and resident groups and the range of partners to consider options for the longer-term development of inner North West Leeds;
- ◇ Working with landlords and other housing partners to identify and develop alternative uses for surplus housing
- ◇ Working with re'new, housing associations and private developers to develop projects to bring empty properties back into use
- ◇ Liaising with the universities, students unions and student representatives on housing and neighbourhood management issues involving and affecting students;
- ◇ Ensuring effective provision of street scene and other neighbourhood services.

Role of Private Landlords

- ◇ Joining or maintaining membership of the UNIPOL Code of Standards or Leeds Landlords Accreditation Scheme;
- ◇ Ensuring responsible arrangements to clear waste arising at end of tenancies?;
- ◇ Tackling anti-social behaviour by tenants;
- ◇ Engage in (intensive) neighbourhood management initiatives.

Role of UNIPOL

- ◇ Providing effective management of directly managed properties in inner North West Leeds
- ◇ Working with landlords to improve standards of management and response to tenant problems
- ◇ Ensuring responsible arrangements to clear waste arising at end of tenancies?;
- ◇ Tackling anti-social behaviour by tenants;
- ◇ Engaging in (intensive) neighbourhood management initiatives.

Role of the Students Unions

- ◆ Working with the Council and community and residents groups to encourage and support community work and engagement by students

Role of the Universities

- ◆ Considering the impact of property disposals or new accommodation provision on the surrounding communities

Role of Community and Residents Groups

- ◆ Welcoming responsible students within their communities;
- ◆ Monitoring lack of compliance of landlords with HMO licensing;
- ◆ Encouraging student members and involvement in community events;
- ◆ Monitoring and reporting the impact of student residence to the Council and other housing providers.

Role of Students

- ◆ Living responsibly in their accommodation
- ◆ Complying with the Student Community Code
- ◆ Complying with their University Code of Conduct
- ◆ Engaging with community networks and events
- ◆ Engaging in community work and projects

Outputs

See SHAP

- ✓ Bringing surplus properties back into use for sale
- ✓ Bringing surplus properties back into use for housing homeless households

Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy

The implementation of this strategy needs to be monitored and evaluated through the Shared Housing Group which is led and guided by Leeds City Council within the overall support of the Leeds Housing Partnership.

The strategy is built on current known intelligence and information on student housing needs and market trends. It is essential that the strategy be dynamic and capable of being changed to meet requirements as they change and to reflect the inevitable changes in market conditions that will take place.

Further research

Achieving a complete picture of the student housing market and the preferences and actual behaviours of students in seeking and occupying housing is impossible at the moment. With so many aspects of the student housing market changing, it is crucial that continuing intelligence gathering and supporting targeted research takes place to undertake:

- Analysis and mapping of combined database of student addresses and changes since 2003 (Autumn 2006)
- Identification of variations in concentration across various areas (i.e. Central Headingley, Far Headingley, Hyde Park, Kirkstall etc) on a postcode basis. (Autumn 2006)
- Analyse nature and location of surplus private rented/UNIPOL spaces/properties being sold through (Autumn 2006)

- Survey of landlords/letting agents to assess level of divestment (Autumn 2006)
- Surveying of students taking up new purpose built accommodation (Annual in September?)
- Monitor surplus places in purpose-built housing (2007 ongoing)
- Identification of any shift in housing preferences of returning students (2007 ongoing)
- Assess options for re-use of surplus properties (Ongoing)
- Analysis of likely alternative locations linked to purpose-built housing (Ongoing)
- Research long term role and function for communities in inner NW Leeds (Ongoing)
- Monitoring of impact of tuition fees on housing choices (Ongoing)
- Future monitoring of take up of new purpose built accommodation (Ongoing)

The research will be commissioned through the Shared Housing group and a standing research coordination group has been established to review research and intelligence gathering and report findings to the Shared Housing Group and other interested parties.

To support this it is proposed that a common database be established to hold research and intelligence on the student housing market, student housing provision, student preferences and requirements and community research and intelligence relating to areas where students live.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND TARGETS

This strategy for housing students in Leeds aims to draw together and improve investment and activity by a range of organisations to ensure that students coming to Leeds have access to affordable, well managed and decent accommodation, while achieving a balance in provision for students within neighbourhoods and effective management of neighbourhoods containing student populations,

The strategy is based upon welcoming students to Leeds and an intention to retain them once they have graduated in order to harness their skills to help the continuing economic growth of Leeds and to become positive and valuable members of the community.

This strategy aims to identify mechanisms for ensuring that all students coming to Leeds have access to decent, well managed and affordable housing to enable them to safely and successfully complete their studies.

This strategy highlights means to start tackling studentification and diversifying concentrations of student housing that threaten the sustainability of residential neighbourhoods. It also provides an acknowledgement that 'de-studentification' arising from students moving to other areas or from reducing numbers of students living in inner North West Leeds may pose problems and highlights the need for concerted action to address those problems.

This strategy highlights the crucial importance of effective management of the individual neighbourhoods that comprise inner North West Leeds and the need to develop a vision for the future of inner North West Leeds in the long-term and develop a strategic approach to realising that vision.

However, the situation regarding the student housing market and the future structure of housing provision and the impact of changes within the student housing market on inner North West Leeds is far from clear. This strategy is a starting point and will need continual review if it is to be able to provide effective strategic direction. Further research and intelligence gathering will be required and this strategy will require further review in two years time.