

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration)

Date: 30th April 2013

Subject: Student Housing

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report explores issues underpinning the preparation of a new planning policy for student housing development and lists current planning permissions and enquiries for purpose built student accommodation.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) is recommended to:

- i). note and comment on the contents of the report.

1. **Purpose of this Report**

- 1.1. The request for a scrutiny report concerns council strategy toward student housing and dialogue with private landlords. This report deals with the former.

2. **Background Information**

- 2.1. A number of concerns have been raised by Members and residents about student housing in Leeds, and the Council continues to receive applications for new development despite falls in number of University places in the City and experience of empty units in some of the less popular localities and rental discounts on some developments. This means questions about the long term viability of the market and the need to better manage future provision and the location for new development. However, the Council continues to receive applications for student development, often in locations which are considered unsuitable by adjoining occupiers and local residents. Currently there are few criteria against which future planning applications can be determined.

3. **Main Issues**

Planning Policy

- 3.1. In determining planning applications for student housing, the prime consideration is policy set out in the statutory development plan. For Leeds, the statutory plan that contains relevant policy is the Unitary Development Plan 2006 (UDP). However, this is expected to be superseded by policy in the Draft Core Strategy when this plan is adopted late 2013 or early 2014.

Unitary Development Plan

- 3.2. Policy H15 sets policy for the "Area of Housing Mix". This was originally proposed by LCC as the "Area of Student Housing Restraint", but the UDP Inspector considered that policy approach discriminatory against students. The adopted policy is positively worded to permit development intended for occupation by students providing that it would not reduce the stock of housing available for family occupation, that there would be no unacceptable harm to residential amenity, that the scale would be compatible with surroundings, that satisfactory car parking provision will be made and that the proposal will improve the quality or variety of student housing.
- 3.3. Policy H15 has a sister policy, Policy H15A which expects LCC to be pro-active in identifying suitable sites for new student housing. Criteria for suitable locations include i) proximity to the Universities or good public transport, ii) potentially attractive to students, iii) supported by services and facilities, iv) contribute to regeneration and v) not prejudice the quality, quantity or variety of the local housing stock.

- 3.4. Also, the UDP contains policy H18 which has criteria for dealing with proposals for houses in multiple occupation.
- 3.5. The UDP also has city centre policies which promote a number of “quarters” for particular uses , such as the Prime Office Quarter. This policy (CC27) sees the quarters as having a dominant purpose, but not exclusively single use. Supporting uses are encouraged which will provide supporting services or add variety, providing they do not prejudice the main purpose of the quarter.

Core Strategy

- 3.6. Draft Core Strategy policy H6 set out the Council’s current approach to student accommodation within the city. This takes two forms, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and purpose built student accommodation. Part A seeks to control the concentration of HMOs within the Article 4 Direction area by avoiding high concentration of HMOs, ensuring the amenity of nearby residents is protected and by preventing further loss of housing suitable for family occupation. Part B outlines the approach for purpose built accommodation which should be controlled to help extend the supply accommodation taking pressure off the need for private housing to be used. Also, Part B seeks to avoid excessive concentrations of purpose built accommodation and development in areas which are not easily accessible to the universities.

Demand and supply

- 3.7. Re’new has been commissioned to examine demand and supply for student housing in Leeds and report on options on policies for future decision making. This will look at future demand for student housing in conjunction with the Higher Education Institutions, key providers such as UNIPOL and others active in the student market. It will take account of the local supply chain and current trends in the student market, as well as vacancies. It will propose policies and management arrangements to better assess the future provision of student housing and the suitability of locations.

Planning applications and enquiries

- 3.8 Planning permission is in place for a total of 2471 new student bedrooms in purpose built accommodation. Some of these schemes are currently under construction:

Pennine House, Russell Street	119 bedrooms
26-30 Clarendon Road	15 bedrooms
4-28 Westfield Road	119 bedrooms
22 Lovell Park Road	66 bedrooms
Algernon Firth, Thoresby Place	110 bedrooms
City Campus, Calverley Street	404 bedrooms
Servia Road	300 bedrooms
20-28 Hyde Terrace	97 bedrooms
St Marks Road	526 bedrooms
Moorland Road	53 bedrooms
Glass Works, Cardigan Road	154 bedrooms

The Gateway, East Street 508 bedrooms

In addition, other sites (eg Boddington Hall) have become surplus to requirements.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1. Adoption of the Core Strategy is recognised as a corporate priority.

5. Consultation and Engagement

5.1. Preparation of the UDP and Core Strategy involved considerable public consultation and engagement. The Core Strategy will be subject to a public examination in the summer 2013 whereby the “soundness” of the plan policies will be considered by an independent inspector who will hear representations from objectors and from LCC. The review will involve key stakeholders including Higher Education providers, UNIPOL, key developers and local groups.

6. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

6.1. National planning policy is to create inclusive and mixed communities (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 50). Similarly, UDP and Core Strategy policy seeks to avoid excessive concentrations of student housing that could undermine the balance and health of communities.

7. Council Policies and City Priorities

7.1. Policy is summarised in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.6 above.

8. Resources and value for money

8.1. The preparation of planning policy and dealing with planning applications is covered under existing budgets.

9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

9.1. The Core Strategy is being prepared within the context of the LDF Regulations, national planning guidance and statutory requirements. Planning applications are determined in accordance with the Planning Acts.

10. Risk Management

10.1. The Core Strategy needs to be prepared according to national planning practice guidance in order to be considered “sound”. Planning applications that are refused planning permission have the right of appeal to the Secretary of State.

11. Conclusions

11.1. Local policy on student housing provides a good context for considering planning applications. This will be strengthened if the policies in the Core Strategy are adopted following the examination in public this summer. The final report from Renew on student housing will provide evidence to help inform decisions on future planning policies and applications for purpose built student accommodation.

12. **Recommendations**

12.1. Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) is requested to:

- i) note and comment on the contents of the report