



Subject:	<i>Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Supplementary Planning Guidance</i>
Date:	<i>14 June 2016</i>
Reporting Officer:	<i>Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Dermot O’Kane, Local Development Plan</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	The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast provides additional advice and guidance specific to PBMSA in Belfast and builds upon the Planning and Place Advice Note endorsed in October 2015 and the Best Practice Guide agreed in December 2015.
1.2	This report provides an update to Members on the public consultation process undertaken on the draft SPG and the responses received. It also outlines a number of amendments made to the final SPG as a result of the consultation and presents the final SPG for notation.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the comments received in response to the consultation exercise and the proposed amendments to the final SPG as a result;• Note the Consultation Report (Appendix 1); and• Note the final SPG document (Appendix 2).
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast is the third document produced to provide the Council with appropriate tools to deal with the recent influx of planning applications for PBMSA in the City Centre. It builds on the ‘Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Advice Note’ (approved in October 2015) and the ‘Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Best Practice Guide’ (approved in December 2015).
3.2	The SPG provides additional advice and guidance for use by developers, the public and by planning officers in the assessment of planning applications for PBMSA developments. It represents non-statutory planning guidance which supports and clarifies existing

policies, most notably the HMO Subject Plan for Belfast, the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and PPS7 Quality Residential Environments.

3.3 It is structured around the same criteria contained within the internal Planning and Place Advice Note, setting out supplementary guidance in relation to six planning issues, including:

1. **Location:** The development should be at a location which is easily accessible to university/college campuses by sustainable transport modes.
2. **Quality Design:** The layout, design and facilities provided within a development should be of high standards.
3. **Scale and Impact:** The development should be designed in a way that does not conflict with adjacent properties or the general amenity of the surrounding area.
4. **Management:** 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.
5. **Need:** The development meets an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed. This should help secure a supply of accommodation in response to evidence of need.
6. **Planning Agreements:** Planning Agreements, and related developer contributions, may be required in relation to PBMSA where what is secured cannot be adequately addressed by the imposition of conditions alone.

3.5 Where relevant to a particular development proposal, the SPG will be taken into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications, with the weight accorded to it being increased by virtue of a period of public consultation.

3.6 Following endorsement of the draft SPG by the Planning Committee on 16 February 2016, the Council published draft SPG for public consultation for a period of 12 weeks from 7 March-31 May 2016. During the consultation period, the SPG's consultation page on the Council's website received over 430 views and 31 organisations were contacted directly in relation to the consultation. Three formal responses were submitted to the consultation all of which were generally supportive of the draft SPG but made a number of specific comments or suggestions. These are outlined in detail within the Consultation Report at Appendix 1. Subject to approval, this report will be published on the Council's website alongside the final SPG.

3.7 There are a number of changes made to the final SPG as a result of the consultation process, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Community Consultation:** Inclusion of a reference to the Council's role in directing pre-application community consultation through the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) process and reference to community involvement in the planning application process when considering the impact of proposed developments;
- **Inclusive Design:** Inclusion of an additional paragraph within the design quality context actively promoting compliance with disability legislation and highlighting the need for developments to be suitable for students with disabilities;
- **Sustainable Development:** Introduction of a new section within the design quality context promoting sustainable development in all aspects of PBMSA. It highlights the use of sustainability standards, such as BREEAM or Code for Sustainability, which although not mandatory, help ensure sustainability is considered throughout the design, construction and operational processes;
- **University Corporate Aspirations:** Text inserted to make reference to published Corporate Plans of the city's further and higher education institutions when considering the identified need for proposed PBMSA developments in the future; and
- **HMO Legislation:** Amended references to the HMO Bill to reflect the fact that this

	legislation has now received Royal Assent.
3.8	A copy of the final SPG is contained at Appendix 2 and this Committee is requested to note the final documents.
3.9	<p><u>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</u> In accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and associated NI Regulations, the SPG has been subject to an SEA screening exercise. This concluded, in consultation with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, that a full SEA is not required.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> Equality and Good Relations Screening has been completed in parallel with the consultation processes. One minor amendment has been made to the final document as a result to actively promote compliance with disability legislation by highlighting the need for rooms within PBMSA development to be suitable for students with disabilities. A full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation Supplementary Planning Guidance Consultation Report Appendix 2 – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Supplementary Planning Guidance, June 2016