

November 2005

Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Student Housing

There are well over 30,000 full time students in the city attending the two Universities. The City Council recognises that the students there - and at Newcastle College - make a huge contribution to the economic and social life of the city. However, the Council also recognises and understands the increasing concern over the impact of high concentrations of students living in some areas in Newcastle.

The Council has decided it needs a clearer strategy to manage student housing provision and its impact on the city. You may already know about the new licensing system for *houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)*, which is one part of the picture. There are other initiatives under the headings of environmental management and community safety.



The City Council now has a planning policy on student housing, contained in a draft Supplementary Planning Document (or SPD for short). It looks mainly at issues around students in the private rented sector.

You can see the document at local libraries or at the Customer Service Centres in the Civic Centre and on Shields Road. You can also download a copy from the Council's website at www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf or contact me as above for a copy through the post.

Comments are requested on the draft SPD by 14 December and this letter is your invitation to give the Council your views. You can read the brief summary on the reverse and send in your comments immediately or better still find the full SPD and give us a longer reply. You are also very welcome to attend the Informal Drop-in Session on 21 November.

Colin Percy
Senior Policy Officer, Planning and Transportation

Informal Drop-in Session

Come and discuss what all this might mean for you!

7.00 to 9.00 pm, Monday 21 November 2005

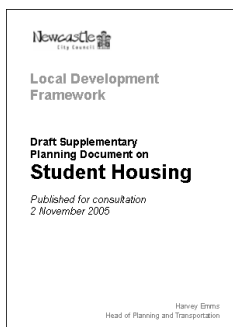
Banqueting Hall, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne

Please contact us on 0191 278 3407 or 3219 if you require any special arrangements to allow you to attend. Other questions should be directed to Colin Percy on 0191 211 5637.

Your views are requested!

Consultation - draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Student Housing

We would very much welcome your views on the draft SPD and encourage you to go and find it and the more detailed response form at your local Library or Customer Service Centre. You can also request a copy by phone or email or download it from our website at www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf via the Supplementary Planning Documents page. However, in the meantime your answers to the short questions below would be helpful to us. Write your answers in a letter or email and send them to the address overleaf by 14 December 2005.



- The draft SPD recognises the value of students to the city but notes the pressures caused by the high numbers living in some areas. There can be extra pressures on the structure of communities as well as day-to-day issues. Licensing of *houses in multiple occupation* and other initiatives are helping manage the situation. But there is perhaps a case for limiting further growth in student numbers in some areas.

Question 1: Do you consider that in some residential areas of the city the numbers and concentrations of students are causing problems? If so, do you think they outweigh the benefits of having young people in the area?

- Planning powers are limited, but the City Council can refuse planning permission for some building works, including some house extensions and installation of rooflights in upper Tyneside flats. It can be difficult to justify refusing permission for works to a house or flat seen in isolation but it may be easier if an area approach is taken. The SPD suggests that we set up an Area of Student Housing Restraint or ASHoRe with strict controls on creating new bed spaces - see the map in your Library for the suggested boundary.

Question 2: Do you think the idea of defining an Area of Student Housing Restraint is a good one or not? If it's a good idea, should your street should be in an area of restraint?

- There is a problem with introducing planning restrictions on conversions and extensions. For example, longer term residents may wish to extend their house for a growing family. It is possible to grant planning permission subject to what is called an *occupancy condition*. This could prohibit new rooms being used by full time students.

Question 3: Do you consider that the of occupancy conditions in this way is acceptable as part of the wider package of measures in the SPD?

- As well as dealing with the proposed ASHoRe, the SPD includes some guidance on new purpose built student housing, which these days consists mainly of blocks of multi-bedroom flats rather than halls of residence. The SPD includes clarification of existing planning policy, particularly on how to protect the amenity of existing dwellings and the character of a locality.

Question 4: Do you think it is important to protect the character of the area you live in and what would you say are the main characteristics of your area? Should we be using planning policy of the sort set out above to protect character?

Any other comments or concerns about the possible impact of the SPD are welcome!