



University of Brighton



Director of Finance
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Ref: SMH/LMF

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Councillor Anne Meadows
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Dear Councillor Meadows

**Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Report – Students in the Community**

I am responding to your letter dated 12th March addressed to Mr David House, enclosing a copy of the above report. I am responding on behalf of the University as I have overall responsibility for student housing and community liaison.

The University has been pleased to participate in the Scrutiny exercise and welcomes the opportunity to play a part in improving community relations. The Scrutiny exercise has very helpfully highlighted linkages between the activities of all the agencies involved in supporting good community relations and changes that could improve the overall impact of these activities. Responses in relation to each of the recommendations for University of Brighton are set out below:

Recommendation 6 – SShh campaign

We will work with the Students' Union to ensure the benefits of the SShh campaign are maximised on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 7 – street noise

This is a very difficult area as young people making noise in the street may or may not be our students and the level of disturbance may not justify police attendance. However, the University works closely with Sussex Police and will take forward discussions, along with the Students' Union, to see what further action can be taken.

Recommendation 8 – Phoenix Halls podium

We are progressing the formation of a smoking shelter adjacent to C block at Phoenix Halls.

Recommendation 9 – Phoenix Halls windows and signage

In response to the report, students have been asked by halls staff to close windows when playing music at night. Notices have also been placed in Kitchens to remind students to shut windows. More visible signage in relation to noise is in the process of being installed across the site.

Recommendation 10 – staffing resources in halls

A review of current staffing arrangements is planned. We have already invested in relocating the reception and entrance at Phoenix to enable a clearer view of the entrance and front of Southover Street.

Recommendation 11 – tree and bush planting at Phoenix Halls

This is being actively investigated. There will be some restrictions on planting on the podium due to maintenance issues.

Recommendation 12 – planning for future halls and noise impact

We will ensure that the impact of the smoking ban and other noise issues is taken into account in new developments.

Recommendation 19 – clean up days

We will take forward discussions on this in conjunction with the Students' Union and Sussex University.

Recommendation 20 – promotion of public transport to students

We already include this information in our halls accommodation guides and will extend to publications aimed at students living in the private sector for the next issue. We are currently working on a university wide travel plan and aim to have this in place for the start of the next academic year. This will include provision for initiatives to reduce use of cars by our staff and students.

Recommendation 28 –affordable accommodation in halls

Our halls offer a range of prices, the lowest being under £70 per week in some blocks at Varley. We will consider incorporating low cost rooms within new halls developments.

Recommendation 29 – halls accommodation for second and third years

We wish to see a significant expansion of our current halls accommodation. Our first priority is to ensure we can offer places to all first year students; but would ideally wish to see sufficient to offer places to second and third year students. We are working on proposals to redevelop the Varley halls site to provide additional accommodation (with a first phase of new accommodation planned for September 2011). We are also progressing discussions about a number of other sites for halls development in the City.

Recommendation 30 – directly managed properties

The Accommodation Team is working to expand the portfolio of directly managed properties.

Recommendation 33 – Student Working Group

The University will be pleased to participate in a Student Working Group. We are already involved in a number of joint working groups across the city and it may be that these could form the basis of the new group.

Recommendation 36 – student volunteering

We are supportive of promoting student volunteering.

Recommendation 37 – student attendance at LATs

We encourage students to attend LATS along with the Community Liaison Officer.

I hope you will see from this response that the University of Brighton is keen to work with the City Council and other agencies to promote good community relations. I would be very happy to meet with you in order to discuss the recommendations and our responses further.

Yours sincerely



Sue McHugh
Director of Finance

cc David House, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Kevin Mannall, Community Liaison Officer

