

Brighton & Hove City Council

Student Housing Strategy 2018

scoping paper

Student Housing Strategy

The city's first Student Housing Strategy was adopted in 2009. The strategy brought together actions to increase provision, conditions and management of student accommodation and support balanced residential communities. This strategy broke ground by being the first nationally and set a benchmark for national good practice.

The Student Housing Strategy 2009 has now expired and a refresh of the strategy has been agreed. The new Student Housing Strategy will be developed by April 2018 and will build on the successes of the previous strategy, setting out priorities and strategic goals that will support the changing needs and challenges faced by students living in the city. It will set a balance between meeting students' needs and those faced by the rest of the city's population.

The new strategy will support the council's priorities and, where applicable, other key policies that interlink with this strategy.

The new strategy will sit under the Housing Strategy 2015 and will support the Housing Strategy's strategic actions relating to students and student accommodation which are:

- To develop Good Neighbour Guides
- Reduce the impact of student lets on neighbourhoods through managing the concentration of student lets (City Plan Part 1) and other measures such as requiring safe bicycle storage,

communal bins and working with letting agents to reduce signage

- Promote support services to students around tenancy management, rights, and responsibilities
- Work with bordering authorities to support satellite campuses.
- Promote the Student's Union "Rate Your Landlord" report across the city and the idea of rented accommodation that is 'fit for study'
- Promote the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) licensing scheme so that we can ensure that unlicensed HMOs are reported and licensed properties are of standard
- Consult on extending HMO licensing to other areas where there is an identified need
- Respond to issues where legal standards are not being met
- Improve refuse collection and storage where there are high levels of HMOs
- Support community links between older people and students where both groups can benefit.

The delivery of a new fit for purpose Student Housing Strategy and action plan that will support the city's changing student population can only be successfully achieved through partnership working across the different council services, higher education providers and other stakeholders.

Progress during the lifetime of the Student Housing Strategy 2009

During the lifetime of the current strategy it has been successful in:

- Identifying five sites for PBSA in the City Plan Part 1 providing over 3,000 further bed spaces on either single use or mixed sites
- Delivering approximately 1,600 bed spaces in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) at sites in London Road, Varley Halls and at the University of Sussex Falmer campus
- Preventing further over-concentrations of HMOs by introducing an 'Article 4 Direction' in five wards along Lewes Road. This overrides permitted development rights which allow the conversion of family homes to small HMOs without planning permission. In line with City Plan CP21, applications for new HMOs and changes from small to large HMOs are only permitted where less than 10% of properties within 50m of the application site are already in use as a HMO
- Introducing additional licensing schemes that support and enhances the quality and management of smaller HMOs, with wider community benefits. The first scheme was introduced in 2012 in five wards that were identified as having a high concentration of student housing with over 2,000 licenses issued in these wards to date

- Enforcement action taken in respect of properties converted to HMOs without planning consent
- Making sure that students are integrated into local communities through support from the universities. This is achieved through projects, events, intervention, sharing advice and through joint working between the council and universities on key issues such as noise nuisance and refuse collection
- Working with Home Sweet Home, a local campaign group, to identify letting agents which are not following the laws introduced under the Consumer Rights Act 2015
- Formally joining Rent Smart Brighton and Hove, a citywide partnership of organisations committed to supporting tenants in private rented accommodation.

Scope of the new Student Housing Strategy 2018

The new strategy will consider housing requirements from the Universities of Sussex and Brighton and the British and Irish Modern Music Institute (BIMM). The strategy also acknowledges the importance of the City College Brighton that recently merged with Northbrook College to create a new Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and language schools that play an important role in the economy of the city.¹ It will link to the development of

¹ Regional Breakdown of the value of the ELT industry in the UK in 2013 reported that the estimated value to the city was around £206,000,000 from students

the City Plan (Part 2) and the wider protocol being developed between the council and the universities.

The new Student Housing Strategy will help our partners, funders and residents understand our ambitions for future student accommodation and related services provided for Brighton & Hove students and existing residents of the communities within which they live.

It will set a clear vision and delivery plan for student housing which will help the council achieve its ambitions to create a well-run city and a vibrant economy. The supporting action plan will span the four years period of the strategy but will be refreshed annually to make it responsive to local and national policy and investment changes.

Key areas for consideration

- Student numbers and growth projections until 2030
- Housing supply and the potential solutions and issues arising from them including the need to balance affordability and quality. These will include:
 - Purpose Built Student Housing

spending money not only on tuition and accommodation, but also on transport, tourism, entertainment and shopping

- Private Rented Sector
- Citywide and sub-regional options
- University headed leasing schemes and regulatory issues arising from a change of approach
- Economic, cultural and other benefits of universities to the city
- Students and the community – high concentrations of areas and positive and negative impacts

Living in the city

Brighton and Hove has an international reputation as a youthful and creative coastal city. It is therefore not surprising that Brighton & Hove is a city with a relatively young demographic profile. Analyses of UK census data, for instance, show that the 16-44 age group increased in the city by 15% between 2001 and 2011 rising to 48% (132,192) of the total usual resident population. Importantly the relatively young population is sustained by the annual movements of students into the city and the propensity of young adults to ‘put down roots’ in the city after their studies. This brings the city numerous, cross-cutting, economic, social, demographic, cultural advantages for the city.² Yet at the same time, the presence of relatively high numbers of students and young people in the city raises challenges as well as opportunities about how to most effectively accommodate them in the city.

² Draft Student Housing Study 2016

Student population

During 2016/17 academic year there was a total of 35,930 students studying at the two universities (18,611 at University of Brighton and 17,319 at the University of Sussex). BIMM has approximately 1,200 students. In 2016 the council commissioned a Student Housing Study to identify the projected student population for the future and subsequent demand for housing. The University of Sussex have confirmed they have no plans to increase the current number of students studying at the Falmer campus (up to 18,000). Minor growth of an additional 700 full time students is predicted at the University of Brighton until 2020³.

Housing market in the city

The housing market in Brighton presents significant issues for the city. There is an acute shortage of affordable homes, and in particular family housing in the city. This is coupled with an expanding private rented sector. The city has a large and buoyant private rented sector representing around 31% of the city's housing stock in 2011⁴. The sector is expanding and has seen significant growth in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). There are high costs for renting privately due to high demand. As an example the average advertised monthly rent for 4 bed houses was £1,867

³ Draft Student Housing Study 2017

⁴ 2011 Census

during 2016. There are seasonal peaks in the number of 4 bed houses advertised during the year which can be attributed to them coming onto the market and advertised as student lets. In the BN2 area this accounted for 82% of 4 bed houses counted in a snapshot taken in January 2017, highlighting the impact on the availability of family housing in the city and affordability issues for students.

Housing quality

The quality of management and maintenance of the city's private rented sector is inconsistent. The high demand for housing means that the market alone will not drive up standards in the private rented sector. Poor quality or overcrowded housing can also impact on people's health and their personal development, particularly for younger people and families. With the current licensing schemes housing quality issues have been identified during property inspections leading to 12,619 special conditions being attached to licences and have resulted in improvements to 2,629 homes benefiting an estimated 13,000 tenants. The first Additional Licensing Scheme for smaller HMOs was introduced in 2012 in five wards in the Lewes Road area, bringing benefits to students living in this area.

The move to head leased accommodation by the universities can bring further improvements through introducing set standards and proactive management of the properties.

Student housing supply and demand

Students live in many types of accommodation from living at home to PBSA to shared houses in the private rented sector. Student accommodation tend to be concentrated around the universities itself and surrounding neighbourhoods with the highest concentrations in the Lewes Road corridor. Factors in this include good transport links and the nature of the housing stock.

The draft Student Housing Study 2017 models the need for new PBSA based on six scenarios – growth in student numbers of 0% or 1% after 2020 at both universities and accommodating different percentages of university students requiring accommodation in PBSA. It then looked at the effect on demand for HMOs going forward.

In seeking solutions to providing additional accommodation for future students, the council needs to ensure that there is the right balance in meeting the accommodation needs of students and the accommodation needs of the city's other residents when deciding on the mix use of sites for new developments and licensing smaller HMOs.

Proposed / pipeline provision for student accommodation

There is extensive new build PBSA planned for the city over the coming years. Those with planning permission include:

- University of Sussex East Slope development: 590 study bedrooms proposed to be demolished with 2,117 study bedrooms proposed, giving an increase of 1,527 study bedrooms
- University of Sussex West slope development: 533 study bedrooms proposed for demolition with 2,000 study bedrooms proposed, giving an increase of 1,467 study bedrooms
- Circus Street 450 bed spaces (University of Brighton)
- Preston Barracks – 1,338 student bed spaces (University of Brighton)

Those without planning permission at this point:

- 45/47 Hollingdean Road – 88 bed spaces
- Lectern site – 200 bed spaces
- Falmer retained land – 700 bed spaces

A number of bed spaces are available from private specialist student accommodation providers through direct let and are not affiliated via formal partnership to either University. For example on the Lewes Road three schemes have been completed during 2017 providing 138 bed spaces.

Neighbourhoods and community cohesion

Integrating students into the local communities is embedded practice at the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex and they provide information to students on how they can be involved in projects, events and volunteering opportunities. Some examples of the range of community projects include:

- Community Ambassadors scheme where students have contacted 7,500 local residents in Moulsecoomb, Bevendean and Coldean, and will continue to contact at least 7,500 households annually at the doorstep (University of Sussex)
- Street Marshaling / Streetwise scheme where students go out in pairs in the Hanover & Elm Grove, Lewes Road, Coldean and Moulsecoomb areas three nights a week between 10pm to 4am and provide assistance to both students and other residents when needed
- Employing two police liaison officers providing advice and assurance (University of Brighton)
- Completing street clean up events four times a year with local residents, community groups and City Clean (University of Sussex)
- Community Day held by University of Sussex in June 2017
- Attendance by both universities at Local Action Team meetings

- Funding and expertise support for the city's Rent Smart advice service (University of Sussex)

In addition the University of Sussex provide free advice and information to local residents e.g. law students providing advice on housing, welfare and family law.

The universities ensure that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities when living in the local communities. The council together with the University of Brighton have produced a joint leaflet specifically for students relating to duties and how to prevent noise. In addition there is joint working with universities and colleges on noise cases involving students which includes joint visits and information exchange. This early joint working interventions on cases prevents notices having to be served.

Located on Lewes Road, the University of Sussex information centre provides a venue for engagement with current students, local residents, businesses, future university students, parents and teachers. People are able to drop in to discuss University news and student accommodation, browse the displays, pick up prospectuses and find out about campus events

Improvements have been made to waste management with communal refuse collection introduced service across the city centre and also other areas of the city with a high level of HMOs.

Waste can now be disposed of whenever is convenient from on-street bins, without having to be stored in the property or on the pavement.

In June 2017 the Council introduced a Voluntary Code of Good Practice as part of a pilot scheme to reduce the impact of residential sales and letting boards. The scheme has been introduced in the Coombe Road area and the council is working with the local community, estate agents and landlords to gain their support. Engaging with the community is key to the scheme's success as they will the local knowledge regarding the prevalence of boards in the area.

Strategic context

Brighton & Hove Connected

Brighton & Hove City Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019

Housing Strategy 2015

City Plan Part 1 & City Plan Part 2 development

Housing Act 2004 – HMO licensing

National Planning Policy Framework

National policy and legislation affecting universities

Development of the new Student Housing Strategy

The strategy will be developed in four stages:

Stage 1: Evidence gathering

- Examine and refresh our evidence base from the draft Student Housing Study
- Undertake peer review to understand best practice
- Task and Finish Groups – BHCC and the universities and Student Unions
- Report to committee outlining evidence and options and requesting permission to consult on the proposed strategy

Stage 2: Consultation

- Undertake consultation with higher education providers and relevant stakeholders

Stage 3: Housing & New Homes Committee approval

- Report to committee on findings and committee approval sought for a new Student Housing Strategy

Stage 4: Implementation

- If strategy agreed – implementation and annual monitoring of the action plan