

Housing Strategy 2009-2014
Healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city

November 2009

Student Housing Strategy

Executive summary

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This document sets out a strategic approach for the supply and management of student housing in the city, to ensure that students are integrated into established residential communities in ways that do not unbalance local population structures and housing markets. In doing so, the strategy seeks to harness the many benefits of a large student population for the long-term health and well-being of the city, and engender mixed, cohesive and sustainable communities.

The strategy includes four main principles:

- To effectively support and enhance the quality and management of housing and residential environments within studentified neighbourhoods dominated by Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) , in conjunction with the recognition of the need to continue to support private sector landlords to supply high-quality student accommodation.
- To reduce the over-concentration of HMO in some neighbourhoods by promoting and enabling the appropriate development of purpose-built student accommodation at suitable locations within the city, that will appeal to the locational and residential preferences of students.
- To ensure that new developments of student accommodation are well-managed, and do not impact on existing residential communities in negative ways.
- To monitor the changing geographic patterns of student housing in the city and identify signs of destudentification.

Drawing upon evidence-based research, the strategy emphasises the need for an area-based perspective of student housing to acknowledge the different contexts of local neighbourhoods across the city.

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Dr Smith was supported by Joanna Sage (Researcher, University of Brighton) and Jeni Woods (Policy Officer, Private Sector Team, Brighton and Hove City Council).

The permanent members of the Strategic Housing Partnership are:

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Julie Barker	University of Brighton
Paul Bonett	Bonett Estate Agents / Brighton and Hove Estate Agents Association
Rhys Daniels	Brighton and Hove Housing Partnership
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Tony Mernagh	Brighton and Hove Economic Partnership
Kaiser Mirza	Southern Landlords Association
Amanda Radley	Sussex Probation
David Standing	Hove YMCA
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1. About this student housing strategy

There is a consensus for a strategic approach for student housing to be provided in balanced ways which are appropriate for local populations and housing markets, particularly in light of the expansion of student populations at the city's two universities, and educational establishments (City College Brighton and Hove, Brighton Institute of Modern Music, and language schools).

Since 2006, the theme of student housing has been a consistent item for discussion at the Strategic Housing Partnership – charged to 'look into impact of student housing on overall housing supply' by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) (Sustainable Community Strategy, 2020 Community Partnership Brighton and Hove, p.33). This is not surprising since the pace of change within the student housing market has been considerable since 2000.

The main aim of this Student Housing Strategy is to engender mixed, balanced, sustainable, and cohesive communities across the city. This is in line with the Draft Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF), which seeks to:

- create balance communities that meet the needs of all residents and reduce the inequalities between different areas;
- engage with and listen to local communities;
- help create communities that work well – with good local facilities (shops, pubs, cafes), opens space and play and community facilities (GPs surgeries, schools, community buildings, allotments, children's centres);
- increase the availability of jobs and training;
- encourage healthier lifestyles;
- improve accessibility and make roads in residential areas safer;
- encourage environmental sustainability, and;
- build active and inclusive communities based on mutual respect.

It is acknowledged across the UK, that a large student population is beneficial (e.g. local businesses), although high-density student populations in the private rented sector can stimulate some challenges – termed 'studentification'. This is evident in Brighton and Hove, and analyses of Communities and Local Government (CLG) 2007 data show that Brighton and Hove has the highest total of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (15,000) in England, as defined in planning legislation. Of course, other social groups reside in HMO, yet students are the main type of HMO resident in the city. At the same time, it is important to recognise that state funds are not given to universities to develop accommodation for their students. Instead, the private rented sector has generally provided accommodation for students, and there are many excellent landlords in Brighton and Hove, who have well-established links with the City Council and universities. This segment of the student housing market is vital for the accommodation of students in the city. Central to this strategy is the premise that the private rented housing sector must continue to be supported to provide student accommodation; albeit in a balanced way which does not undermine the sustainability of local communities.

The proactive approach of a range of stakeholders in the city, to acknowledge and address the issues of studentification, is cited as good practice in the wider national context (UniversitiesUK, 2006). The key stakeholders across Brighton and Hove: Strategic Housing Partnership (SHP) which includes Brighton and Hove City Council, University of Sussex, University of Brighton, Brighton's landlords and estate agents; in addition the language schools; the two student's unions; Brighton and Hove Police; and private developers; and community organisations, are committed both to realising the benefits of the universities and students, and tackling the challenges of studentification in order to maintain and foster balanced and cohesive communities. This Student Housing Strategy seeks to build upon this good practice, and the well-established partnership working.

It is clear that there have been some major recent changes to the ways in which students are accommodated in the city. This includes the:

- New provision of private rented student housing in different parts of the city by landlords and investors (e.g. Bevendean and Hollingdean);
- Promotion and continuing development of new purpose-built student accommodation by the universities (Swanborough, Northfield, Great Wilkins, Varley), language schools (New England), nursing (Royal Sussex), and private sector-university partnerships (Stanmer Court);
- Changing balance of types of accommodation in the student housing market (i.e. changing context of head-leased, student housing);
- Introduction of HMO licensing;
- Implementation of university and local authority accreditation schemes for private rented student housing;
- Appointment of a Community Liaison Officer by the University of Brighton to foster more cohesive relations between the university, established communities, and students, and;
- Changing dynamics of the student population, and student preferences for housing and residential locations – as illustrated by recent Student Housing Needs Assessments by the universities.
- Partnership working between the University of Brighton and University of Sussex to accommodate students in the city (e.g. Studentpad), and the campaigns of both local Student Unions,
- Recognition of the needs of the universities for different accommodation strategies to accommodate their diverse student populations, and operational activity within the city and beyond.

This Student Housing Strategy takes on board these local developments in the city.

On a national scale, initiatives have been forged in response to the benefits and challenges posed by concentrations of students in established residential communities. These include: a UniversitiesUK (2006) publication on studentification, and the establishment in 2006 of a Councillors Campaign for Balanced Communities (CCBC). In national parliament, an All-party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Balanced and Sustainable Communities was created in 2007. The National Union of Students have published two guidance reports on students in the community.

There have also been two government-commissioned reports that have investigated student housing. The ECOTEC Report (2008) involved an evidence-gathering exercise of the management and effects of HMO. The Rugg and Rhodes Report (2008) provided a fuller review of the private rented housing sector. There was a recent consultation exercise by CLG on HMO and Use Classes Order (UCO), and on the value of a national register of landlords, drawing upon the two reports.

This Student Housing Strategy takes into account these national developments, as well as building upon good-practice from other university towns and cities, where appropriate. The strategy supports multi-stakeholder partnership working towards this aim by providing a strategic framework for the planning, management and monitoring of student housing and student populations.

The Student Housing Strategy represents a two-stranded approach to effectively manage and deliver student housing in the city. The first strand will involve monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this Student Housing Strategy by the Strategic Housing Partnership. The second strand will involve the implementation of the establishment of a Student Housing and Universities Working Group, linked to the Strategic Housing Partnership. The principal aim of which is to bring key stakeholders together to consider issues of student housing and community relations in the city.

1.1 The strategic student housing vision for Brighton and Hove

The Student Housing Strategy is part of a group of housing related strategies that supports the overarching **Housing Strategy 2009-2014: Healthy Homes, Healthy Lives, Healthy City**; sharing the same united vision. The 6 fundamental strategic principles that underpin all of the visions outlined in this Student Housing Strategy are:

- A healthy city.
- Reducing inequality.
- Improving neighbourhoods.
- Accountability to local people.
- Value for money.
- Partnership working.

The Student Housing Strategy specifically feeds into:

- City-wide Housing Strategy 2009 – 14. Goal 15: Work to ensure student housing provides a positive contribution to students' lives and the city.
- Planning Core Strategy – CP11 (Housing Delivery); DA3 (Lewes Road); SA6 (Sustainable Neighbourhoods)

The strategic goals of the Student Housing Strategy

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| Strategic Goal 1: | to ensure effective management and support housing and populations within HMO-dominated studentified neighbourhoods, using an area-based approach. |
| Strategic Goal 2: | to reduce or halt over-concentrations of HMO across studentified neighbourhoods via the sustainable development of affordable and appropriately-designed, purpose-built student accommodation (in line with ANUK Code of Standards), in close proximity and / or tied to effective public transport which allows relative ease of access to place of study / campus for students. |
| Strategic Goal 3: | to work collaboratively to support and ensure effective management of the impact(s) of high-density student populations within large purpose-built student accommodation on adjacent residential environs. |
| Strategic Goal 4: | to monitor the effects of the movement of students into purpose-built student accommodation, and identify the signs of destudentification. |

1.2 Engaging local communities and other stakeholders

Effective engagement with local residents and communities is pivotal to the Student Housing Strategy. The strategy was developed in extensive consultation and dialogue with leading organisations and stakeholders to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of different residents and communities in Brighton and Hove.

This demonstrated that issues linked to student housing are complex and viewed in different ways by different social groups.

The research that was involved in the formulation of this Student Housing Strategy involved focus groups with a range of actors in the City Council, including Private Sector Housing, Planning, CityClean, Revenues, and Transport. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with officials from the universities and representatives from local private sector landlord organisations, and in consultation with Local Student Union officers.

The strategy also builds upon a number of University of Brighton and Sussex research projects which have involved primary research with local community organisations and residents, and actors in the city, and analyses of student term-time addresses, census data and other datasets.

As part of the research for this strategy, and following Cabinet recommendations that the Strategic Housing Partnership consider the recommendations of the ASC&H Overview and Scrutiny report, Dr Smith has undertaken a cross-referencing exercise to ensure that the Student Housing Strategy encompasses the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny report. Aside from three specific recommendations (which involved lobbying national government for legislative change), all recommendations are captured by this student housing strategy.

1.3 The actions of the Student Housing Strategy

Each strategic goal has a range of actions (part of an action plan) that will be developed and implemented throughout the lifetime of this strategy. These are not listed in order of priority. Each action will also have operational delivery statement.

Strategic Goal 1:

To ensure effective management and support housing and populations within HMO-dominated studentified neighbourhoods, using an area-based approach.

Our actions to help deliver this first strategic goal are to:

Action 1	Identify areas with high-levels of HMO, and consider the establishment of HMO Action Zones where cross-departmental action within the City Council could be beneficial.
Action 2	Map licensable HMO (3 storey and 5 or more unrelated residents) on an annual basis to identify changing geographies, and ensure that the maps are disseminated to appropriate stakeholders in the city.
Action 3	Ensure that relevant HMO is licensed, and enforcement action is taken with non-compliance.
Action 4	Ensure that non-licensed HMO is identified, and consider the possibility of additional licensing of HMO in the city.
Action 5	Encourage and support the role of the university's and other appropriate organisations for increasing the number of managed head-leased accommodation in Brighton and Hove.
Action 6	Identify and implement mechanisms for the conversion of 'empty/vacant homes' to family housing in studentified areas, where appropriate.
Action 7	Raise the standards of housing management, and the quality of student accommodation in the private rented sector (see Southern Landlords Association website: http://southernlandlords.org/).
Action 8	Raise expectations and demands for affordable, high-quality housing in the student population.
Action 9	Investigate the regulation and control of the physical modification of residential property for the production of student housing (i.e. extensions / building of conservatories, loft conversions), which can change residential facades and skylines in negative ways.
Action 10	Reduce the proliferation of unsightly 'to let' boards in studentified areas.

Action 11	Enhance security and safety measures in student housing to reduce burglary and theft of household items.
Action 12	Manage the incidence of noise nuisance (e.g. parties, music, closing of doors) from within houses.
Action 13	Manage the incidence of noise nuisance (e.g. pedestrian movements, taxis) from street / road activity in studentified areas.
Action 14	Provide a responsive service to deal with issues of noise and other nuisance from students / established residents.
Action 15	Log issues of nuisance from HMO residents.
Action 16	Manage the degradation of residential environments, including: (1) the incidence of the spill-over of refuse on to streets and in gardens / yards; (2) untidy gardens / yards; (3) fly-tipping (e.g. White goods, discarded sofas and beds) in studentified areas; (4) on-street litter in studentified areas, and (5) of flyposting, and provide alternative facilities for the display of posters in studentified areas.
Action 17	Encourage the use of public transport, and reduce the dependence on the usage of private vehicles by students.
Action 18	Enhance the opportunities for interaction(s) between established residents and students to foster community cohesion.

Strategic Goal 2:

to reduce or halt over-concentrations of HMO across studentified neighbourhoods via the sustainable development of affordable and appropriately-designed, purpose-built student accommodation (in line with ANUK code of standards), in close proximity and / or tied to effective public transport which allows relative ease of access to place of study / campus for students.

Our actions under this second strategic goal are to:

Action 1	Identify possible development sites for purpose-built student accommodation or appropriate mixed-use developments in Brighton and Hove, in line with the Local Development Framework (Site Allocation Document) and Supplementary Planning Documents.
Action 2	Ensure the development of purpose-built student accommodation is in tandem with the wider housing strategy of the city, and concurs with the core principles of the housing strategy.
Action 3	Undertake detailed impact assessments of proposed developments of purpose-built student accommodation, and consider any possible unintentional consequences on the wider local housing market.
Action 4	Ensure that the development of purpose-built student accommodation complements 'sustainable transport corridors', and minimises travel time / costs for students.
Action 5	Seek and permit developments of purpose-built student accommodation that do not isolate or segregate students in gated communities.
Action 6	Plan the development of purpose-built student accommodation based on projected future student populations; student needs/preferences, the suitability of proposed sites, and in respect of university student accommodation strategies.
Action 7	Understand the diverse accommodation needs and locational preferences of the student population for purpose-built student accommodation.
Action 8	Seek and permit appropriate purpose-built student accommodation, subject to compliance with other planning policies.
Action 9	Ensure that purpose-built student accommodation is effectively promoted to students in positive ways.
Action 10	Consider the relocation of students to suitably located parts of the city, via the development of purpose-built student accommodation.

Strategic Goal 3:

to work collaboratively to support and ensure effective management of the impact(s) of high-density student populations within large purpose-built student accommodation on adjacent residential environs.

Our actions under this third strategic goal are to:

Action 1	Ensure that student populations in purpose-built student accommodation are mapped on an annual basis, and that findings are fully disseminated to stakeholders.
Action 2	Provide safe and secure environments for students in purpose-built student accommodation.
Action 3	Manage the degradation to residential environments adjacent to purpose-built student accommodation, including the incidence of: (1) fly-posting in areas, (2) on-street litter, and (3) the spill-over of refuse (e.g. fast-food trays) on to streets.
Action 4	Consider the use of planning conditions / Section 106 agreements with providers of purpose-built student accommodation to achieve effective management of purpose-built student accommodation..
Action 5	Encourage the use of public transport by students in purpose-built student accommodation.
Action 6	Manage the incidence of noise nuisance from street / road activity in areas adjacent to purpose-built student accommodation.
Action 7	Manage the incidence of noise nuisance from within purpose-built student accommodation.
Action 8	Enhance the opportunities for interaction(s) between established residents and students residing in purpose-built student accommodation for community cohesion.

Strategic Goal 4:

to monitor the effects of the movement of students into purpose-built student accommodation, and identify the signs of destudentification.

Our actions under this final strategic goal are to:

Action 1	Identify changing geographic distribution of students by type of accommodation.
Action 2	Explore the provision of financial incentives for families or organisations to deconvert HMO to family housing, where appropriate.
Action 3	Establish place-making campaigns in (de)studentified areas to promote a 'family-friendly' sense of place.
Action 4	Consider the use of covenants to ensure family housing in reconverted HMO.

1.4 Where should new purpose built student housing be considered?

1.Evidence of studentification in the city

Student populations have increased in the city with students registered at University of Brighton and University of Sussex increasing from 25,589 (1995-96) to 33,580 (2006-07). There were 19,780 full time undergraduate students registered at University of Brighton and University of Sussex in 2006/07.

However, as residents students are not dispersed across the city. Rather, students are concentrated in a distinct number of local neighbourhoods (also see figures below):

- Bevendean
- Coombe Road
- Hartington Road and Triangle
- Hanover
- Hollingdean

The emergence of student geographies in the city has brought about rapid changes to local population structures, housing markets and profound changes to residential environments.

The increasing demand for student housing is an influential factor in Brighton and Hove having the highest number of HMO in the UK (15,000 in 2007), as the supply of purpose-built student accommodation by universities / commercial-providers has not matched the expansion of the student population. As the private rented sector has increasingly responded to the increasing demand for student housing, there has been a significant conversion of family-housing to student HMO in many neighbourhoods. During 2006-07, 9,726 students resided in private rented (and own home) housing within Brighton and Hove.

A recent survey of 350 established households in Bevendean, Coombe Road, Hartington Road and Triangle, Hanover, and Hollingdean found:

- Most residents perceive that their neighbourhood has changed due to increasing student populations.
- Most residents describe neighbourhood changes which involve management-related challenges (e.g.refuse collection, noise nuisance) for stakeholders in the city.
- Established residents are generally aware of the benefits of the student population for the city.
- There are different expressions of studentification within the city that suggest the need for an area-based approach to student housing in the city.
- There are significant differences of opinion between residents within neighbourhoods, which tend to be influenced by previous experience as a student / non-student.

- The impacts of studentification are perceived differently in different locations due to contingent factors such as local population and culture, housing stock and residential environment.
- The majority of established residents support the need for the City Council to develop a student housing strategy, and for the universities to establish accommodation strategies.

The University of Brighton Accommodation Strategy will therefore seek to increase the provision of university-managed accommodation (i.e. accommodation which is purpose-built by the university or partners for students) to offer a guaranteed bed-space for 90% of incoming first-year students, and for 20% of level two students. This will require the development of 1,728 bed spaces in university halls of residence.

2. Student populations in the future

- It is likely that total student populations in the city will increase in the future. Provisional student numbers at the University of Sussex are earmarked to rise from 9,620 (2007) to 11,819 (2015). The University of Brighton have forecast 'moderate growth' during this period (University of Brighton Strategic Planning Unit, 2008).
- On current projections, the total student population in the city is not likely to exceed 40,000 by 2015.
- Total population projections for the city predict an increase from 254,600 (2006) to 269,050 (2016) (Brighton and Hove City Council Research and Consultation Team, 2005). It can be suggested that the proportion of students in the city may be approximately 12-14% of the total population in 2015 (depending on the status of students in 2015, i.e. not resident in Brighton and Hove).

3. The pressing need for purpose-built student accommodation

- Currently, only 5,813 bed-spaces in university halls of residence are provided by both universities in the city.
- Even with the redevelopment of the Varley campus in Coldean (by the University of Brighton) and the University of Sussex recently acquiring planning permission for a further 798 bed spaces (Northfield) (to add to its current provision of 3,352 bed spaces, excluding head-leased properties), as well as the replacement of the East Slope Halls of Residence on the campus at the University of Sussex, demand for purpose-built student accommodation in the city will not be met.
- In particular, the University of Brighton has a major shortfall between incoming students and the number of bed-spaces in halls of residence, and there is a demand from returning students (20%) to reside within purpose-built student accommodation.
- The University of Brighton Accommodation Strategy will therefore seek to increase the provision of university-managed accommodation (i.e. accommodation which is purpose-built by the university or partners for students) to offer a guaranteed bed-space for 90% of incoming first-year students, and for 20% of level two students. This will require the development of 1,728 bed spaces in university halls of residence.

4. On-going demand for student housing in the private rented sector

The University of Brighton (and the University of Sussex) recognises the need to extend partnership working with private sector landlords and other stakeholders to ensure the continuing supply of high-quality, affordable, private rented housing for the majority of returning students that seek this type of accommodation, and to acquire head-leased properties for 50% and 70% of level two and three/plus students, respectively. This will require an additional 2,781 bed spaces in head-leased, university-managed accommodation. If this is realised, there will be 1,442 students from the University of Brighton seeking accommodation in the private rented sector in the city (based on 2007-08 student populations).

5. The location of new developments of purpose-built student accommodation

The recent University of Brighton Student Housing Needs Assessment identified some locational prerequisites for the development of purpose-built student accommodation. These include: the relative close proximity to place of study, good transport links (or improved public transport), access to the town centre, and access to key amenities for student lifestyles. There is some flexibility in these locational prerequisites given the identification of differential residential locational preferences which are tied to year of study.

Given the onus of providing accommodation in close proximity to place of study, the University of Brighton Student Housing Needs Assessment also noted the need for future development of purpose-built student accommodation to take into account the current differential provision of university-managed accommodation across the campuses (Varley redevelopment will increase the supply for students at Falmer Campus), and asserted that development of new accommodation should be prioritised where shortfalls of accommodation are most significant (i.e. Moulsecoomb campus, see below).

Campus	Total full-time students	Number of bed-spaces in university halls of residence	Shortfall (if all students resided in university halls of residence)	Bed-spaces in university halls of residence as % of full-time students
Falmer	3,500	1,128	-2,372	32%
Moulsecoomb	5,000	163	-4,837	3%
Grand Parade	1,500	298	-1,202	20%
Total	10,000	1,589	-8,411	16%

A key factor in the future development of university halls of residence will be the need for the developments to be woven into an integrated transport policy for the city.

6.The appropriate type of purpose-built student accommodation

Any future development of purpose-built student accommodation in the city should adhere to the ANUK Code of Standards for large developments, which are adopted nationally by universities and commercial providers of purpose-built student accommodation.

The Student Housing Needs Assessment of the University of Brighton also demonstrated that future developments of purpose-built student accommodation need to take into account the following factors:

- The promotion of the personal and social benefits of residing within university-managed accommodation, and ensure that the design of future developments of university-managed accommodation integrate the key benefits of residing within university-managed accommodation;
- The supply of university-managed accommodation which offers a range of different internal layouts to cater for the diverse needs of students;
- The supply of university-managed accommodation which includes a range of bedroom sizes for students at different years of study;
- The supply of university-managed accommodation with a mix of communal and ensuite bathrooms;
- Extend the supply of university-managed and private rented accommodation which includes a range of internal facilities which are consistent across campus locations and all forms of student housing;
- The promotion and supply of university-managed and private rented accommodation with a weekly rental cost of between £70-90, and the possible delivery of some higher-cost, exclusive accommodation for a minority of final year students.

University of Sussex and University of Brighton students living in private rented accommodation or own home by census output area (2006-07)





