**PBSA SPD presentation and discussion.**

**Monday 6 December 2021**

Policy for controlling impact of increased student accommodation is a priority for BCC. This is driven by expansion plans of University of Bristol. UWE no plans to expand, majority of students live on campus and many students live in S Glos

UoB plans 6400 additional bedspaces by 2028 though they are currently reviewing this given the implications of Brexit and Covid- BCC awaiting revised figures from UoB

Bristol is compelled to provide student accommodation but can’t stop universities growing. Any proposals to tackle proposed expansion needs to come from the administration ie mayor to raise and discuss with eg vice chancellors; planners cannot do this. This SPD is being brought in to manage growth in most sustainable way, avoid negative impacts on local communities and central area.

\* Local Plan review sets out approach to the management of PBSA development in draft policy in H7. The approach to the management of HMOs is set out in draft policy H6. Areas shown in diagram in PBSA SPD as “Suitable location for Student Accommodation” p14

Slideshow presentation

**1: Background:** SPD is additional guidance not policy- supports existing and emerging local plan- see Local Plan review.

Development proposals will be assessed for combined impacts of all forms of student accommodation = HMO/ PBSA using both SPDs

BCC is testing some approaches in this draft,

Initial consultation is until 7 Jan- BCC want to hear feedback from communities also universities and accommodation providers

There will be further consultation next year with final documents

Evidence documentation will also be produced to support final consultation document

**2: Content:** This SPD is about how to control unsustainable development of student accommodation by defining harmful concentration- method uses densities rather than proportions.

 Identification of areas for development- and BCC thought it appropriate to include existing ‘campuses’.

Western harbour proposal for student accommodation; currently consultation is happening here which may or may not support student accommodation

Concentrations- slightly different metric

**Questions:**

Does PBSA refer to smaller units? = 10 or more bed spaces are PBSA, smaller is more likely to be C4/Sui Generis HMO

What definitions are used for HMO/ shared living? BCC definitions are not the same as Housing Act definitions. This may result in confusion which may be exploited. Covers accommodation from private landlords. Some student accommodation is provided by companies under national accreditation – HMO development for student purposes should be covered under HMO SPD- others under PBSA- in order to avoid double counting BCC may need to provide clarification in final document. Also be explicit about relationship with licencing for HMOs.

How were decisions made about which areas would be specified for student accommodation development? In drafting of Local Plan review and eg in discussion with UoB eg for Temple Quarter- it will be sustainable to have student accommodation near new TQ campus

How can outdoor space provision be ensured? There is an ambiguity about whether rooftop gardens space is allowed. SF confirmed that Policy set out the need for outdoor garden space. There is concern about health risk of balconies and roof gardens- so Ground floor gardens preferred. Emerging BCC policy on private outdoor space which would give a potential metric for provision (set out in the Urban Living SPD). Expansion of the existing residential campus at Stoke Bishop is included where open space for socialising is available.

Importance of ensuring good management of refuse and recycling which is a particular Bristol problem- emphasise necessity for concealed bins and disposal units well located.

What is the definition for affordable student housing? No more than 50% of current government maintenance grant; this is a potentially controversial element. UoB would prefer to use bursaries rather than this mechanism.

Why does this PBSA SPD define provision by density and how was the quantum arrived at? HMO SPD set 10% of dwellings as maximum; to incorporate PBSA within HMO metric was overly complex so needed simple transparent measure therefore density chosen. Planning officer would have a calculator for PBSA which would operate alongside the HMO calculator. If one or other measures was above the threshold, development would most likely be refused. Where development is proposed in an area with HMOs below 10% and PBSA below 70 bed spaces per hectare density consideration would be given as to whether the overall level of this type of housing would constitute a harmful concentration. Concern was raised that this would be open to interpretation and possible exploitation. Important to consider each case individually so not to be prescriptive.

How would affordable student housing be allocated? It is proposed in draft policy H7 that students claiming the max level of maintenance grant would be eligible- BCC would have to have conversation with UoB about how this would be managed. BCC does not have a mechanism for allocation for students unlike for wider public.

HMO SPD needs a ‘before and after’ analysis. Agreed: Still to do. Now developers are using the SPD to guide their applications and not bringing forward proposals which would be refused. Challenged by appeal in two cases a) 80 Whiteladies Rd– officer recommended approval but refused at committee- inspector overturned committee decision but a subsequent case b) Cotham Vale was supported using HMO SPD as evidence.

AW- how to assess using both calculators- many areas in already densely HMO areas; calculator relies on how much pinpoint map reflects situation on the ground. Previous developments may not have been captured. Never going to be 100% accurate. But need local people to alert BCC to missing information. SF confirmed that HMOs reported to enforcement would be looked at in new year.

Is identifying areas in Lawrence Hill ward for PBSA which is area of deprivation eg Temple Quarter/ Frome gateway and St Philips discriminatory? All three have been identified as areas of Growth and Regeneration to include housing, including affordable housing, and a mix of other uses including student accommodation. There is a perception that student accommodation proposals are coming forward and little or no housing especially affordable development. TQ & St Philips have caps for quantity of student accommodation. Once cap is reached, no further PBSA would be permitted. Flood risk issues are holding back decisions on residential development of all types in these areas. Deprivation needs to be included in decision of where student accommodation is brought forward. PBSA development is not only in areas of deprivation; Stoke Bishop also has 1000 allocated. Will consider whether deprivation and housing need can be added in as a factor.

There is housing pressure across Bristol. The impacts on housing provision from high costs of land/ development are affecting supply. We should press Bristol to consider limiting university expansion. Consider assessing areas which have already excess densities of PBSA and HMOs as already harmed. But should leave each case to be judged.

Student accommodation is counted within housing figures as part of statutory returns to Government.

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Attendees:

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