

Matter: CC6A.2

CCLP ID: 4257

ST EDMUND'S COLLEGE

MATTER CC6A.2

Maintaining a Balanced Supply of Housing

Policy 46 – Student Housing

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared in response to the questions raised by the Inspector in the Matters and Issues for Cambridge City Local Plan hearing sessions for the joint examination of the draft Local Plan for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 1.2 This statement is specifically in response to the Inspector's questions on Matter CC6A Issue 6A.2 relating to the representations made to policy 46 of the Local Plan Proposed Submission consultation (2013) (ref: 27781). Five questions are posed by the Inspector. The fifth relates to non-University educational institutions and no response is made on this issue.
- 1.3 The City Council has commissioned an Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply for Cambridge City Council (ASHDS) which was published in January 2017 and the findings of the Report were endorsed by the City Council Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 29th January (Ref: RD/CFM/030). The City Council has also proposed further modifications to the draft Plan which were agreed by the Committee at the same meeting to be submitted for further consideration by Full Council and for submission to Inspectors as part of the Local Plan process (ref: RD/CFM/010). Both the ASHDS report and the modifications are relevant to consideration of Policy 46.

2.0 ISSUE CC6A.2 (i)

Does the policy accord with paragraph 159 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as the policy is based on the necessity for the applicant to demonstrate the need for any development which would provide student accommodation rather than to meet the objectively assessed need established through the Local Plan process?

- 2.1 The ASHDS is welcomed as it provides a comprehensive and robust assessment of student supply and demand in Cambridge and valuable background evidence to inform the draft Plan. St Edmunds College participated in the survey undertaken as part of the ASHDS. The College falls within the category of university institutions as defined in the ASHDS.
- 2.2 The ASHDS and the City Council in their report which accompanied the Modifications (RD/CFM/010) acknowledged that student accommodation should be given further consideration. The City Council propose to include this within their next Strategic Housing

Market Assessment for the next Local Plan. In the interim the ASHDS provides the most up to date and reliable evidence base in relation to student housing.

- 2.3 Need for student housing is well established in the draft Plan and the ASHDS reinforces this. The ASHDS should serve to provide evidence of need for individual institutions supplemented as appropriate to enable each application to be treated on its merits. As such the policy should make reference to the ASHDS as the principal source of evidence in demonstrating need.

3.0 ISSUE 6A.2(ii)

Is criterion (a) {and criterion (c) by implication} of the policy too restrictive as the criteria tie any proposed student accommodation to the educational institution which is seeking to provide it whereas paragraph 14 of the Framework requires that the Plan should meet objectively assessed needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change?

- 3.1 As set out in Section 2 in response to question (i) the reference to the ASHDS together with evidence provided by an application should ensure there is scope within the application of the policy to accommodate changing needs of the educational institutions.
- 3.2 The policy refers to individual institution. In the interests of ensuring there is flexibility in addressing need it is suggested that the wording be amended to acknowledge that accommodation may be most efficiently used if occupation is not restricted to a single institution. For clarity the policy should refer to both an 'institution' and a 'group of institutions'. This will give flexibility in finding solutions to address identified need.

4.0 ISSUE 6A.2 (iii)

Is criterion (a) too inflexible to enable alternative models of student accommodation to be provided as some students may not wish to live in cluster style accommodation?

- 4.1 As identified in ASHSD at paragraph 7.6 '...what the research has made apparent is that students are very diverse both within and across different institutions as are their housing needs' (Appendix 1). The Study recognises that whilst undergraduates are likely to want some form of institutionally provided accommodation, there is a large postgraduate population, some of whom will desire a more 'home-like' form of accommodation. The

University is generally seeking to expand the postgraduate population whilst undergraduate numbers remain static. As such the demand for a more self-contained style of accommodation will grow alongside the continued requirement for cluster flats.

- 4.2 The converse is also true in that the Colleges experience a demand for rooms with shared facilities which offers the most affordable accommodation option for students. This further reinforces the need to ensure a flexible policy approach to the provision of student housing.
- 4.3 A further point should be made in relation to the diversity of the student population and consequently their housing needs. As already referred to the postgraduate student population is growing, as are the numbers of post-doctoral researchers, who are similar in terms of their accommodation needs to postgraduates. The ASHSD report highlights this stating at 7.6: 'The boundaries between different groups of students, and other sectors of the population such as post doctoral researchers and contract researchers are quite blurred in terms of their housing needs and current provision.'
- 4.4 The Colleges provide support and services for the post graduate students and post doctorate researchers and seeks to house them in College owned accommodation. Only 55% of postgraduates live in college. Given this, and the desire as described in the ASHSD for a more home like environment, postgraduates and post-doctoral researchers are much more likely than undergraduates to occupy private housing.
- 4.5 This being the case the policy, if it is to enable a flexible approach to student housing provision, should recognise that a diverse student population has a wide range of housing needs. For the purposes of policy 46, students should include post-doctoral researchers.

5.0 ISSUE 6A.2 (iv)

Would compliance with criterion (f) be determined on a case by case basis?

- 5.1 The nature of rooms and facilities would have to be considered on a case by case basis. As explained in response to (iii) the requirements will differ depending upon the institution, the type of students to be housed, the College's existing accommodation provision as well as the size and location of the accommodation. Each scheme will need to be considered on the basis of individual requirements and on their merits.

5.2 Criterion (f) could be amended to add the words 'on a case by case basis' to ensure this is clear.