



Guidance note on Student Accommodation Statements

November 2019

1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This document provides detailed guidance on the application of Policy TP33 Student Accommodation in the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP). It does not create new policy or place additional burdens on applicants; rather it explains what information is needed in order to demonstrate that the requirements of the policies will be met.
- 1.2 This guidance note sets out:
- the policy context;
 - what development the policies apply to;
 - the information required from applicants to demonstrate the policy has been met; and
 - how the information submitted will be assessed.

2. Policy context

- 2.1 The adopted Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) (Policy TP33 Student accommodation) recognises that Birmingham has five major universities which are important assets for the city in terms of providing quality higher education, research and innovation, qualified graduates and employment. In addition, Birmingham has six large further education colleges for students over 16 years of age. The City Council's vision in the BDP is for the city's universities and colleges to flourish and grow. Student accommodation plays a major role in the university experience and in meeting housing need.
- 2.2 In recent years there has been a significant growth in the development of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) which has been triggered by growth in overall student numbers. Policy TP33 of the BDP sets out the policy requirements for on campus and off campus student accommodation provision. This note provides guidance on the evidence required in order to meet the requirements of the policy. It should be noted that policy TP33 places onus on the applicant to provide an up to date demonstration of need for the development.

What development the policy applies to

- 2.3 The policy applies to proposals for off campus purpose-built student accommodation and will also apply to proposals for conversions and changes of use of former institutional uses, hotels and other large properties in excess of 1,000 sq.m. to student accommodation.

Policy TP33 criteria

a. There is a demonstrated need for the development.

- 2.4 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Council that there is a need for the accommodation proposed at the time the application is submitted. In particular applicants should:

- Identify which university the accommodation is intended to serve and whether a university or institution would have exclusive nomination rights over the development and if so for what period.
- Demonstrate that there is unmet need for the type, size and format of accommodation proposed (taking into account the demand for student accommodation arising from the institutions the proposal seeks to serve and the existing and committed future supply to determine the unmet demand)
- State what type of accommodation the anticipated occupants of the accommodation are likely to be drawn from if the need does not arise from an increase in student numbers.

2.5 In addressing need, consideration should be given to the local area around the university to be served. Evidence of city-wide need alone will not be sufficient. The evidence should address specific subsets of the student population, not the overall student population.

2.6 This, together with any additional supporting evidence, should be submitted to the City Council along with the planning application. However, developers are encouraged to make the evidence available earlier to enable effective pre application discussions to take place. Additional supporting evidence could include details of waiting lists at nearby, similar, accommodation.

2.7 Developers are urged to contact the relevant university to determine the specific nature of any additional accommodation requirements before bringing forward development proposals.

2.8 When needs can be met by a variety of different types or sizes of accommodation, such as that which is suitable for groups of friends to live together, for older students including those who have families and for research students, proposals should incorporate a variety of suitable types and sizes of accommodation. Proposals which offer a greater diversity of accommodation, such as student houses, are encouraged.

2.9 Where the accommodation is intended to draw students from shared HMO accommodation the evidence should include information on comparable rent levels.

2.10 In considering the demand for student accommodation, it is acknowledged that, currently, all students have accommodation and there is sufficient accommodation to house all students. This suggests that any new purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) would primarily be to:

- Serve a growth in student numbers,
- Rectify a mismatch in the type of accommodation which is available and that which is needed,
- Respond to changing student preferences or
- Replace existing PBSA accommodation.

b. The proposed development is very well located in relation to the university that it is to serve and to the local facilities which will serve it, by means of walking, cycling and public transport.

2.11 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the proposed development is well located. Information to be provided includes:

- The walking distances from the proposed site to the campus which it is to serve and to the local facilities which will serve it; and
- Accessibility to good public transport for connections beyond the local area.

2.12 Reasonable walking distance is defined as ten minutes. In terms of distance this equates to around 1km. Where proposals are located more than 1km by foot from the campus, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that there are no suitable alternative locations within 1km of the campus and that the site can be easily accessed by means of sustainable transport options to the satisfaction of the City Council.

c. The proposed development will not have an unacceptable impact on the local neighbourhood and residential amenity.

2.13 Planning applications for student accommodation should be accompanied by a Management and Neighbourhood Impact Statement. In this statement developers should demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Council that measures are in place to:

- Mitigate nuisance to neighbours including those relating to noise, nuisance, litter and parking.
- Create a safe environment for students including lighting, security, concierge facilities and CCTV.
- Manage car parking.

The scale, massing and architecture of the development is appropriate for the location.

2.14 Applicants should demonstrate this through the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The accommodation should be designed to enhance the quality of the urban environment and to minimise potential adverse impacts.

d. The design and layout of the accommodation together with the associated facilities provided will create a positive and welcoming living experience environment.

2.15 In demonstrating the above, proposals for new purpose built student accommodation should take into careful consideration student health and well-being. Developers should demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Council how the design, layout, size and format of accommodation will:

- Provide communal space / facilities such as games rooms and lounges to allow students to interact and add to the living experience.
- Provide attractive and usable open space / amenity areas.
- Provide for the welfare and wellbeing of students including help and support.
- Provide safe and secure environments incorporating appropriate safety and security measures both inside and outside the accommodation to minimise the opportunity for crime and make the environment safer for the students.
- Be flexible and designed in such a way that they can be converted into general housing should the need arise.