

Interim Student Accommodation Policy

June 2015

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Sunderland is a global enterprise with a presence in over 85 countries worldwide and a global student population of around 19,905¹. The University has an international campus located at Canary Wharf in London. The importance of the University within the city is recognised through the City Council's strategic priorities and the continued regeneration aims of the city centre, which serves the diverse student population and in which the city campus is located. (St Peter's campus lies to the immediate north of the City Centre).
- 1.2 The student experience is a key driver for where a student chooses to study and this experience includes housing and leisure. Currently Sunderland is a city with a university, but it does not yet possess all the characteristics and qualities of a university city, such as a centre which is bustling with students visiting shops, cafes, bars and restaurants and leisure activities that meet their needs. The city centre needs to be exploited more by student life to bring about these characteristics and qualities and to generate more activity, both day and night. The close proximity of the two university campuses to the city centre should also assist in driving this forward and the potential for the city centre to be a prime location for student accommodation and for Sunderland to be recognised as a great experience for students.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of city centres and ensuring their vitality by pursuing policies which support their viability and vitality. It also acknowledges that residential development can play an important role in ensuring centre vitality. Within Sunderland it is considered that student living can play a major role in the economic and societal development of the city centre, and contribute to its viability and vitality, whilst assisting in its regeneration. The important role of student accommodation needs to be maximised through local plan policies.
- 1.4 The NPPF also seeks to ensure built environments are created to a high quality, this can be driven through planning policies and ensuring student accommodation is developed to a high standard, which in turn will contribute to the student offer and experience.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The University of Sunderland is focused around two main campuses, the city campus which is within the city centre and St Peter's campus, to the north of the river, within walking distance of the city centre. The university has a predominately local recruitment focus and an aspiration to increase the student intake from the city and the immediate surrounding areas. As such the socio-economic and demographics of students are quite specific to Sunderland which differs considerably from neighbouring University cities such as Newcastle and Durham whereby a high proportion of University of

¹ Source- University Of Sunderland as of 2013/14

Sunderland students tend to reside in their parental/own home whilst studying.

- 2.2 The university has around 12,000 on- campus students, of which approximately 7,000 reside within the city. Of these 7,000 students over 46% reside in private rented accommodation, with others living either in their own home, their parental home or in university accommodation.²
- 2.3 The students who reside in university owned accommodation live in one of four residential sites, Clanny House, Scotia Quay, Panns Bank and The Precinct, all of which are located on the south side of the river. The total supply of university halls of residence accommodation is 1,547 beds. The Forge (U Student) hall of residence provided by a private company takes the total halls of residence bed spaces supply to 2,095.
- 2.4 The supply of private rented accommodation is generally made up of purpose built student accommodation blocks, city centre flats and some form of HMOs (House in Multiple Occupation)³. Houses in multiple occupation account for the majority of the student private rented sector.
- 2.5 Wards such as St Michael's, Pallion, Hendon, Barnes, Millfield and St Peter's are known to accommodate high levels of HMO's and students. (Within Millfield 52% of the private rented sector is student accommodation)⁴. These areas have seen the decline of traditional dwelling houses and in some instances, where HMOs are outside the scope of mandatory HMO licence and as such do not require to be licensed or do not comply with City Council standards, amenity issues have become problems for permanent residents due to lack of property management.⁵
- 2.6 As part of the private rented sector prime residential development schemes which were developed to assist in the regeneration of the city centre, such as Echo 24, have become part of the student housing market as this offers high quality living in a prime location for access to the university campuses.
- 2.7 Students traditionally looked for halls of residence in their first year then moved to shared housing for the remaining years of their study. However, there is now a growing trend for students to spend more than just their first year in halls of residence. Recent demand suggests that more students are seeking to reside in halls/purpose built accommodation for all of their university life.

² Source: University 2013/14 Term Time Address Report (TTA)

³ Certain HMOs are licensable, generally over 3 storeys, 5 or more people comprising 2 or more families with shared facilities. See <https://www.gov.uk/house-in-multiple-occupation-licence>

⁴ Source: Sunderland City Council, Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended (13/12/12).

⁵ Article 4 Directions are in place for certain wards within the city to manage the number of HMOs, see paragraph 8.4-8.5

- 2.8 En-suite single rooms in self-catered halls are now the most common form of purpose built student accommodation nationally⁶. Availability of high quality purpose built accommodation in the right locations is therefore increasingly important to prospective students.
- 2.9 As such, to meet demand there has been a recent increase in the number of planning applications for the development of purpose built student accommodation blocks and conversions of existing buildings to student accommodation, by private developers
- 2.10 The current⁷ student accommodation supply and potential supply position in the city is:-

Table 1- Student Accommodation Supply

Supply⁸	Bed spaces
Existing known private rented stock	3,377
University stock	1,547
The Forge	548
Total	5,472
Potential additional supply⁹	
Under construction	123
Extant Planning Approval	416
Planning Applications pending	0
Total	539
Total	6,011

- 2.11 In terms of supply, it can be seen from the table above that the total current supply of accommodation for students is 5,472 beds, with a further 123 currently under construction, taking this total to 5,595 beds. Further beds are in the pipeline, with planning approvals in place for an additional 416 bed spaces, which would increase the total to 6,011.
- 2.12 The number of student accommodation bedspaces which have planning permission need to be considered carefully, as they may not all be developed. Appendix 1 details the current planning approvals and it can be seen from the approval dates that a number of these are longstanding permissions, which have yet to be implemented (416).
- 2.13 In terms of demand in relation to numbers, as mentioned above the university has a total of around 12,000 on-campus students and with the university

⁶ Source: Accommodation Costs Survey 2012/13 (Unipol-NUS)

⁷ As of July 2014 (these figures will be updated on an annual basis and available on the city council's web site)

⁸ Source: Sunderland University MISD student records/SCC planning records

⁹ A detailed breakdown of these sites can be found at appendix 1.

having a very strong local recruitment base, around 6,800 of these 12,000 students reside at their family home during their period of study, (1,744 of these 6,800 students have their family home within the city). For those students who do not reside in their family home, there is currently a total of 5,472 bedspaces within the city to satisfy demand, a further 123 under construction and 416 beds with extant planning permission.

- 2.14 The local nature of the university and the high level of home based local students has to be recognised to ensure the whole 12,000 on campus population does not form part of the demonstration of need.
- 2.15 As a large amount of the supply is available within the private rented sector (as set out above), the majority of this stock is accommodation which is not specific to students, as such these beds could be occupied by people other than students and therefore cannot easily be accounted for within the supply. However, it is known that around 12% of this private rented stock is purpose built, including converted student accommodation and as such can be justified for inclusion within the total supply.
- 2.16 In terms of future student numbers and university growth expectations, the university has indicated that it is not envisaged that any significant increases in student on-campus numbers will occur over the next two to three years. However, this will be reviewed annually.

3.0 Purpose of the document

3.1 The purpose of this document is to link the City Council's and the University's aspirations for developing a city centre which has the characteristics and qualities of a university city with the NPPF and other council strategies in relation to ensuring the vitality of the city centre, by providing guidance and advice on where student accommodation should be located, what quality it should be and how much actual accommodation is needed. The document will be taken forward as an Interim Policy Document, which will subsequently be incorporated into the publication version of the City Council's Local Plan-Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.

3.2 The main objective of the Interim Policy is to:

'Maximise the benefit of student accommodation to regenerate the city centre and assist in creating a university city that offers an excellent student experience'

Through:

- Considering favourably good quality accommodation located in the city centre and on campus
- Ensuring a balance between supply and demand at each level of quality
- Ensuring choice in the type of accommodation available
- Enhancing the student experience
- Ensuring there is not an over supply

- 3.3 Developing a vibrant city centre is a priority for the council. By directing student accommodation to the city centre this will assist in bringing life into the centre and start to create a city centre which provides both the day time and evening uses that students are looking for, all of which will be within close proximity and easily accessible to both the Chester Road and St Peter's campus.
- 3.4 Not only is the location of student accommodation key, but the quality of the accommodation is fundamental. Students expect high quality accommodation with a range of facilities included. As such all student accommodation should be developed to high standards, but the offer should ensure choice and value for money so students can opt for different types of accommodation depending on their circumstances.
- 3.5 Notwithstanding the above, student accommodation numbers need to be managed in line with projected student numbers to ensure the city does not end up with an oversupply of accommodation, which cannot be easily converted to other uses.
- 3.6 It is therefore important for the city that a student accommodation policy is developed which can assist in delivering city centre regeneration, contributes to enhancing the student experience, and offers choice in good quality accommodation, without supply outstripping demand.
- 3.7 It is recognised that students and the University make an important contribution to the city's economy, increasing demand for services, shops, and housing whilst studying, and as potential future residents of the city who can contribute to its future prosperity and regeneration. By providing choice in accommodation and ensuring students reside in the city and do not feel isolated from the university and its activities, will help create the qualities and characteristics Sunderland as a university city, should have.

4.0 Policy Context

National Policy

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012)

The NPPF is the most up to date policy in place for planning, as this is a strategic framework it does not make specific reference to student accommodation. The emphasis of the framework is to promote sustainable development. Planning has a requirement to perform a social role by, 'supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being'. Ensuring the vitality of city centres is also a requirement of the NPPF.

Local Policy

4.2 **Sunderland City Council Economic Masterplan (2010)**

The Masterplan sets out how the university is an asset and how it can assist in expanding the local economy. It also recognises that the two campuses can become an integral part of the city centre. It defines a vision for the city's economy, which is:

'An entrepreneurial university city at the heart of a low carbon regional economy'

4.3 It sets out five aims to meet this vision, one of which is 'a new kind of university city, where Sunderland will be a vibrant, creative and attractive city, with a strong learning ethic and a focus on developing and supporting enterprise, with the University of Sunderland at its heart.'

4.4 The masterplan recognises the contribution the University and its students currently and potentially could make to the city and in particular the city centre. It echoes the contribution student accommodation could have on the city centre, if it is planned appropriately and the right policy is put in place.

4.5 **Sunderland's Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 (SHMA)**

As part of the (SHMA), student accommodation provision was looked into. This involved gaining the views of students via a survey and gathering stakeholder views on student accommodation.

4.6 The information gleaned from the student survey indicated that, of those who responded, the majority were satisfied with their accommodation, the majority walked to their place of education and of the 67% of students who intended on moving within the next 5 years, the majority of these expected to move to a private rented dwelling.

4.7 In relation to the views of stakeholders, it was noted that demand for student lets change on a yearly basis, this demand is unpredictable and therefore hard to plan for. Whilst student accommodation is a positive force in terms of economic benefits, it raises challenges in terms of community sustainability, especially in areas saturated by large numbers of student lets, where issues of anti-social behaviour, noise and summer void periods are a major problem for local residents.

4.8 The SHMA put forward a number of policy recommendations,

- It is recognised that students and universities make an important contribution to a city's economy through an increased demand for services, shops, and housing both whilst studying, and as potential residents of the city. This contributes to a city's future prosperity and regeneration.
- By providing a wider choice of accommodation and ensuring students who reside in the city do not feel isolated from the university and its activities, will help create the qualities and characteristics Sunderland is aspiring to deliver as a university city.

- The city centre needs to be exploited more by student life to bring about characteristics and qualities of a true university city in order to generate more activity, both day and night.
- The close proximity of the two university campuses to the city centre should also assist in driving this forward and the potential for the city centre to be a prime location for student accommodation.
- Student accommodation has to be developed in the right location, to enable students to easily access university facilities, as well as ensuring need is demonstrated. This will ensure the city doesn't end up with a large number of vacant purpose built student accommodation blocks which would not be fully utilised or easily convert to other uses.
- As such it is important for the city that the City Council develop a student housing policy which will assist in regenerating the Central Area, whilst incorporating student accommodation and without over supply.

4.9 The Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP)

The UDP has no specific student policy, although it does recognise that the provision of HMOs can make a valuable contribution to the supply of rented accommodation in the city. Notwithstanding this, it acknowledges that problems can occur when there are over-concentrations of such uses (Policy H18).

4.10 UDP Alteration No.2- Central Sunderland (September 2007)

The Alteration seeks to guide and aid the regeneration of the Central Area of Sunderland, which includes the City Centre and the University Campuses. The emphasis is on the re-use of previously developed land and the creation of mixed use developments. Policies seek to maximise investment in employment, housing, and leisure and tourism in the area. Directing student accommodation to the City Centre and the Campuses will assist in the regeneration of the area.

4.11 Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document - July 2008

Within the City Centre lies Sunnyside. In recent years Sunnyside has seen an increase in student accommodation provision. The seeks to deliver an urban renaissance in this area and develop a revitalised, distinctive mixed use city quarter which is an efficient, accessible and vibrant place, along with being a desirable centrally located living area, offering a mix of high quality residential accommodation.

4.12 **Wearmouth Masterplan and Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) February 2012**

The SPD guides future development in the area and ensures that there is the right balance between protecting and enhancing the areas heritage and achieving significant regeneration activity. Crucially the Masterplan aims to protect and enhance St Peter's Church and grounds and the key views both to and from. The Masterplan, which incorporates a number of broad planning and urban design principles relating to acceptable uses, layout, scale of development, access and landscape is accompanied by a design code which provides more specific design guidance to ensure proposals incorporate highest possible design qualities, whilst recognising that design is not purely about the appearance of buildings, but is also heavily influenced by the relationship between buildings, public realm, streets and squares.

4.13 **Sunderland Local Plan: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Draft Revised Preferred Options August 2013**

This document includes a detailed policy on student accommodation provision and on HMO provision. These policies together aim to ensure there is a need for student accommodation. It further acts to ensure that it is located within the most sustainable location and that development proposals would not be detrimental to the local amenity, the character of an area and not result in an over concentration of student accommodation.

4.14 These draft Core Strategy policies have been subject to public consultation via the plan process. Limited comments were received on the policy, and are summarised as follows:

- Ensuring a definition is given for the reference to 'Edge of Central Area';
- The priority location for accommodation to be on campus, being too restrictive;
- Different types of accommodation is required for different types of students and;
- Question how need for student accommodation is to be demonstrated.

4.15 Support was also given to the policy in relation to the sequential approach to the location of student accommodation and the aims to ensure over concentrations are avoided. Suggestions were put forward for additional points to be included in relation to quality and type of accommodation.

4.16 **Private Sector House Condition Survey 2014**

This document presents the findings of a comprehensive survey of housing conditions in the private housing sector in the city. Survey information applies to dwellings from all private tenure sectors including those which are owner-occupied, rented privately and tied to a persons employment. Dwellings

owned and rented by Registered Social Landlords, including the ex-Council housing stock are excluded from the survey. The main summary of the findings are set out below:-

- 14.2% of heads of household in the private rented sector are unemployed compared to 1.9% of owner occupied households.
- Median household income within the private rented sector is estimated at £20,310 compared to £37,700 in the owner occupied sector.
- 46.4% of private rented households are economically vulnerable compared to 12.5% of owner occupied households.
- 2,493 dwellings (2.8%) exhibit Category 1 hazards within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- 8,582 dwellings (9.5%) are in disrepair.
- 431 (0.5%) dwellings lack modern facilities and services; and
- 4,793 occupied dwellings (5.7%) fail to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

5.0 Policy Direction

- 5.1 Set out below is the draft proposed development management policy which aims to meet the objective as set out in Section 3 of this document. The policy is an amendment of Policy DM4.3 of the Sunderland Local Plan: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Draft Revised Preferred Options August 2013. The policy has been amended to take into account consultation responses and further evidence that has become available.
- 5.2 The revised policy will be taken forward as a Draft Interim Policy and will be subject to public consultation. Following consultation the policy will be amended accordingly and reported back to the Council's Cabinet for approval, from which it can then be considered as a material consideration for Development Management purposes (albeit with limited weight). The policy will be incorporated into the next reiteration of the Local Plan- Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.
- 5.3 It should be noted that issues in relation to amenity, traffic generation, the character of an area, over concentration of student accommodation and submission of management plans are set out in the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Development Management Policy DM4.4, which must also be complied with for student accommodation proposals.
- 5.4 A suite of development management policies are in place within the draft Local Plan to ensure acceptable development proposals. Developers should comply with all relevant policies in relation to their proposals before submitting schemes for pre-application advice or formal planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Documents referenced within this document should also be adhered to.

5.5 A list of potential planning conditions, Section 106 Heads of Terms¹⁰ and notes for planning approvals are set out at Appendix 2. However this list is not exhaustive.

5.6 Proposed Draft Policy

Student Accommodation- Policy DM4.3

To assist in the regeneration of the city centre and in creating a 'University City', the City Council will consider favourably proposals for purpose-built student accommodation or the conversion of existing buildings for student accommodation within the city centre and on existing university campuses

Provided proposals demonstrate that:

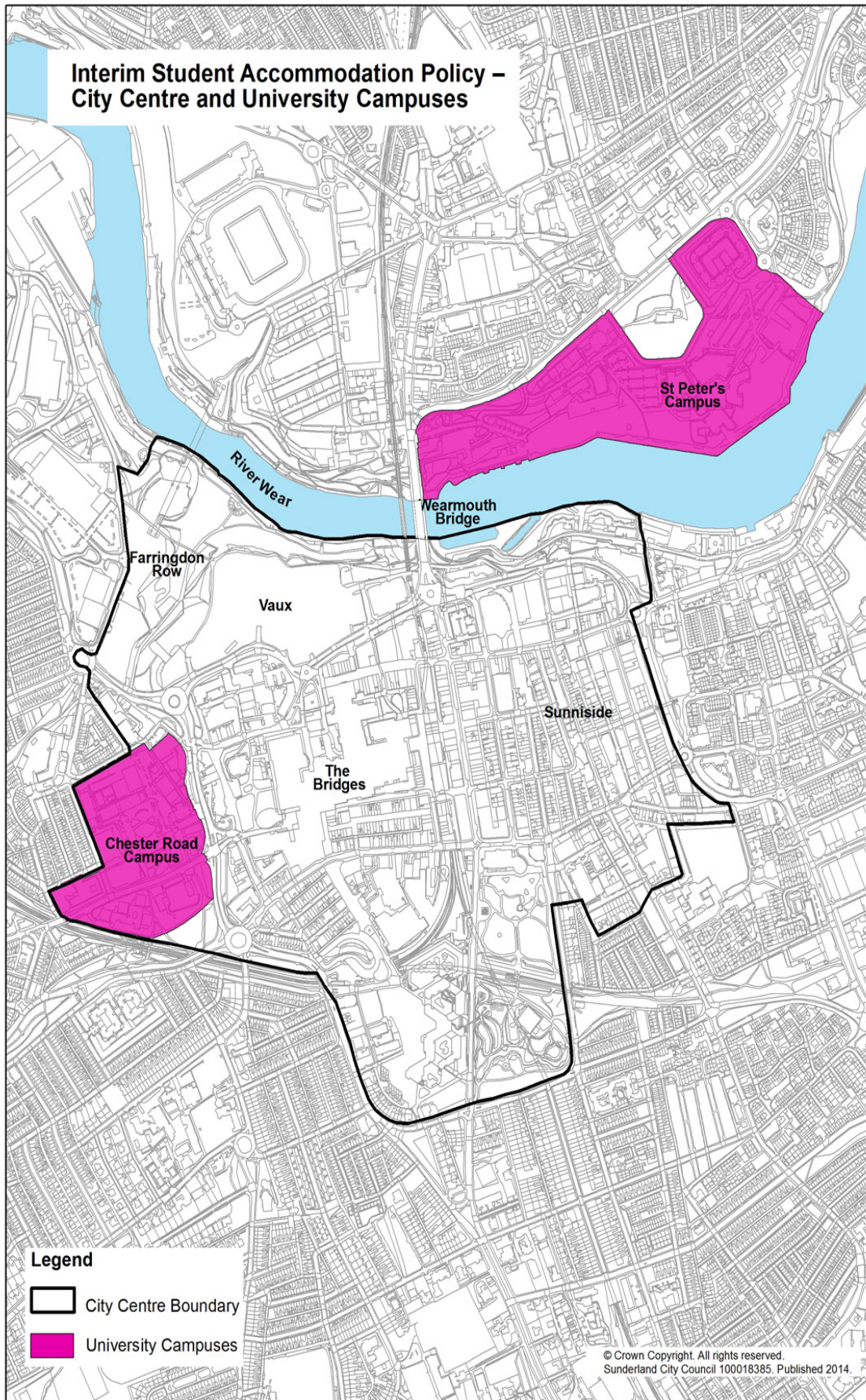
- a. The development meets an identified need in terms of quantity;
- b. The development meets an identified demand in terms of quality;
- c. The development is of a scale and appearance appropriate to its surroundings;
- d. The development is located within close proximity to local facilities and is accessible to the university by foot and cycle and by public transport: and
- e. The accommodation provides high quality living accommodation in terms of design, layout, standards and facilities provided within the development, as more particularly described in the background text to this policy.

Should a proposal come forward which is not located within the areas specified above, the developer will need to demonstrate there are no suitable and available sites to accommodate the proposed development within either the city centre or on an existing campus and also ensure compliance with the above points (a-e).

All proposals for student accommodation must also accord with the requirements of Policy DM4.4.

¹⁰ Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Interim Student Accommodation Policy – City Centre and University Campuses



Legend

-  City Centre Boundary
-  University Campuses

Detailed guidance to comply with Policy

Locational requirements

- 6.1 The two university campuses are both within walking distance of the city centre. To assist in the regeneration of the city centre and to create a centre which can enhance the student experience and attract further investment, thus adding to the positive living experience for students, priority will be given to student accommodation proposals that are located in the city centre or on university campus. This will also minimise private car use and encourage walking and cycling and ensure students have good access to everyday facilities.
- 6.2 The city centre, particularly Sunnyside has been identified as a key area to absorb future purpose built student accommodation. Both areas already have existing student-orientated facilities such as pubs, nightclubs, shops, museums, art-galleries etc. Both areas are mixed use in nature and therefore student accommodation is unlikely to have a detrimental impact upon the character or amenity of such areas.
- 6.3 In addition, both areas have a limited number of existing residents, thus avoiding over concentrations of students in established residential areas and preventing hostility between existing residents and students which often has a negative impact on the character of neighbourhoods and how they function.
- 6.4 The concentration of student housing within the city centre may mean the area has more potential to support more student orientated facilities and services, benefiting the students, which in turn could increase the university experience and create the 'University City' Sunderland currently lacks.
- 6.5 Proposals outside the city centre or campuses will need to demonstrate consideration has been given to suitable and available sites within the city centre or on campus.
- 6.6 Student accommodation proposals should be of a scale that is appropriate to the surroundings and as such large scale proposals which are out of keeping with their surroundings will not be considered favourably.
- 6.7 In order to ensure students can easily access day to day facilities all proposals will have to be in close proximity to local facilities and easily accessible to the university campuses by a choice of transport means, such as footpaths, cycle routes and bus/metro stops and stations. In order to contribute to student safety, development proposals should be linked to nearby facilities, transport links and the university campus by well-lit, direct footpath links.
- 6.8 This information should be demonstrated as part of the planning application and should indicate the proximity of the proposed accommodation to these links, stops and stations and the frequency details of public transport. Secure cycle storage should also be incorporated into the design. In addition to this,

proposals should also comply with draft DM Policy 6.1,2 and 3 in relation to transport access and parking.

- 6.9 To assist the City Council in monitoring student accommodation levels and locations, planning applications should be accompanied by details of the type and location of existing accommodation the potential student occupiers are likely to be drawn from. This will allow the City Council to consider the impact on the local housing market if the number of students living in accommodation not specifically designed for students decreases.

Quantity of development

- 6.10 In order to demonstrate need in terms of quantity, developers will be required to submit details of:

- Existing and projected numbers for students in further/higher education in the city, taking into account any development plans of the University of Sunderland/Sunderland College¹¹;
- The proportion of these students that are likely to require accommodation in the city, taking into account: the existing number and location of student housing units; the number and location of additional student housing units that have extant planning permission¹²
- The level of demand for the type of accommodation proposed and demonstrate where this demand comes from and how it offers a clear 'added value' to the city.

Quality of development

- 6.11 It is recognised that need for student accommodation cannot always be determined by numbers alone and consideration has to be given to the quality/type of accommodation on offer. As such, part of the policy requirement is demonstrating that the development meets a specific demand in terms of the quality of accommodation.

- 6.12 To consider this in terms of quality an analysis of the existing student accommodation supply needs to be undertaken, detailing what type of stock is already available and what it does or doesn't provide in relation to the demand for accommodation. This information should then be considered alongside evidence of student demand for accommodation and how the proposal will meet these demands.

- 6.13 If it is clearly demonstrated that the available stock is not meeting demand/student expectations then consideration will be given to proposals that assist in meeting this. In these circumstances, developers are required to provide evidence that the proposals actually offer a different 'product' than currently exists.

¹¹ No significant increases in student numbers for University of Sunderland are expected over the next few years, see para.2.16

¹² See paragraph 2.10 and 2.11 for details of supply

- 6.14 Student accommodation proposals should encourage social and community living, with consideration being given to providing a range of accommodation units, such as studios and cluster flats which can provide accommodation for couples and families, as well as single people. The provision of social space should also be considered by providing areas such as cinema rooms, games rooms, gym provision and IT areas, which all enhance the student living experience.
- 6.15 To ensure student accommodation proposals provide high quality living accommodation planning applications should be accompanied by internal and external layout details and comply with the following standards:-
- I. Bedrooms to offer a choice in size and accommodate a bed, wardrobe and study desk and chair with the minimum size being 10m² for a single person, (excluding any en-suite facilities);
 - II. Each bedroom shall include at least one window or skylight facing directly outdoors which can easily be opened;
 - III. If bedrooms are not en-suite one bathroom and one separate WC with wash-hand basin should be provided for every 5 persons. However, for 6 persons or more one of the WC's with wash-hand basin must be separate, others can be contained with bathrooms;
 - IV. Communal kitchens should be a minimum of 7m² for 1-5 people sharing, with larger residences requiring more sizeable kitchens;
 - V. A Communal lounge will be required of a size sufficient to accommodate the number of students in the unit.
 - VI. Dining space shall be provided for all students, either separate to or as part of the lounge/kitchen area
- 6.16 As the above standards are minimums, it is expected that larger developments provide adequate communal areas. These will be determined on their merits taking into consideration the number of proposed bedspaces in relation to the size of the communal areas.
- 6.17 As the aim of the policy is to improve quality and standards in student accommodation, variety in internal layout is encouraged provided that adequate size rooms/communal areas are incorporated.
- 6.18 New purpose built student accommodation should be designed to incorporate appropriate levels of security. Measures such as security doors, window locks, CCTV¹³, lighting and intercom systems can all help to make the local environment safer and reduce the opportunities for crime.
- 6.19 In addition to the above, developments which propose in excess of 15 students living in one building in rooms off a central corridor, in cluster flats or

¹³ Planning permission may be required for CCTV proposals. Further information can be found at www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=812

in self-contained flats should strive to meet the standards as set out in the 'National Code of Standards' for Student Accommodation. This ensures both managers and tenants enjoy the benefit of good standards of housing management and practice, misunderstandings and disputes are reduced and where problems do occur they are promptly resolved.¹⁴

- 6.20 In order to further assist in ensuring a positive living experience proposals must also comply with other relevant Development Management policies of the Draft Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), in particular policies DM4.4 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), DM7.1 Design, DM7.23 Greenspace, DM7.24 Local Environmental Quality, DM7.25 Amenity. Of particular importance to any proposals within the southern part of St Peter's ward and northern part of Hendon Ward is ensuring development proposals are sympathetic to St Peter's Church and grounds (Grade 1 listed building/scheduled ancient monument) and enhance and do not detract from its character, its setting and views of it from the surrounding area. As such compliance with the Wearmouth Masterplan and Design Code (Feb 2012) is essential.
- 6.21 Developers should design all new purpose built accommodation in such a way that it can be capable of being re-configured through internal alterations to meet general needs housing in the future.

Delivery of developments

- 6.22 Proposals for student accommodation must also comply with policy DM4.4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation, as such this Draft Interim Policy expands upon those policy requirements in relation to HMOs which benefit from further clarification. (The full policy is set out in appendix 3). The points in the policy in relation to traffic, the character and function of an area and amenity issues are self-explanatory and as such would not lend themselves to further explanation.

7.0 Management Plan

- 7.1 It is important that proposals for student accommodation have minimal negative impact on the existing community and the character of an area. The council will expect all new purpose built/ conversion student accommodation schemes to have a Management Plan. The Management Plan should detail how the property will be managed and maintained and should, as a minimum, include details of the following:-

- Details of on site management;
- Control of car parking;
- Appropriate sound insulation measures;
- An on-going annual programme of Maintenance;

¹⁴ The standards can be found at <http://www.nationalcode.org/>

- Security;
- Refuse and recycling storage
- Lighting;
- Cycle Storage
- Helpline contact for residents

7.2 For larger purpose built properties or conversions proposing 15 bedspaces or more consideration should also be given to providing arrangements for postal delivery, laundry and drying facilities, building security plans, fire evacuation plan and weekend arrivals procedures. Warden arrangements or community liaison should also be considered to help minimise and manage anti-social behaviour.

7.3 In order to achieve quality accommodation all student accommodation proposals should strive to comply with the standards set out in the Sunderland Accredited Landlord Scheme, (and gain membership). This scheme is designed as a partnership between the City Council and private landlords to improve the quality of the private rented sector and its management through an agreed set of standards. Its aim is to improve the quality of the private rented sector by providing good quality safe accommodation that is well managed. Further information can be found at www.sunderland.gov.uk/landlords-accreditation.

7.4 In addition to the above, the accommodation should comply with the relevant legislation contained in the Housing Act and The Building Regulations. Developers should consult the City Council's Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Team, Environmental Health and Building Control at an early stage to ascertain these requirements. With regards student accommodation which comprises a licensable HMO, an application for an HMO licence should be submitted at the same time as the planning application. This will avoid unnecessary delay should changes be required as part of the HMO licence. This also applies to student accommodation in the selective licensing area of "Middle Hendon and the Long Street" until June 2015. (More details can be found at www.sunderland.gov.uk and search for selective licensing).

8.0 Existing stock and over concentrations

8.1 Despite the increase in purpose built student accommodation in recent years, shared housing (often referred to as Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)) continues to play an important role in providing accommodation for students in the city, particularly at the lower end of the housing market price range. It is typically cheaper than purpose built accommodation and its continued availability is important in providing students with a choice of accommodation which reflects their range of needs, aspirations and financial means.

8.2 Shared housing generally exists in traditional residential neighbourhoods, usually in dwellings formerly in use as family homes. Although in the main shared housing in the city operates well, issues can arise when there are over concentrations within a particular area. The increase in residential density that can result from change of use to shared housing can put pressure on the

existing services and infrastructure of an area, and can change the character of the neighbourhood, particularly with the transient nature of students.

- 8.3 The council will continue to support private sector landlords to supply high quality housing. However, it is also important to ensure that potential conflicts with other housing and their occupiers are minimised. An over concentration of shared housing will be assessed by taking into account the following:-
- a) the number of students living in shared housing in surrounding residential neighbourhoods and (identified using evidence from Council Tax records);
 - b) whether the introduction of further student accommodation would introduce a demographic imbalance (in terms of numbers) or place an unacceptable strain upon local amenity (e.g. noise, parking, litter) or local facilities (e.g. open spaces, other recreational facilities).
(This would apply to all HMO proposals and not just student accommodation)
- 8.4 In addition to the above considerations for over concentrations, it is important to note that the City Council has introduced an Article 4 Direction. This is a legal mechanism which removes permitted development rights within a defined area resulting in planning permission being required to convert a family house into a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) for up to 6 people.
- 8.5 The Article 4 Direction relates to the following wards:
- Hendon
 - Barnes
 - St Michaels
 - St Peters
 - Millfield

9.0 Alternative Uses

- 9.1 Student accommodation can sometimes have standards of residential amenity that differ from properties designed for long term occupation, in terms of minimum floor space standards, open space provision, parking requirements etc. New purpose built student housing is also not required to contribute to affordable housing. It is for this reason that all applications for student accommodation will be conditioned/Subject to Section 106 agreements to limit occupancy to students.
- 9.2 Should an applicant apply to remove this occupancy restriction at a later date, it will need to be demonstrated at that time that all of the policy requirements for general housing needs, including amenity standards can be met.
- 9.3 Where it is difficult to determine whether student occupation of a new development is planned and it is anticipated that the new development if occupied by students will prejudice the aims and objectives of this policy, the City Council will consider using conditions to limit occupation to non-student households.

Hostel Accommodation

- 9.4 There is already a concentration of hostel type accommodation within the city centre, as such the council would not support the development or conversion of existing buildings to hostel type accommodation, it being contrary to policy and the objectives and aspirations of the Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework SPD, the Hostel Strategy, the Unitary Development Plan and the Draft Local Plan. For this reason a Section 106 will be required on all applications the council deem to have the potential to become hostel accommodation to prevent the student accommodation from ever being used as a hostel.

Appendix 1 – Additional supply breakdown

Sites currently under construction

Site	Bed spaces	Notes
8 Norfolk Street	5	
5 Brookside Terrace	8	
48 Frederick Street	10	
Rear Of 24 - 26 Stockton Road/Former Thirkells Garage Site	100	13/02786/FUL
Total	123	

Sites with planning permission

Site	Bed Spaces	Ref	Notes
Close Street, Millfield	32	11/00633/FUL	Approved 21/07/11
137 - 139 Church Street North	25	11/02553/FUL	Approved 08/11/11
Land At Egerton Street/ Toward Road	118	12/02229/EXT1	Approved 17/10/12
Wearcourt, Rock Lodge Road	34	12/01081/FUL	Approved 15/02/13
15 Whickham Street	44	11/03441/FUL	Approved 16/04/13
24 - 25 Norfolk Street	44	13/01532/FUL	Approved 24/09/13
13 North Bridge Street	12	13/02777/FUL	Approved 10/01/14
82-84 Hylton Road	4	13/03784/FUL	Approved 12/02/14
Land at Former Builders Yard, Chester Oval	7	13/03275/FUL	Approved 04/03/14
76 Kings Road, Southwick	8	13/03928/FUL	Approved 24/04/14
Phoenix House, City Centre	88	15/00357/FUL	Approved 09/06/2015
Total	416		

Appendix 2- Potential Section 106 Heads of Terms, Planning Conditions and notes

Section 106 Agreement

- Details of student¹⁵ residents to be submitted annually in Nov/Dec (which should include student ID number) and verified by the LPA.
- Property not to be used for hostel accommodation.

Planning Conditions

- Limit occupation to non-student households

Notes

- Make applicant/agent aware of Sunderland Landlord Accreditation scheme and membership.
- Make applicant/agent aware that if the property is a licensable House in Multiple Occupation (generally 3 or more storeys and occupied by 5 or more persons forming 2 or more households) a HMO licence must be applied for. If the property is outside the scope of mandatory HMO licence, the Sunderland City Council HMO standards must be adhered to.
- Make applicant/agent aware of 'National Code of Standards' for Student Accommodation.

¹⁵ Student definition: Person undertaking a full time course of higher education which lasts 24 weeks and involves at least 21 hours a week of study, tuition or work experience. Person enrolled on a course of further education for at least three consecutive calendar months and for at least 12 hours per week. See www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7948 for full definition.

Appendix 3 – Draft Local Plan, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Policy

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Policy DM4.4 – Proposals for HMOs/student accommodation will be permitted providing:-

- a. the property is located where increased traffic and activity would not be detrimental to local amenity;
- b. the intensity of use will not adversely affect the character and function of the locality;
- c. the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring properties by causing undue noise and disturbance;
- d. adequate provision for parking, servicing, refuse, recycling arrangements and the management and maintenance of the property can be demonstrated through the submission of a management plan.
- e. the proposal would not result in an over concentration of houses of multiple occupation and/or student accommodation collectively.

Proposals for student accommodation must also comply with policy DM4.3

Policy DM4.5 - Article 4 Directions will be implemented by the City Council where the number of HMOs in one locality, including student accommodation will have a detrimental effect on the character and function of an area. This will remove permitted development rights preventing the change of use to HMOs without planning approval.