



Glasgow City Council

Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm
City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Regeneration and the
Economy

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Item 3

20th August 2019

**STUDENT ACCOMODATION STAKEHOLDER EVENT AND
SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE PRODUCTION**

Purpose of Report:

To Advise Committee of the outcomes of a Student Accommodation Stakeholder Event and the next stages in production of new Student Accommodation Supplementary Guidance.

Recommendations:

That the Committee consider the outcomes of the Stakeholder Event and the plans for producing new Supplementary Guidance.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1 Introduction

1.1 Members may recall that a report was brought to Committee in March 2018 which described research undertaken into the student accommodation market in Glasgow. The report outlined the current level of demand for student accommodation and range of impacts and benefits the student population brings to the city. In particular it focused on the social and economic effects student accommodation brings along with the effects of clustering of accommodation around Higher and Further Education Institutions. After reviewing the research Committee requested a further report to explore the following:

- (i) The development of policies on the issues of over concentration of purpose-built student accommodation in certain areas;
- (ii) Locational criteria in areas with a high proportion of purpose-built student accommodation currently in Supplementary Guidance 10; and
- (iii) The option of introducing new supplementary guidance to the Glasgow City Development Plan that developments should include 50% general housing by floor area.

1.2 Subsequent to this request it was agreed among Members that a Stakeholder Evidence Gathering Event should take place. This would be designed to develop greater understanding of the experience of those affected by, or involved in student accommodation, to then support the review of supplementary guidance relating to student accommodation.

2 The Event

2.1 The Evidence Gathering event took place on 5th February in the City Chambers (it had been postponed from October 2018). Attendees were invited representing different stakeholder groups; Community Councils, Student Accommodation Operators, Students, Higher Education Institutions and Ward Members from wards containing concentrations of accommodation. While members of this committee, representing a cross section of the different groups, assisted with facilitation throughout the event.

2.2 The format involved reviewing and exploring the positive and negative effects of student accommodation and then looking at how these could translate into points to then inform a review of the Supplementary Guidance.

2.3 Initially, within their stakeholder groups the representatives discussed what benefits student accommodation bring to an area before looking at what challenges it can generate. Among the prominent outputs from this stage were:

Benefits

- Educated labour pool,
- Enhanced city reputation,

- Economic boosts to local businesses,
- Cultural and community vibrancy,
- Convenience for students; and
- Regeneration opportunities.

Challenges

- Pressure on infrastructure and facilities,
- Transient population with no sustained connection to an area,
- Over-concentration of one type of development,
- High cost for students,
- Lack of integration with communities; and
- Poor design of buildings relative to their context.

2.4 Once these lists had been compiled, the next stage of the event saw the stakeholder representatives mixed together for a broad discussion on how to maximise the beneficial effects student accommodation can generate and tackle the challenges it can create. This discussion then led to the identification of specific recommendations that could be carried forward to help manage the positive and negative impacts.

3 Event Outputs and Recommendations

3.1 The format of the event allowed a range of different stakeholders to engage with others who came to the event with opposing views about student accommodation and led to a well informed and constructive discussion, which has since been commended by different members. The outputs were generally focused on tackling the problems considered to be generated by student accommodation rather than enhancing the positive effects it can have. Nevertheless, these still represent a series of constructive actions that can help tackle the problems that were identified.

3.2 The outputs ranged between activities and ideas that could be progressed by the different stakeholders working in collaboration, as well as a number recommendations on how the review of the Council's supplementary guidance should be approached. In terms of ideas that the stakeholders can progress the following key areas were identified:

- Improving communication channels among stakeholders, but in particular local residents and the students and student accommodation operators,
- promoting activities that encourage greater interaction, such as social events, litter picks or similar,
- inviting students to participate in Community Council events or raising awareness of community priorities and opportunities by participating at "Freshers Weeks" and other appropriate student events; and

- exploring setting up a Student Housing co-operative.
- 3.3 The more specific recommendations to emerge around how Supplementary Guidance could be revised generally fell into one of two topic subsets. Firstly there is the **design** of student accommodation and the recommendations were that new guidance should consider:
- the other uses that might be included in new developments,
 - the process of designing new accommodation; and
 - the quality of accommodation and operational performance.
- 3.4 Then there were **locational** issues which focused on:
- linking accommodation to good transport connections; and
 - directing it to specific areas to help support regeneration elsewhere in the city.
- 3.5 Also under the **locational** heading, but more specific to the existing guidance, were recommendations seeking to:
- establish a clearer illustration of what a threshold of over-concentration of student accommodation would be; and
 - providing stronger reinforcement of how new Student Accommodation might help create more balanced communities.
- 3.6 To progress activities and ideas that could be undertaken by the stakeholders we have already alerted all attendees of the outcomes of the event. Officers will now contact the stakeholders to explore and support the creation of a forum between all stakeholders to allow communication and organisation of the activities and ideas. In additions, officers in our Housing and Regeneration Service are also being engaged to explore how a Housing Co-operative could be developed and what support can be provided.
- 3.7 In terms of the two sets of recommendations for supplementary guidance these will be absorbed into a review of guidance as described below.

4 Preparation of Supplementary Guidance

- 4.1 Currently the guidance relating to Student Accommodation is contained as an individual section within [SG10 Meeting Housing Needs](#). The guidance focuses principally on both design and locational parameters to inform the assessment of new student accommodation developments. Therefore the themes of the recommendations emerging from the Stakeholder Event are consistent with the current scope of guidance. Indeed, most of the issues raised are already factors that are considered in some way by the existing guidance. However these recommendations all introduce new ways of approaching the detailed assessment criteria that can inform how it is reviewed and updated.

- 4.2 Along with the recommendations that directly relate to existing themes, there are two that would represent new matters to be developed and considered. These are the proposal to look at introducing other uses in student accommodation developments (ancillary uses /social facilities and mainstream housing) and the suggestion to promote greater co-production with other stakeholders in the design of new developments.
- 4.3 In terms of the recommendations on existing themes, work is underway to look at how these can be revised. In terms of **Design** matters, reviews of previous schemes and discussion with users and operators will inform how to improve the operational design and identify what opportunities there are to ensure the quality of accommodation that is satisfactory to students. The principle of co-production is already something that the City Development Plan has sought to promote through its Placemaking Guidance (which informs all new development) and encourages ongoing and iterative dialogue with communities and stakeholders as new proposals evolve. However, this approach is something that can be reinforced within the specific Student Accommodation guidance.
- 4.4 The introduction of other land uses within new student accommodation development is something that has been implemented in other local authorities and officers are currently engaging with counterparts elsewhere to understand how these policies have performed and what lessons are to be learned in developing a Glasgow appropriate approach. There will also be merit in exploring how this can be achieved with operators to understand their experiences and ensure guidance can be founded in practical and viable terms.
- 4.5 The Locational recommendations relating to over-concentration and achieving a balanced community are also under consideration. Research and analysis of available data will play a key role in designing an assessment methodology that sets out workable thresholds on what characterises an over-concentration in student accommodation within an area. This work will need to ensure the revised guidance is evidence based and will withstand challenge. Analysis of similar approaches elsewhere is helping to illustrate how shortcomings in policy rationale can lead to a stance that is vulnerable to challenge and ultimately undermines the overall guidance ambitions.
- 4.6 In terms of supporting a balanced community the development of the other recommendations regarding mix of uses will play a key role along with analysis of experiences to date with accommodation.
- 4.7 The relationship to sustainable transport and opportunity to promote regeneration are already matters reflected within existing guidance but can be strengthened through guidance review and revision, particularly in tandem with other emerging connectivity strategies that are being explored corporately.

5 **Next Steps**

- 5.1 The event has generated a set of clear directions for how new guidance should be reviewed and updated and has hopefully improved shared understanding among all stakeholders of the range of challenges and benefits student accommodation can generate and how this can be approached.
- 5.2 The work on reviewing and revising Guidance is ongoing and it is anticipated that an updated version of the guidance will be prepared and presented back to Committee in November of this year. After that it will need to go back out for public consultation as part of SG10 Meeting Housing Needs before any further amendments are brought to this Committee and then to City Administration Committee before submission to the Scottish Government to allow the guidance to then be adopted as Statutory Supplementary Guidance. It should be noted however, that as a result of the Planning Bill this procedure may be the subject of change, however, members will be advised of changes should they emerge.

6 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	None, the revisions to guidance represent detailed changes to existing guidance under established themes, therefore there will be no financial implications generated.
<i>Legal:</i>	None.
<i>Personnel:</i>	In the short term staff will be diverted from production of the City Development Plan 2 Main Issues Report to support this work.
<i>Procurement:</i>	Unlikely and any activity will be on a small scale basis and unlikely to trigger formal arrangements.

Council Strategic Plan: Specify which theme(s) and outcome(s) the proposal supports

Supports Priorities 55, 82 and 83,

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22</i>	The guidance revisions will have a neutral effect however the process has been grounded in supporting community empowerment by supporting community councils and other
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stakeholders to participate in production of the guidance.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

An improved form of guidance informed by and responsive to the experiences and needs communities

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The scope of changes to policy will mean environmental performance is unlikely to change significantly. Other stakeholder forum activities may lead to a positive impact.

Social, including Article 19 opportunities:

Guiding better integration between new build student accommodation and the host communities.

Economic:

None

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

None.

6 Recommendations

That the Committee consider the outcomes of the Stakeholder Event and the plans for producing new Supplementary Guidance.