

Appendix 5

Student Accommodation

Guildford Borough Council
2020

Background

Guildford borough hosts a variety of further¹ and higher² education establishments; including the University of Surrey, the University of Law, Guildford College (which includes Merrist Wood College), the Academy of Contemporary Music and the School of Horticulture at RHS Wisley. Together, these institutions provide a range of higher and further education courses such as foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and vocational higher education courses and diplomas.

Students attending these courses are likely to be from a wide range of backgrounds, including students from ages 16 and above. Students typically live in a diverse set of accommodation types such as at home with family, in purpose-built communal halls of residence (either on or off campus), in other establishments (such as the YMCA), or in houses within the local community. Many students also benefit from distance learning, placement years, or are part-time or postgraduates that may rent or own their own home.

National planning policy guidance and test

In February 2019, the government published an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which had been significantly revised from its previous iteration in July 2018.

The NPPF states that:

the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes³.

Additionally, the Government's national Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG'), updated to reflect the revised NPPF, states that:

All student accommodation, whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus, can in principle count towards contributing to an authority's housing land supply based on:

- *the amount of accommodation that new student housing releases in the wider housing market (by allowing existing properties to return to general residential use); and / or*
- *the extent to which it allows general market housing to remain in such use, rather than being converted for use as student accommodation.*

¹ Further education typically refers to education for those over 16 years old studying for A levels, higher national diplomas and two-year foundation degrees.

² Higher education typically refers to post-secondary school education for those over 18, usually at university or college and normally for a degree or an equivalent alternative.

³ NPPF Paragraph 61.

This will need to be applied to both communal establishments and to multi bedroom self-contained student flats. Several units of purpose-built student accommodation may be needed to replace a house which may have accommodated several students.

Authorities will need to base their calculations on the average number of students living in student only accommodation, using the published census data, and take steps to avoid double-counting. The exception to this approach is studio flats designed for students, graduates or young professionals, which can be counted on a one for one basis. A studio flat is a one-room apartment with kitchen facilities and a separate bathroom that fully functions as an independent dwelling³.

How student accommodation is counted

The Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book⁴ (MHCLG, 2018) includes student communal accommodation in the housing delivery calculation. The calculation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & \textbf{Net homes delivered in a year} \\ & = \text{Net Additional Dwellings National Statistic} \\ & \quad \textit{PLUS} \\ & \text{Net increase in bedrooms in student communal accommodation in local authority} \\ & \text{-----} \\ & \text{Average number of students in student only households (2.5) in England} \\ & \quad \textit{PLUS} \\ & \text{Net increase in bedrooms in other communal accommodation in local authority} \\ & \text{-----} \\ & \text{Average number of adults (1.8) in households in England} \end{aligned}$$

Adjustments made for student and other communal accommodation within the calculation are made by MHCLG and published in the Housing Delivery Test result. Student accommodation delivered within the assessment period counts at the nationally derived ratio of 2.5 bedspaces per household (i.e. 2.5 student bedspaces = 1 equivalent C3 dwelling).

³ NPPG: Housing Supply and Delivery: Paragraph: 034: Reference ID: 68-034-20190722.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book>.

Although this approach is mandatory within the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) assessment, the Council has adopted an alternative approach for the purposes of calculating 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS). In calculating the 5YHLS, the Council considers that it is more robust to make adjustments to the national approach in order to more accurately reflect the context within the borough. In particular, the HDT does not take account of local circumstances when accounting for the ratio of market housing release from communal accommodation units.

As such, the following approach has been taken in calculating Guildford borough's 5YHLS:

- 1) The University of Surrey's on-campus, purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), currently being built-out as part of the Manor Park scheme, is expected to meet approximately 55% (2,090 bedspaces) of the overall student need in Guildford derived from the University's expected growth (3,800 bedspaces) as calculated in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Local Plan period.

Given that the build-out rate of these units is currently outpacing the University's rate of growth, this source of supply will release market housing in the short-term. However, this will not be the case over the plan period. Therefore, the Council has removed these bedspaces from the anticipated supply. However, the positive short-term effect of the on-campus PBSA should be noted, as it will benefit the availability of market housing in the early years in the context of the accrued backlog due to past shortfall in supply.

- 2) The higher cost of housing in Guildford means that the average ratio of students per household is higher in the borough than it is nationally. As such, a greater number of bedspaces would need to be provided in order to make available an equivalent number of general market C3 homes. For this reason, the Council has adjusted the national ratio of 2.5 bedspaces per equivalent C3 unit (as deployed in the HDT), to a ratio that is more appropriate for the Guildford housing market. Using the Census 2011 Guildford data⁵, the average number of students per household (in student-only households), is calculated at 3.1. As such, in determining the Council's 5YHLS, the contribution of off-campus student accommodation bedspaces has been calculated at 3.1 bedspaces per equivalent C3 dwelling.

The identified need in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The West Surrey SHMA Guildford addendum 2017 looks at how the student population in Guildford might influence the need for both student accommodation and a wider housing need. It focuses on the growth of the largest student establishment in the borough, the University of Surrey (UniS), which is predicted to increase by 3,800 additional full-time Guildford-based students over the plan period.

The SHMA addendum estimates that assuming 55% of UniS students will live in halls on campus (2,090 students) then there would be an additional maximum need for up to 428 C3 dwellings (23 dwellings per year) for 1,710 students over the plan period to 2034. This separately identified student accommodation need for C3 dwellings is included within the general housing need figures.

⁵ ONS, CT0773 – Number of students in student only household

Planning permissions - 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

On-campus provision is calculated separately from off-campus provision in housing delivery terms.

On-campus

There have been no planning permissions for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) on-campus from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. However, it is worth noting that 479 bedspaces in PBSA at Manor Park, UniS were completed by September 2018 and 674 bedspaces completed in 2019. The University propose to demolish 224 bedspaces on the Stag Hill campus. As some background, the University have approximately 6,029 existing student bedspaces in total (taking into account the proposed loss of 224 bedspaces).

There is outline planning permission at Manor Park for a total of 145,200 square metres of student and staff residential accommodation. The Manor Park Masterplan shows capacity for approximately 4,171 bedspaces, although the actual number built may vary within the permitted floorspace of 145,200 sq. m and other parameters. It is understood that approximately 3,022 are completed and occupied to date. The University has a rolling programme to build the remaining student bedspaces.

Off-campus provision

Off-campus Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) is growing in popularity. The table below sets out planning approvals from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. For information, a planning application (ref 19/P/00407) for PBSA with 360 bedspaces at Plot 5 Guildford Business Park was refused planning permission on 3/2/20 and the planning appeal decision is currently pending.

Date of decision	Planning reference	Site address	Ward	Number of bedrooms (net)	Equivalent no of dwellings ⁶
Approved 1/5/19 and 1/11/19	18/P/02100 and 19/P/01460	Just Tyres ⁷ , Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4TX	Friary and St Nicolas	82 + 2 studio flats	84
Approved 26/09/19	18/P/02226	Bishops Nissan of Guildford, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 1TX	Friary and St Nicolas	102 studio 259 cluster flats	185
Approved 21/2/20	18/P/02391	1 & 2 Ash Grove, Guildford, GU2 8UT	Onslow	79 Studio flats	79
Total					348

Table 1: Planning permissions for PBSA off-campus from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

⁶ Equivalent number of dwellings is calculated by dividing the number of cluster flats by 3.1.

⁷ Please note there is a pending application to increase the number of units to 99 (planning ref: 20/P/01460).