

Purpose Built Student Accommodation Guidance

Edinburgh Association of Community Councils' 20 February 2025

Background

- City Plan sets out policies relating to the development and use of land
- City Plan 2030 Policy Hou 5 Student Accommodation sets out specific policy on student accommodation.

Planning permission will be granted for purpose-built student accommodation where:

- a. there is good access by public transport and active travel routes to further and higher education institutions,*
- b. it provides suitable amenity to students, including open space,*
- c. no more than 10% studio flats are provided and,*
- d. there will be no adverse impact on the established character of the area.*

Background

- City Plan Policy Econ 2 sets out policy which would apply to sites above 0.25Ha.
 - *Proposals for commercial uses within the urban area on sites 0.25ha or larger, should where compatible and appropriate within the site context, provide at least 50% of the site for housing.*

Purpose of the Guidance

- Provides further detail on how policies should be applied.
- Provides guidance for developers and planning officers in the assessment of planning applications.
- Once approved guidance will be taken into account when determining planning applications.

Guidance

- Seeks to achieve the balanced development of student accommodation, ensuring it positively contributes to the communities in which it is situated as well as the wider city.
- Addresses each of the policy requirements of Hou 5 and Econ 2 along with other policies of City Plan which are particularly relevant to student accommodation.

Guidance-General

- Local Living – sets out key facilities which should be within walking distance to provide for the daily needs of students.
- Integration with the community – encourages publicly accessible uses such as shops and services
- Safety – addresses safety through the design and layout.
- Accessibility - for people with a range of abilities - Asks applicants demonstrate how they are meeting the needs of people with varying needs.
- Adaptability - PBSA should be designed so that it can be adapted and reconfigured internally and externally to meet the needs of mainstream housing use.
- Requirement for housing on larger sites.

Guidance – Policy Hou 5

Student Accommodation

- Location-asks applicants to submit information setting out the accessibility of the development to the main academic buildings it is intended to serve.
- Amenity - PBSA must meet with same requirements as for housing which include daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook and noise.
- Studio accommodation – clarifies that the limit which policy puts on studio accommodation of 10% will be based on the number of bedspaces
- Character of the area – provides guidance on the types of factors that should be taken into account when considering the impact on character.

Give us your views

- Consultation to run for 12 weeks
- Final draft will return to planning committee