

# Maintaining Sustainable Communities and Urban Core Housing SPD

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Maintaining Sustainable Communities and Urban Core Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)?**

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) reviews the current student housing market in the city, including the growth of purpose built student accommodation market in the Urban Core.

The draft SPD seeks to retain the existing Policy SC1 to control the loss of family housing in areas covered by Article 4 Directions as well as preventing purpose built student accommodation within these areas. In addition a new policy is proposed, Policy SC2, which will apply to all housing developments within the Urban Core of the city. The policy sets out a number of criterion against which housing developments will be assessed to ensure it will maintain the areas vibrancy, environmental quality, residential amenity and prevent the over-concentration of shared accommodation.

### **Why is the council preparing the SPD?**

In 2011 the council introduced the Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD with the aim of controlling the growth of HMOs in existing residential areas. Since that time the council has adopted its Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan. It is therefore appropriate to review the 2011 SPD. The SPD will supplement the policies in the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (CSUCP, adopted March 2015).

### **What has the impact of the existing SPD been on the HMO market?**

The 2011 SPD which sought to prevent the conversion of family housing to HMOs has been a success and is starting to show evidence of HMO levels dropping, particularly in areas further from the city centre, such as Heaton, thereby creating a more diverse community in areas which were previously dominated by student accommodation.

Now most first year students are housed in University owned or nominated student accommodation. Whilst most 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years still live in small HMOs in areas such as Jesmond, Sandyford and Heaton, there is growing evidence that they are now looking to live in purpose built blocks. The increased supply of bedspaces in these new blocks is likely to reduce rental figures overtime and make it more competitive against the traditional small HMO market, to the benefit of students.

### **Will the policy prevent purpose built student housing in the Urban Core?**

Purpose built student accommodation has many benefits to the city, including making the universities more attractive to students, improving accommodation for students, releasing existing HMOs back into family housing and providing increased vibrancy to areas of the city with associated benefits to local shops and services. It is therefore not proposed to prevent future development in the urban core for this form of housing. However an over-concentration of one form of shared housing in an area can impact upon the existing community through a range of issues, including anti-social behaviour and lack of community cohesion. The SPD therefore requires the applicant to demonstrate how it would maintain the areas character and vibrancy and provide a high quality design with good standards of amenity for existing and future residents. The applicant will also be required to demonstrate how purpose built student accommodation developments could be adapted to alternative uses in the future.

### **What will the impact of the SPD have on the private rented housing market?**

The council's objective is to deliver 3,750 new homes in the Urban Core by 2030 (excluding purpose built student accommodation). The draft SPD does not change this objective or impact upon existing planning permissions in place, or land use allocations. Instead it aligns with existing national and development plan policies to ensure housing coming forward is a high quality design and in a sustainable form with the economic, social and environmental benefits of the development clearly identified.

### **Can this SPD be used in connection with any current planning applications?**

The draft SPD is a consultation draft. It has not been subject to public consultation and therefore at the present time, whilst it is a material consideration in the assessment of an application, it will carry limited weight.

### **How can I have my say?**

Consultation on the draft SPD will last for six weeks from 3 October 2016 to 25 November 2016. Copies of the SPD, Consultation Statement and Statement of Representation Procedure are available to view and have been published for inspection on the council's website at <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/maintaining-sustainable-communities-spd> and are also available for viewing at;

Newcastle Civic Centre  
City Council,  
Customer Service Centre,  
Barras Bridge,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE1 8QH,  
(Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm).

Newcastle City Library  
Newcastle City Library  
Charles Avison Building,  
33 New Bridge St W,  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 8AX  
(Monday to Thursday 10am to 7pm,  
Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am  
to 4pm and Sunday 11am to 4pm).

Comments can be made by email or by post to the following addresses:

Email: [planningpolicy@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@newcastle.gov.uk)

Post: Newcastle City Council, Planning Policy, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH.

**After consultation will the SPD be revised and published?**

Yes- the council will publish a statement of consultation and amend the SPD taking into account comments raised. Once approved the SPD will be published on the planning policy webpages.

**When will the SPD be adopted?**

Following consultation, the council will consider the submissions and amend the SPD as required prior to asking Cabinet to adopt the SPD. The timescales for adoption are:

Redraft SPD and finalise adoption version	November/December 2016
Report to Cabinet	Spring 2017
Publish and adopt SPD	Spring 2017