

Question: CQ09.02

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation - Supplementary Planning Document

Questions submitted by: Councillor Anthony Negus

The supplementary Planning Document for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO SPD) was finally accepted as necessary to regulate the apparently unstoppable increasing number of students coming to Bristol and seek to prevent hot-spots and mitigate the issues arising in the city areas agreed with the Universities, principally UoB, where they may live. It is formulaic, focused on local density of existing student residences. The councillors working alongside officers were assured that this would take into account Purpose-built? Student Accommodation (PBSAs) but this was withdrawn without them being told. All types of businesses, educational and non-educational, can manage PBSAs with identical groups of residents, and none of them contribute to the costs of council-provided services. But because of an 'oddity' in the Act only a few need to be licensed. While central government has set the law that makes it difficult for Licensing and Planning departments across the country to co-operate deliver local policy, in this case a licensing anomaly has crossed over to subvert our emerging planning policy. So although all these premises should be licensable they are not licensed and so will not be counted as agreed. This long-overdue HMO SPD is like a balloon created to over above problems but with this panel missing it won't get off the ground. While it has merits, it is fatally flawed and should be withdrawn until it can be patched.

Q: Please provide the estimates of bedspaces for the following types of student accommodation across the city this year and in 5 years' time?:

2020 2025

Licensed HMOs

Legally un-licensed HMOs

Illegally un-licensed HMOs

Licensed PBSAs

Un-licensed PBSAs

Answer:

- **It is impossible to answer some of these types. For example how can we know about illegal unlicensed numbers?**
- **This SPD is the product of a cross party working group which included you, Cllr Negus.**
- **The purpose of this working group was to address harmful concentrations of HMOs.**
- **HMOs are not necessarily occupied by students and this SPD is not about student housing but about HMOs generally.**
- **I would suggest preamble to the question wrongly contends the HMO SPD does not take into account Purpose Built Student Accommodation.**

- **Purpose built student accommodation is referenced in section 4.4 of the SPD. It recognises harmful concentrations of HMOs may arise in combination with the effects of purpose-built student accommodation.**
- **Decisions will be made against criteria set out in the SPD i.e. extent of concentration of purpose-built student accommodation in the area, the proportion of HMOs, the type of any purpose-built student accommodation and its location in relation to the proposed HMO.**