

Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2020

Student housing need addendum to main report

Sunderland City Council

Final Report

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Background

- 1.1 The University of Sunderland has around 9,000 students at its Sunderland Campus and providing appropriate accommodation is a key housing market consideration. Table 1.1 shows the past, current and predicted number of students and their place of residence if living in Sunderland. Based on 2019/20 data, around 26% of students live in university accommodation, 32% in the private rented sector, 22% living with parents and 20% are home owners. Students are therefore an important driver to Sunderland's private rented housing market.
- 1.2 The University is reviewing its accommodation strategy to ensure that the supply of high quality purpose-built accommodation meets demand and support a growth in student numbers.

Student numbers	Past and current		Predicted	
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Based at Sunderland campus	8,633	8,916	8,479	9,241
Live in Sunderland Postcode	5,143	4,720	4,663	5,083
Live in University accommodation (A)	966	1,207	1,288	1,207
Live with Parents (B)	1,354	1,012	1,166	1,271
Own property (C)	1,160	945	933	1,017
Renting in the PRS (D)	1,663	1,509	1,232	1,588
Missing data on where students live	0	47	44	0
Demand for accommodation from students living in Sunderland (A+D)*	2,629	2,716	2,520	2,795
% living in Sunderland postcode by place of residence	Past and current		Predicted	
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Live in University accommodation (A)	18.8	25.8	27.9	23.7
Live with Parents (B)	26.3	21.7	25.2	25.0
Own property (C)	22.6	20.2	20.2	20.0
Renting in the PRS (D)	32.3	32.3	26.7	31.2
Base	5,143	4,673	4,619	5,083
Missing data on where students live	0	47	44	0
Grand Total	5,143	4,720	4,663	5,083

*Excludes missing data

Source: University of Sunderland

Planning policy for student accommodation

- 1.3 The Sunderland Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 recognises that students and the University make an important contribution to the economy. There is a need to provide accommodation choice and the plan references the need to create the qualities and characteristics a 'University City'. This includes support for purpose-built student accommodation or the conversion of existing buildings for student accommodation within the Urban Core.

Student accommodation in Sunderland

- 1.4 There is an extensive range of accommodation for students across Sunderland including houses in multiple occupation (HMO) and purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) which is owned by the university and private organisations. The current (2020) supply of student HMO and PBSA is 4,121 units across the city (Table 1.2). 77% of PBSA accommodation and 69% of all student accommodation is located in the Inner Urban Area.

Sub-area	HMO Student Shared Accommodation	Purpose-built Student Accommodation 2020	Total
Coalfield Communities	10		10
Inner Urban Area	1,500	1,340	2,840
Northern Coastal	298	66	364
Northern Suburbs	187	227	414
Southern Suburbs	389	100	489
Washington	4		4
TOTAL	2,388	1,733	4,121

- 1.5 Further details on the current (2020) range of PBSA and projected units by 2022 is provided in Table 1.3. Of the 1,733 current units of accommodation, 29% is owned by the university and 71% by private organisations. By 2022, a further 258 units of private accommodation are planned.

Table 1.3 Purpose-built student accommodation in Sunderland						
Scheme name	Owner	No. of units (2020)	Projected units 2022	Postcode	Ward	Sub-area
Panns Bank	University	270	189	SR1 1XS	Hendon	Inner Urban Area
Scotia Quay	University	227	227	SR1 2RH	Hendon	Inner Urban Area
The Forge U Student Village	Private	444	444	SR4 6PL	Pallion	Inner Urban Area
Cassaton House	Private	105	105	SR1 1SA	Millfield	Inner Urban Area
City View, 1-4 Thornhill Crescent	Private	39	39	SR2 4AD	Millfield	Inner Urban Area
Forster Building	Private		258	SR1 3RP	Millfield	Inner Urban Area
Jopling House	Private	106	106	SR1 1DP	Hendon	Inner Urban Area
Phoenix House, 1-7 Union Street	Private	88	88	SR1 3BT	Millfield	Inner Urban Area
15/16 John Street	Private	61	61	SR1 3HT	Hendon	Inner Urban Area
Dunn House (Fords)	Private	104	104	SR5 1AH	Southwick	Northern Suburbs
Ella Lea Court	Private	55	55	SR6 0AJ	St. Peters	Northern Suburbs
Swan Street	Private	68	68	SR5 1EB	Southwick	Northern Suburbs
All Saints House	Private	66	66	SR6 0DN	St. Peters	Northern Coastal
Park Lane House, Stockton Road	Private	100	100	SR2 7AQ	St. Michael's	Southern Suburbs
Total (University)		497	416			
Total (Private)		1,236	1,494			
Total (all providers)		1,733	1,910			

Notes:

1. Clanny House was providing 391 units but this is being removed from the University's accommodation portfolio as it now longer meets the expectations of students in terms of quality or location. It is therefore not included in supply
2. There is a potential development at Bonnerfields (363 units) adjacent to St. Peter's Campus which is expected to include professional accommodation on the top floor

Stakeholder views on student accommodation need

1.6 Discussions and feedback from the University include:

- A need to increase the number of PBSA units to help provide a positive student experience as outlined in the University's One Campus Masterplan.
- Better regulation of the private rented sector housing market to improve standards and the University would welcome the reintroduction of a landlord's accreditation scheme.
- A need to reduce reliance on HMO properties within the city centre and areas such as Roker and Millfield.
- There is currently a shortage of accommodation for young professionals and to encourage young graduates to remain in the city.

- 1.7 The University Student Residential Accommodation Strategy is nearing completion. The overarching aim is to ensure a range of high quality PBSA meets demand and support the attractiveness of Sunderland as a place to study, work and live . To achieve this, the strategy is proposing:
- the removal of one scheme (Clanny House) which no longer meets the locational or quality expectations of students;
 - the refurbishment of Panns Bank to incorporate en-suite facilities and better social spaces; and
 - the development of new schemes with private sector partners on sites close to campus .
- 1.8 The broader stakeholder survey carried out as part of the 2019 SHMA identified that some students have moved out of lower quality rental properties into PBSA. This has led to empty dwellings and a risk of neighbourhood decline. A priority is to ensure sufficient high-quality student residential accommodation for current and future students. The need to provide suitable accommodation for graduate professionals was also mentioned.

Overall need for student accommodation

- 1.9 Reconciling the data on overall demand for student accommodation with supply of PBSA is considered in Table 1.4. The resulting supply gap corresponds with data provided by the University. However, this assumes that all student accommodation demand will be met through PBSA and it is likely that students will still continue to rent privately.

Year	Demand (from Table 1.1)	Supply of PBSA (Table 1.3)	Overall supply gap
2019/20	2,716	1,733	983
2021/22	2,795	1,910	885

- 1.10 In addition to the above supply gap, the quality of student accommodation provision is also fundamental to the city and the scale in relation to surroundings. Accommodation needs to be high quality, in terms of design, layout and facilities provided.

Concluding comments

- 1.11 This analysis has provided background evidence on the number of students at the University of Sunderland, their residential choices and the number of units of

accommodation available in the private sector through HMOs and also through University-owned and privately-owned PBSA.

- 1.12 There are currently 14 large PBSA schemes, and other potential developments and there is evidence of a need to develop more to improve the scale of high quality accommodation for students. This would support the council's ambition to create a 'University City' feel in the urban core of Sunderland and improve the attractiveness of the area.
- 1.13 The evidence identifies a supply gap in the provision of PBSA which is currently being met by the private rented sector and HMOs in particular. The overall supply gap is 885 units by 2022 and the University is seeking to refurbish one scheme and develop new PBSA with private sector partners close to campus.
- 1.14 The transition towards accommodating students in PBSA will reduce reliance on the HMO sector. The impact of this is recognised by the council and they are already acquiring vacant HMOs and converting them back into family housing stock. However, students need to be provided with a choice of accommodation to suit their financial circumstances and not all students may choose to live in PBSA. Therefore, improving standards in the private rented sector is recommended to ensure a broad range of accommodation options remain available to students.