



Student Housing Issues Paper

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YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR CITY

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Introduction

This issues paper presents background research on student housing. It asks for your views to inform a revision in how the Council manages the housing requirements of the city's growing number of students. It specifically asks about the support given to:

- *the growth of learning in the city,*
- *meeting needs through purpose-built student accommodation; and*
- *how this accommodation is distributed across the city.*

Why we are consulting

The Council's Student Housing Guidance is being reviewed to take on board the growth in the number of students in the city. This issues paper presents background research and asks for your views to inform the preparation of revised draft Student Housing Guidance for consultation on purpose-built student housing within the city.

Growth in further education

Edinburgh's universities and colleges, and the students that attend them, play a major part in the economy and life of the city. The Council supports the growth of learning and higher education in the city and recognises higher education as one of the key sectors in contributing to the strength of Edinburgh's economy.

Question 1:

Do you feel that the Council should continue to support the growth of further and higher education in Edinburgh?

Please provide a reason for your answer

Purpose-built student accommodation

A relatively small proportion of students live at home with the remainder living in either purpose-built student accommodation or private rented houses and flats. Those students choosing private tenancies tend to prefer shared tenancies in large flats in the more central tenement areas of the city. This can lead to the loss of family housing, a high turnover of population, properties left vacant for long periods over the summer and, as a result, a less stable community.

The Council prefers that student needs are met as far as possible in purpose-built schemes. It is a different type of accommodation to general housing as it always has an element of care provided and the accommodation is actively managed. Some are run by private companies and others managed either directly or on behalf of the universities. Design and layout can vary with some providing individual rooms with en-suite facilities and common kitchen and living areas and others provide a more typical residential layout. Provision can take place at higher densities as it requires less car parking and open space. Provision lowers the amount of family housing taken up by students and reduces the impact on communities.

At the moment the Council supports purpose-built student accommodation where:

- The location is appropriate in terms of access to public transport and university and college facilities; and*
- The proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation in any one locality*

(Student Housing planning guidance 2010)

Question 2:

Do you feel that the Council should continue to support the development of purpose-built student housing?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

Student population trends

The number of full time students at the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier University and Heriot-Watt University has increased by 26.4% from 34,615 in 2001/2002 to 43,740 in 2013/2014 (Higher Education Statistics Agency). The number of students in Edinburgh as a percentage of the total population, based on the 2011 census, is 12.1%.

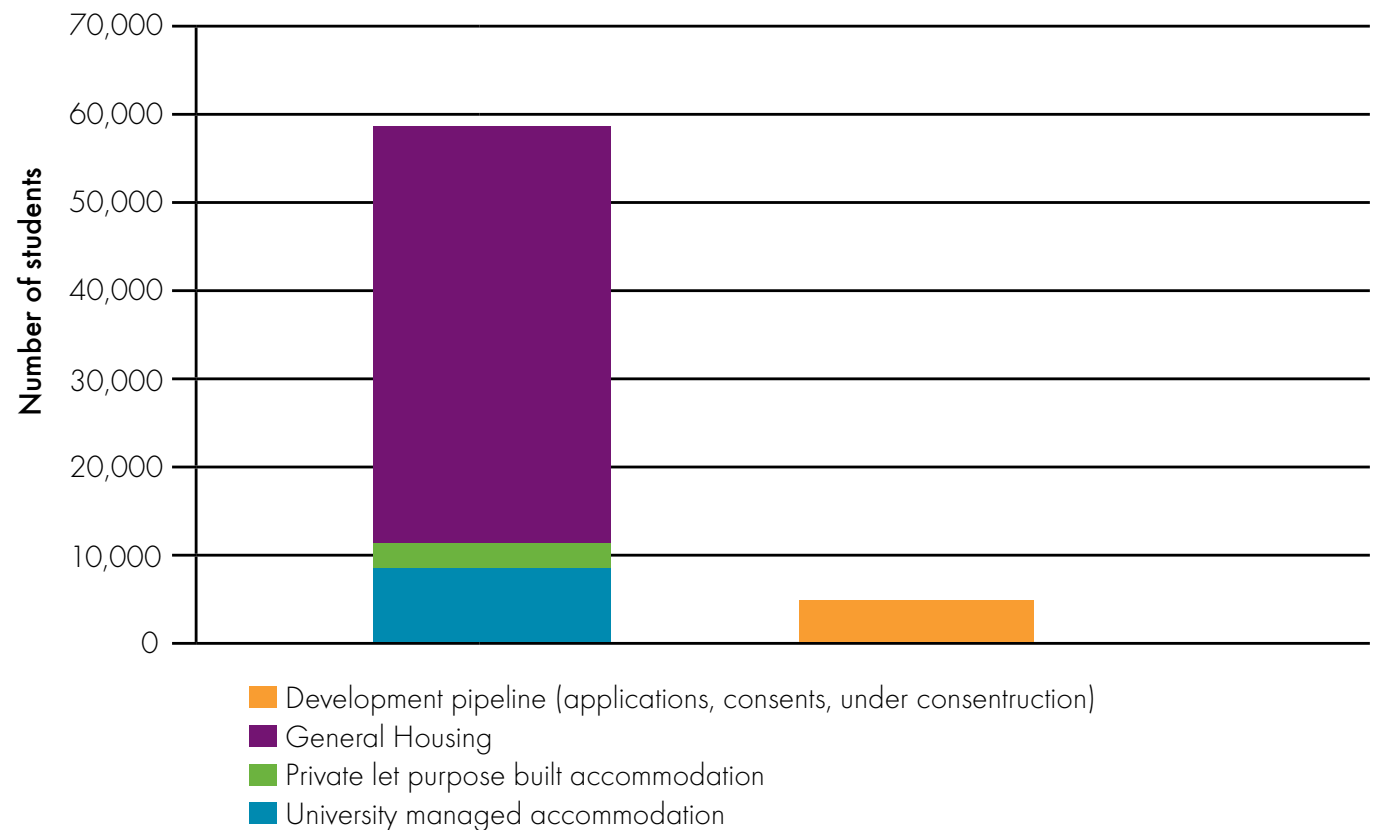
The total number of students does not automatically translate into demand for purpose-built accommodation, as a large majority of students either choose to stay at home, live in privately rented shared accommodation or are owner occupiers. This, and the relative lack of purpose-built student accommodation, has led to the historic tendency for students to gravitate towards the general housing stock, which continue to fuel the demand for Houses in Multiple Occupation licences (HMOs).

Future trends in student numbers are difficult to project. There are a number of factors that could influence this, including the economy, tuition fees, online learning, and overall university funding. Given the number of uncertainties, it is not possible to estimate the demand for purpose-built student accommodation. Nevertheless, as universities are required to provide accommodation to all first year students, there is a 'need'.

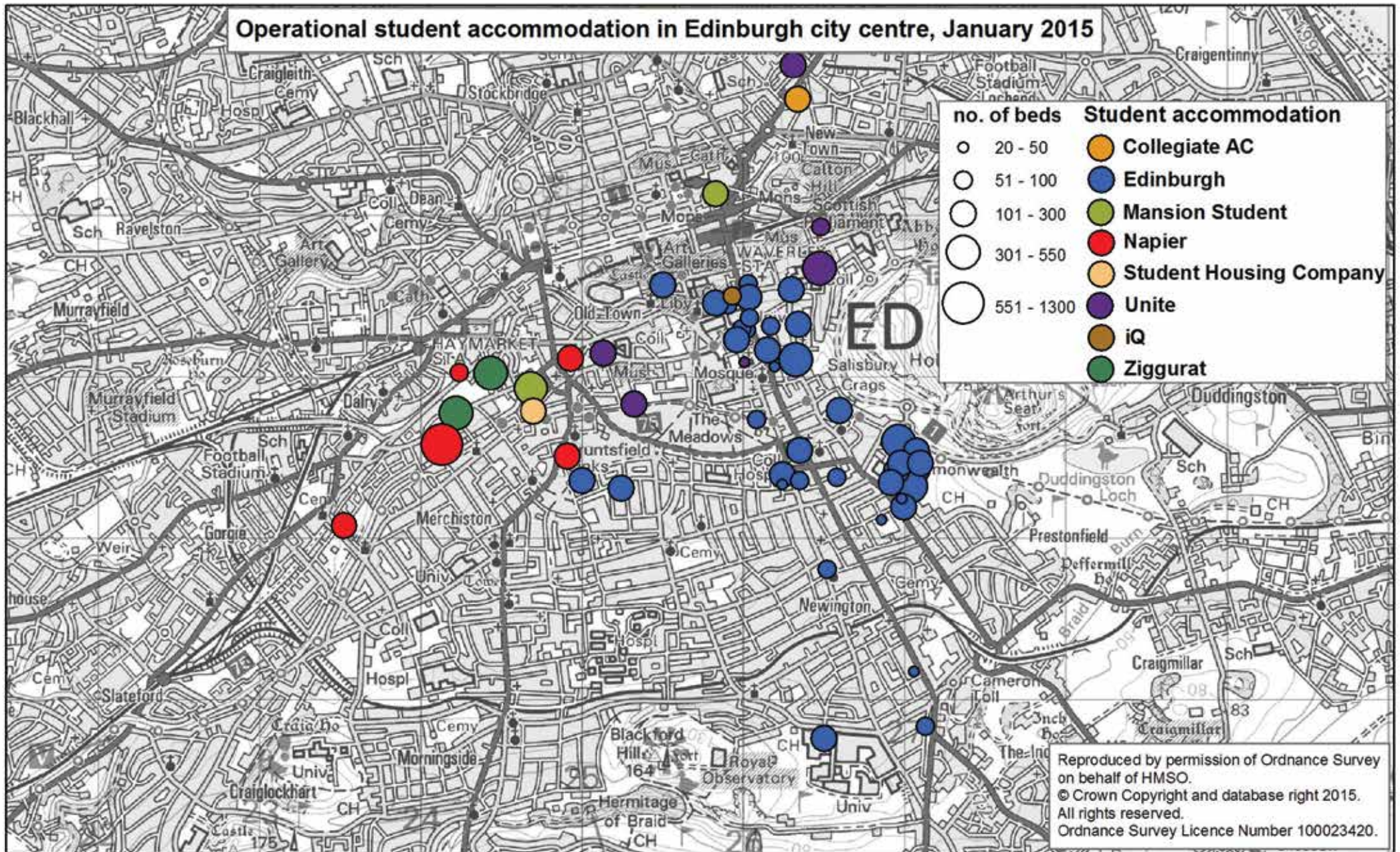
Map 1 shows the distribution of operational student accommodation in the city centre. To date, a total of 13,049 bedspaces are currently being supplied in new private and university provided purpose-built student accommodation. A further

6,183 bedspaces are proposed, have planning permission or are under construction. Therefore, at present, only 29.8% of the total student population is being housed in purpose-built accommodation. If all of the live permissions are implemented, this figure could increase to 44%.

Current student population in each accommodation type



Graph based on 2011 census data for total student population.



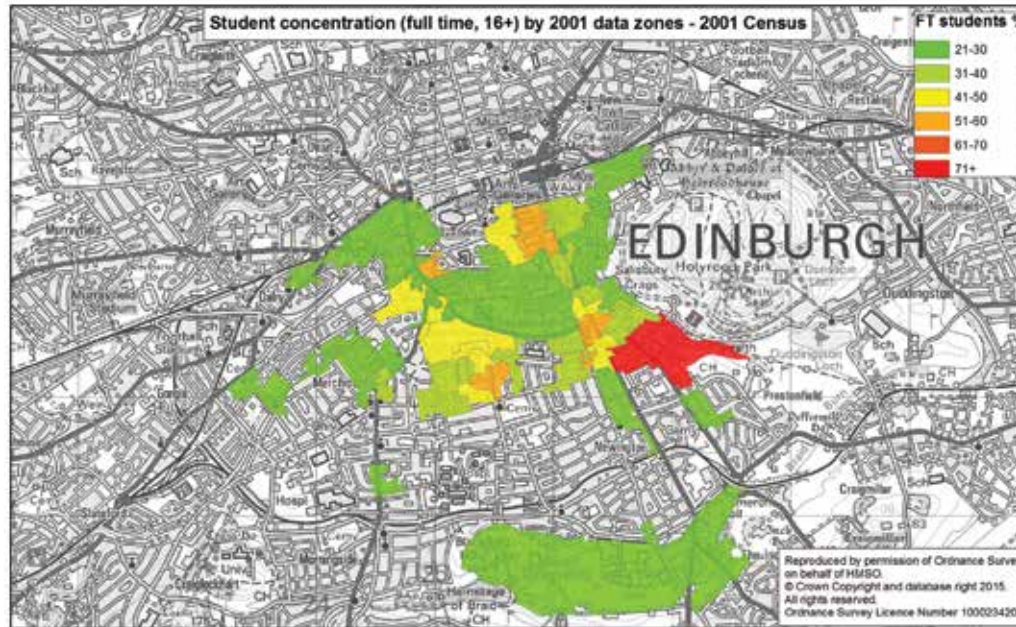
Map 1: Operational student accommodation.

Student concentration and distribution

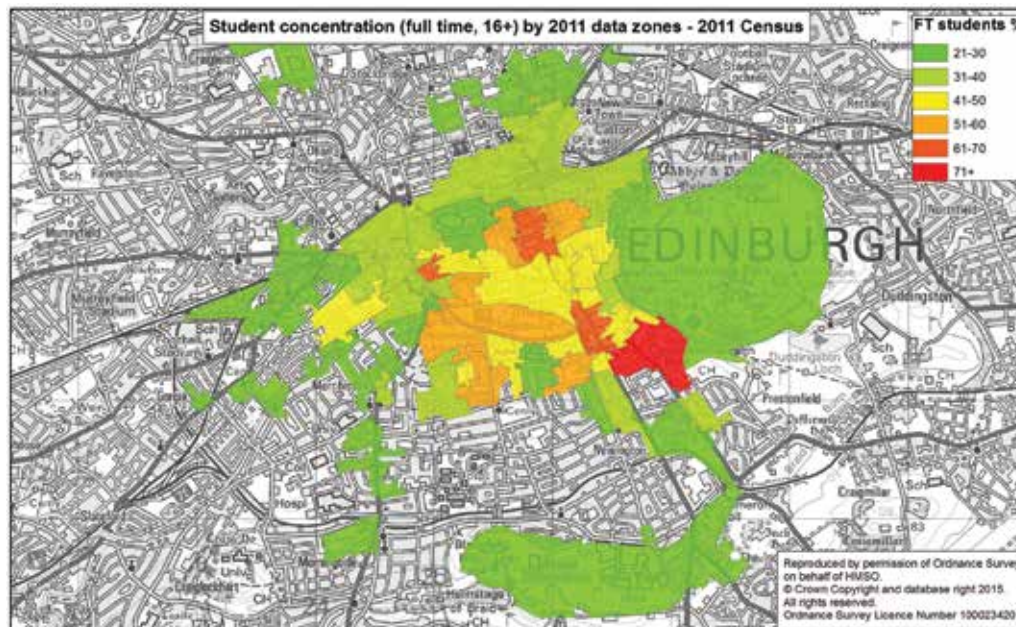
As 'demand' and 'need' for purpose-built accommodation are difficult to quantify, the Council's approach to date has been to consider whether there is an issue of student concentration in particular locations. Since 2001, there has been a noticeable increase in concentration of students living in and around the city centre and expansion into Leith and along western arterial routes. These changes reflect the overall increase in number of students and HMO licences, the opening of Edinburgh Napier University's Sighthill campus and the development of new purpose-built accommodation in Fountainbridge and Leith. The majority of students housed in the more recent purpose-built accommodation developments, assessed using the 2010 guideline, are not included in the 2011 census records.

The most densely concentrated areas are in the city centre, located within walking distance of the George Square campus. Map 2a uses the 2001 census data to show full time students (ages 16+) as a percentage of the total population. These are split into data zones which are fixed small areas, created from census output areas. Map 2b presents the 2011 census data.

Since 2010 when the guideline was approved, there have been 30 student housing applications granted or minded to grant, totalling 7,338 beds. Two applications were refused by the Council on the grounds of over-concentration – Lutton Court and Calton Road. The application at Lutton Court has since been allowed at appeal (although



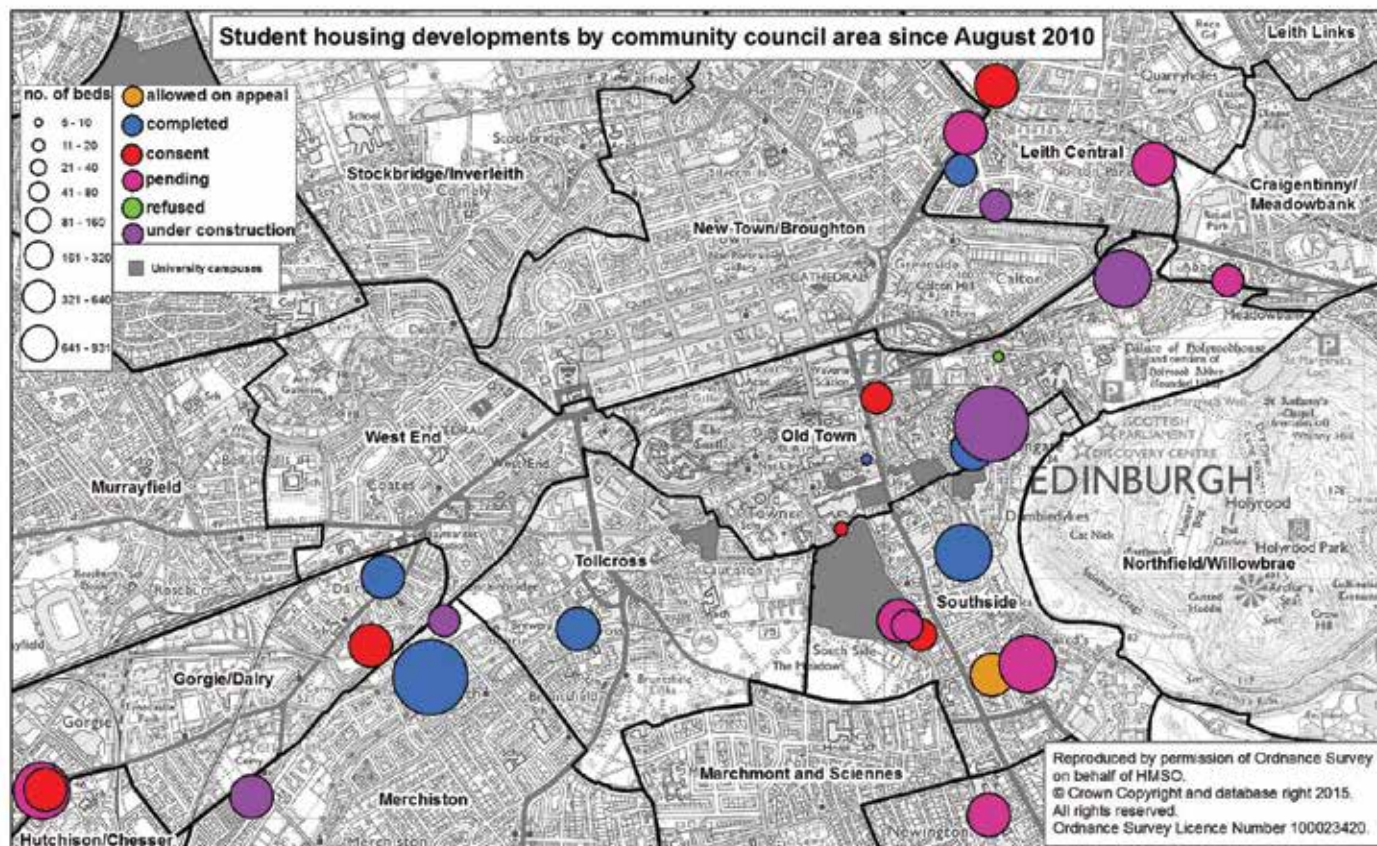
Map 2a: Student concentration by data zone using 2001 census data.



Map 2b: Student concentration by data zone using 2011 census data.

currently subject to a legal challenge). The Reporter considered its location as adjacent to a campus and concluded that the proposal would not result in an excessive concentration.

Map 3 shows the distribution of city centre developments assessed using the 2010 guideline. The guideline has been effective in directing development to campuses, whilst supporting it in more peripheral but accessible locations, such as Gorgie/Dalry and Abbeyhill. By consistently applying a numerical approach, which requires the inclusion of information relating to general housing and student bedspaces, it has enabled a large proportion of general housing to be secured on some of the larger sites, like Fountainbridge. In doing so, it has acted as a tool in promoting balanced and mixed communities. Map 3 suggests that the Fountainbridge data zones exceed the 30% threshold - this is because, whilst some of the student development is now complete, much of the residential development is yet to be fully implemented.



Map 3: Student housing developments by number of beds and planning status since August 2010.

Question 3:

Should the revised guidance identify preferred sites for purpose-built student accommodation?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

Impact of students

Despite the often negative perceptions of students, there are many positive factors allied to this group. According to a report prepared by the Council's Economic Development Service (2010), students at the main universities in Edinburgh have an estimated expenditure of up to £372.4million and provide the labour market with an estimated 20,307 extra employees. Having a larger proportion of the student population living away from home yields greater added value to the economy of the city. In 2008, 15.8% of students in Edinburgh lived at home, compared to a median of 30.5% for the 62 UK university cities.

Therefore, it is recognised that there is a need for more student housing and, as stated in the existing guidance, it is preferable that student needs are met as far as possible in purpose-built managed schemes. This is because such developments can help:

- *reduce the need for further conversion and use of family housing stock, although it is important to note that HMOs do provide for a range of housing needs, not solely for students;*
- *create sustainable locations for student housing which reduce the need for travel where students are located on or adjoining campuses or close to local services and shops; and*
- *provide a stock of well-managed and secure environments, which minimise the impact on amenity for other households in the neighbourhood. The table below shows that since 2010, there have been a negligible number of noise complaints received by the Council.*

2010	16 complaints about 7 purpose-built student properties (10,522 total complaints)
2011	22 complaints about 8 purpose-built student properties (10,935 total complaints)
2012	7 complaints about 7 purpose-built student properties (10,589 total complaints)
2013	4 complaints about 4 purpose-built student properties (9,648 total complaints)

Question 4:

Should student 'needs' be met as far as possible in well managed purpose-built student accommodation?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

Question 5:

Do you believe that purpose-built student accommodation is affordable for students and/or helps address the overall need for places for students to live? If not, do you think the Council should consider revising its approach to try and ensure that student accommodation is more affordable?

The criteria in ECLP Policy Hou 10 and LDP Policy Hou 8 are currently being applied to proposals for student housing using the locational guidance set out in the existing guidance and a percentage threshold of 30% outwith University campus locations.

The current guidance requires proposals to be accompanied by a planning statement justifying the suitability of the location for purpose-built student housing. Such statements are required to use the Council’s concentration calculation table (Table 1). The Council holds the following information, which is required to complete the table:

- *Population figures for each data zone**
- *A schedule of planning applications for student accommodation and general housing development. This includes information on their status (i.e. proposal of application notice, pending consideration, granted, minded to grant) and if permission has been implemented.*
- *Housing Land Audit - includes housing sites under construction and completed and sites in the adopted local plans.*

Student Housing Concentration

	Data Zone
2011 total Census population for the Data Zone*	
2011 Student Census population for the Data Zone*	
2011 Student Census population as a percentage of total population (%)	
Number of additional student bed spaces completed after 2011 **	0.00
Number of additional student bed spaces in the pipeline after 2011 ***	0.00
Number of additional general housing units completed after 2011 **	0.00
Number of additional general housing units in the pipeline after 2011 ***	0.00
Local household size for each Data Zone *	
Total number of additional projected general housing occupants	0.00
Total number of additional general housing occupants after 2011	0.00
Total number of additional student bed spaces in the Data Zone after 2001	0.00
Proposed number of student bed spaces****	
Overall total student population in the Data Zone since 2001 plus proposed number	0.00
Overall total student and general housing population since 2001	0.00
Total proposed student population as a percentage of the overall total population (student and general housing) (%)	

Table 1: Student concentration calculation table

* Information obtained from Table 1
 ** Figure calculated from development which has now been completed since 2011
 *** Figure calculated from development which is still under construction, pending determination or the pre-application process since 2011 and includes Local Plan Allocations for Housing
 **** Number of student bed spaces being proposed by the applicant

Formulas inserted into the cells

Question 6:

Should we continue to use a 30% threshold or introduce different thresholds to reflect the roles of different areas?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

Question 7:

On larger sites, should the Council be requiring a proportion of general housing as part of the proposed development?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

* The 2011 census data showing 16+ full-time students as a percentage of the total population should be used as a starting point in the assessment. As 17 year olds comprised 10.7% or 1,150 of the new intake for all Edinburgh universities in 2012, data for 16-24 is used in the assessment calculation.

This consultation exercise aims to be inclusive of relevant interests and to support a better understanding of the issues relating to the development of student housing in the city.

Question 8:

Do you agree with the numerical methodology currently being used to calculate student concentration?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

Question 9:

Are there other issues, which revised planning guidance should address?

Please provide a reason for your answer.

Further Information

can be found at

[https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/
studenthousing](https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/studenthousing)

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