

H6 Houses in Multiple Occupation and Student Accommodation

Planning permission will only be granted for Houses in Multiple Occupation, including student accommodation, where:

- a) the proportion of dwelling units in multiple occupation (including the proposal) within a 100 metre radius of the application site does not exceed 10% of total dwelling units;
- b) the application site is within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop;
- c) the proposal does not result in a non-HMO dwelling being sandwiched between 2 HMO's;
- d) the proposal does not lead to a continuous frontage of 3 or more HMOs; and
- e) adequate provision is made for the storage of refuse containers whereby -
 - the containers are not visible from an area accessible by the general public, and
 - the containers can be moved to the collection point along an external route only

Exceptions to a) may be made where the application site is located:

- i. on the campus of the University of Warwick or Warwickshire College or;
- ii. on a main thorough fare in a mixed use area where the proposal would not lead to an increase in activity along nearby residential streets (for example, by way of pedestrian movements between the application site and the town centre or car parking)

Exceptions to e) may be made if alternative arrangements for the storage and movement of containers are agreed in writing by the Council's Contract Services section.

Explanation

- 4.60 National planning policy includes the aim to “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”. Further, planning should “enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives”. National planning policy also supports the need to make places better for people. This includes “safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion”.
- 4.61 The recent increase in the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in Royal Leamington Spa has led to a fall in the standards of amenity experienced by residents in parts of the town where HMO's have concentrated. This is largely a result of:

- a relatively large proportion of young, single people with student lifestyles which conflict with the lifestyles of more settled residents; and
- a relatively large proportion of privately rented accommodation, with short term tenancies, which often leads to a lower standard of upkeep of property and the loss of a sense of belonging within the community.

4.62 About 81% of HMOs in the District comprise of accommodation for students, most of whom attend the University of Warwick in Coventry. The areas around central and south Royal Leamington Spa have the greatest concentrations of HMOs. These areas are popular with students and young people because the town centre provides a good range of facilities for young people and a thriving evening economy. In addition, the housing stock lends itself well to the provision of shared houses and flats. However, one of the main problems for more settled residents living in these areas is the anti-social behaviour in the streets in the early hours of the morning as young people return from the pubs and clubs, often on mid-week mornings. Other issues include noise from neighbouring properties, poor attendance to waste storage, increased burglaries, increased street parking, and poor property maintenance. The University and the Council work together to resolve these issues, but the Council is firmly of the view that restricting further concentrations of HMOs will help prevent a worsening of the situation.

4.63 In response to concerns by residents the Council agreed an Article 4 Direction in April 2012 the purpose of which was to remove permitted development rights, in Royal Leamington Spa only, for a change of use from a single dwelling to a small HMO (uses class C4). The need for planning permission would enable the Council to control further concentrations of small HMOs since nearly 81% of HMOs in the District comprised shared houses (use class C4).

4.64 The purpose of this policy is to control the location of new HMOs in order to prevent these uses from either exacerbating existing concentrations or leading to new concentrations. Additional HMOs can impact on local amenity where they lead to concentrations at either the neighbourhood level or in very localised situations. The policy aims to prevent concentrations at both levels by ensuring that within a 100 metre radius of the proposal not more than 10% of dwellings are HMOs and also, at a more localised level, by preventing the “sandwiching” of a non-HMO between 2 HMOs or a continuous frontage of 3 or more HMOs. It is not the intention of the policy to restrict further growth in HMOs. The Council recognises the importance of HMOs and the private rented sector generally in the housing stock but seeks to ensure that the amenity of more settled residents is not compromised. The policy also aims to ensure that there is satisfactory provision for the storage of waste, since a house occupied as an HMO generates more waste than a family or couple. In addition, the policy also aims to ensure that new HMOs are within reasonable walking distance of a bus stop because access to public transport is essential for most University of Warwick students due to the restrictive parking arrangements on campus.

- 4.65 The policy makes exceptions to the application of the 100 metre radius test to allow for HMOs or student accommodation in areas which would not impact on existing residential areas. Since one of the main problems is anti-social behaviour and noise on routes home from the town centre, these criteria are intended to allow HMOs in locations where residential areas would not be affected. Main thoroughfares will normally be defined as A and B roads and mixed use areas are defined as areas with a predominance of non-residential uses.
- 4.66 The Council supports the provision of student accommodation on the University campus which falls within Warwick District. The number of full-time University students increased by 29% in the five years up to 2011/12. A large proportion of this increase has been in international students who are more likely to prefer purpose-built accommodation. Approximately 225 flats for students, along with some flats for staff and visitors, received planning permission in 2009 as part of the University's Master Plan. Of these, 59 have been completed and the remainder are expected to be built in the first phase of the plan period. An additional 4,440 sq. m. of existing student accommodation is the subject of an application for redevelopment & replacement. The Local Plan allows for further expansion of the University within Warwick District and this is likely to include further accommodation for students.