



Policy Evidence Review

Manchester City Council: Affordable
Purpose Built Student Accommodation

24 April 2026

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Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Deloitte LLP to assist Manchester City Council (MCC) in establishing its evidence base in connection with draft Local Plan Policy H5, specifically concerning the requirement for affordable Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). The study analyses market dynamics in Manchester, benchmarks against comparable UK cities, and incorporates feedback from the University of Manchester (UoM) and Manchester Metropolitan University (Man Met).

Key Findings

Demand and Affordability Concerns in Manchester

- 1.2. Greater Manchester has a large and growing student population (120,000+), with a projected need for 5,440 to 11,320 new PBSA bedspaces by 2030 and an estimated current shortfall of 16,000 beds (Office for National Statistics, 2023).
- 1.3. Manchester's student population grew by 22% between 2014/15 and 2024/25. A large international student cohort (22,160) drives demand for premium PBSA, likely impacting overall affordability (Manchester City Council, 2021).
- 1.4. 16% of students in Manchester's Higher Education Institutions are eligible for Free School Meals, highlighting a need for genuinely affordable accommodation (University of Manchester, 2024).
- 1.5. The current student-to-bed ratio of 1.7 indicates unmet demand, contributing to affordability challenges despite being lower than some other major cities (Savills, 2024).

Comparative Analysis Reveals Stricter Affordability Standards in Certain Locations

- 1.6. Cities like London and Bristol define affordable student accommodation more stringently, typically at 50-55% of the maximum student maintenance loan, compared to MCC's current proposed 80% of market rate.
- 1.7. London and Bristol also set higher affordable provision targets (35-50%) than Manchester's proposed 20%.
- 1.8. Other cities emphasise accommodation types like cluster flats over studios to enhance affordability.

UoM & Man Met Feedback Suggests Potential Policy Gaps

- 1.9. UoM and Man Met believe that 80% of the market rate is insufficient for genuine affordability but also warned of potential rent displacement where discounts on 20% of beds could drive up rents on the remaining 80%.
- 1.10. Concerns were raised by UoM and Man Met about the proliferation of expensive studio apartments and the impact of longer (e.g. 51-week) contracts on annual costs.
- 1.11. UoM stressed the need for clear guidance on allocating affordable beds and had in principle support for formal nomination agreements with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to ensure beds reach the most vulnerable students. However, UoM also noted the practical limitations of such an approach which is resource intensive for Higher Education providers. UoM therefore advocates for more delivery to improve affordability by reducing the gap between demand and supply.
- 1.12. UoM called for a clear, annually reviewed five-year plan for PBSA development to ensure supply is meeting demand and affordability is managed. UoM expressed willingness to collaborate with MCC.

- 1.13. Man Met questions the effectiveness of a 20% discount on 20% of beds, suggesting a higher benchmark (e.g., 70% of maintenance loan) is needed, despite cross-subsidisation implications.
- 1.14. Man Met warned of stagnant student maintenance grants worsening affordability challenges.

Recommended Next Steps

- 1.15. **Confirm Affordability Definition:** Re-evaluate the definition of affordable PBSA, considering a Manchester-specific benchmark linked to student maintenance loans, supported by viability analysis.
- 1.16. **Confirm Provision Target:** Validate the proposed 20% affordable bed spaces target through a viability assessment, considering the possibility of a 30% target which is closer to the higher targets used in comparable cities.
- 1.17. **Develop Allocation Mechanisms:** Integrate clear mechanisms for allocating affordable beds into Policy H5, including formal nomination agreements with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- 1.18. **Prioritise Accommodation Types & Contract Lengths:** Consider introducing policy guidance to favour more affordable accommodation types (e.g., cluster flats over studios) and promote shorter, flexible contract lengths.
- 1.19. **Strengthen Need Evidence Base:** Publish a robust, annually reviewed five-year strategic plan for PBSA development in Manchester, with input from HEIs.
- 1.20. **Implement Monitoring & Evaluation:** Establish a comprehensive monitoring framework for affordable PBSA, tracking delivery, rental costs, allocation effectiveness, and accommodation types.

2. Introduction

Purpose of Report

- 2.1. Deloitte LLP has prepared this report to assist MCC in establishing its evidence base in connection with bullet point nine of draft Local Plan Policy H5 ¹ which requires 20% of all student bedspaces in PBSA to be made available at an affordable rent.
- 2.2. To this end, the report:
 - 1) Analyses third-party data to benchmark PBSA affordability and market dynamics in Manchester against comparable UK cities.
 - 2) Assesses affordable PBSA policies in comparable UK cities.
 - 3) Reviews data and input provided by the UoM) and Man Met Estates Teams.
 - 4) Provides recommendations on bullet point nine of draft Policy H5 relating to affordable PBSA.

PBSA Context

- 2.3. Greater Manchester has one of the largest concentrations of students in Europe, with over 120,000 students attending its five universities (MCC, 2023). The 2023 report noted 84,260 students were enrolled at one of Manchester's three HEIs in 2021/22, of which 53,155 had a term time address in Manchester. A significant proportion of the remaining c.25,000 lived at home – which needs to be considered when calculating need.
- 2.4. A 2023 MCC report projected a need for 5,440 to 11,320 new PBSA bedspaces by 2030, depending on annual student growth rates of 1% and 2%, respectively. Given the dynamic nature of the student population and housing market, MCC anticipates a continuing need, in addition to an existing shortfall, for approximately 750 new bedspaces annually until 2030 (MCC, 2023).
- 2.5. Midollo, an independent PBSA market advisor, analysed Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data and in 2024 estimated a significantly higher current 16,000-bed shortfall in Manchester's PBSA provision. Midollo's analysis of HESA data for the 2021/22 academic year revealed a student-to-bed ratio (STB) of 2.5:1 in Manchester (Marrow, 2024), evidencing Manchester's unmet demand.
- 2.6. Unmet demand has previously led to significant increases in the cost of student accommodation in Manchester and increases to the contract lengths offered by PBSA operators. It can also incentivise the development of higher-priced PBSA schemes in the city centre, potentially leveraging market conditions to secure planning approval, rather than addressing the broader need for more affordable accommodation options located close to the university campuses. This dynamic was specifically identified in the appeal of planning application ref. 129406/FO/2021, where the applicant successfully argued the student accommodation should be allowed (in a location not deemed in 'close proximity to the university campuses' and therefore in accordance with policy) due to the scale of the unmet need across Manchester.
- 2.7. Draft Policy H5 seeks to support PBSA that helps meet MCC's regeneration priorities, including being in proximity to the university campuses and delivering affordable rent. The draft policy wording requires at least 20% of all student bedspaces should be affordable rent – but notes the evidence base for this is still being developed.
- 2.8. This report seeks to contribute to the evidence base specifically for the affordable element of draft Policy H5.

¹ See Appendix A for draft Policy H5 wording.

Methodology

- 2.9. The methodology integrates quantitative data analysis with comparative case studies and qualitative feedback from stakeholders to inform recommendations.

Stage 1: Desktop Research and Data Collection

- 2.10. A comprehensive review of relevant policy documents has been undertaken, including:
- MCC's Core Strategy (2012), Proposals Map (2012), and saved UDP policies (2005)
 - Manchester Student Strategy (2009)
 - Manchester Draft Local Plan (2025)
 - Places for Everyone (2024)
 - MCC reports to the Economy Scrutiny Committee on PBSA (2019, 2020 & 2023)
 - Previous PBSA planning applications and appeal decisions (e.g. Ref. 129406/FO/2021)
 - Reports and data on student housing demand and supply.
- 2.11. An analysis of publicly available third-party data has also been undertaken to assess and benchmark PBSA affordability and market dynamics in Manchester. This includes PBSA pricing; student socioeconomic profiles; PBSA delivery rates; student number growth; and shifts in domestic/international student ratios.
- 2.12. All sources used in this report are included in the bibliography at the end of the report.

Stage 2: Comparison Exercise

- 2.13. A long-list was created of the 20 city areas with the highest student populations using data from the HESA 2024/25 statistical release.
- 2.14. This was then filtered down to remove Manchester, as the focus of this study, cities outside of England and where an out-of-town campus model is employed as it is not comparable to Manchester.

City Area	Taken forward?
London	Yes
Manchester	No – focus of this study
Birmingham	Yes
Glasgow	No – not under the English Planning system
Nottingham	Yes
Leeds	Yes
Bristol	Yes
Liverpool	Yes
Sheffield	Yes
Newcastle	Yes
Edinburgh	No – not under the English Planning system
Kent (Canterbury)	No – campus model not comparable with Manchester
Oxford	Yes
Cambridge	Yes
Cardiff	No – not under the English Planning system
Leicester	Yes
York	Yes

City Area	Taken forward?
Southampton	Yes
Exeter	Yes
Bath	Yes

- 2.15. This was then further filtered to identify those with an adopted affordable PBSA policy, as set out below.

City Area	Affordable PBSA Policy
London	Yes
Birmingham	No
Nottingham	No
Leeds	No
Bristol	Yes (under examination, expected to be adopted shortly)
Liverpool	No
Sheffield	No
Newcastle	No
Oxford	Yes
Cambridge	No
Leicester	No
York	Yes
Southampton	No
Exeter	No
Bath	No

- 2.16. York and Oxford require new student accommodation to provide a financial contribution towards delivering affordable housing elsewhere in the cities. They were therefore not explored further as this is not relevant in the context of this report.
- 2.17. The remaining cities with affordable PBSA policies have then been assessed in the comparison exercise:
- London
 - Bristol
- 2.18. To further inform our comparative analysis of PBSA affordability in the remaining cities; London and Bristol, a systematic review of their respective development pipelines was undertaken. This involved a review of publicly accessible planning registers for both cities, specifically focusing on recent planning applications.
- 2.19. Our research focused on planning applications validated between 1 April 2021 and 1 April 2026 – the earlier date was chosen to coincide with the current London Plan and its Affordable PBSA Policy being adopted in March 2021. For London, our spatial analysis was further refined: we prioritised Boroughs that accommodate major HEIs, ensuring our research concentrated on areas with significant student populations.

- 2.20. This methodological framework allowed us to identify and analyse contemporary PBSA developments. This yielded a dataset for assessing evolving affordability trends within the student housing market and enabled us to identify the average affordable provision made per development for PBSA in London and Bristol.
- 2.21. It is important to note the differences between cities in land prices, historic urban grain and available development land mean that requirements for PBSA to be in specific locations differ on a city -by-city basis. Qualitative commentary has been provided on requirements for PBSA to be in specific locations for Bristol and London. It is important for any policy research / evidence base to consider the appropriate geography for PBSA as location and proximity to HEIs impacts affordability.

Stage 3: Consultation with UoM and Man Met Estates Teams

- 2.22. Deloitte consulted with representatives from the Estates Teams at UoM and Man Met in February and March 2026. The consultation sought to gather insights into:
- Projected PBSA needs.
 - Definition of affordable PBSA in Manchester, potentially expanding on the London standard (55% of maximum student maintenance loan).
 - Student socioeconomic profiles (current and target).
 - Existing PBSA rental levels, demand, and price point analysis.

Report Structure

- 2.23. The remainder of this PBSA Report is structured as follows:
- Section 3 sets out the policy context relating to PBSA and student accommodation in Manchester.
 - Section 4 analyses third-party data to assess and benchmark PBSA affordability and market dynamics in Manchester.
 - Section 5 provides a comparative assessment of four cities.
 - Section 6 summarises the outcomes of engagement with Manchester's two main HEIs, UoM and Man Met.
 - Section 7 assesses the research findings.
 - Section 8 recommends next steps.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. This section outlines the strategic context for current PBSA developments in Manchester, referencing relevant planning documents and material considerations such as planning guidance and MCC strategic objectives.
- 3.2. The relevant Manchester City Council planning documents are:
- Manchester Core Strategy (2012)
 - Manchester Proposals Map (2012)
 - Manchester Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 version published for consultation in 2025)
 - Greater Manchester Places For Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024)
- 3.3. The following published policy, executive reports and guidance documents are material considerations relevant to this report:
- Manchester Student Strategy (2009) Economy Scrutiny Committee & Executive: Purpose Built Student Accommodation (2023)

Adopted Manchester Local Development Plan

Core Strategy (2012)

- 3.4. Policy H12 of MCC's Core Strategy (adopted in 2012) was developed with the objective of managing the supply of student accommodation in Manchester.
- 3.5. Policy H12 requires developers to demonstrate a need for additional student accommodation. While this need currently exists, the policy also mandates that new PBSA be located near university campuses or high-frequency public transport.
- 3.6. Policy H12 does not include any requirements for affordable PBSA. The full text of Policy H12 is included in Appendix B.

Places for Everyone (2024)

- 3.7. Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. The document was adopted on 21 March 2024, by the GMCA, on behalf of the nine districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan).
- 3.8. The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) sets out 10 strategic objectives, including ensuring access to physical and social infrastructure and promoting the health and wellbeing of communities.
- 3.9. The plan identifies the important role the student population plays in Manchester, stating:
- "The universities and the knowledge economy are other important assets for us, with a high concentration of students, research activity and scientific institutions. This activity is primarily focused within the City Centre, with The Oxford Road Corridor being an internationally important location in this regard."*
- 3.10. In regard to student accommodation, the plan also details:
- "Housing provision to accommodate specific groups, such as students and travelling people, will be addressed through district local plans."*

PfE recognises Greater Manchester's substantial student population and the resulting need for student accommodation.

Emerging Planning Policy

Draft Local Plan (2025)

- 3.11. In recognition of the need for a robust policy for affordable PBSA, MCC included draft wording in its emerging Local Plan published for Regulation 18 consultation in 2025. The relevant extract of draft Policy H5 is:

"At least 20% of all student bedspaces should be made available at an affordable rent and the same conditions as those outlined in Policy H2 Affordable Housing will apply for developers claiming an exemption to this requirement. Affordable student housing is assumed to be 80% of the market rate."*

*this figure is subject to ongoing work on the evidence base and therefore is an assumption at this stage.

- 3.12. The full text of draft Policy H5 is included in Appendix A. The market rate is not defined in policy and the market 'area' could be interpreted differently by applicants.
- 3.13. Despite no adopted policy requiring affordable PBSA, some schemes in Manchester have started including provision. The provision of affordable PBSA in Manchester is characterised by Section 106 financial contributions, discounted student accommodation, and pricing models which incorporate a percentage of affordable units. A selection of these schemes are included in Appendix C.

Planning Guidance and Other Material Considerations

Report to the Executive: Student Strategy Implementation Plan (2009)

- 3.14. The Manchester Student Strategy (2009) was developed via a partnership between MCC, UoM and Man Met, and the approach was agreed by the Executive. The Strategy provided an implementation plan with four key objectives:
- Develop and improve neighbourhood management approaches in areas with concentrations of student households.
 - Provide better accommodation for students in appropriate locations (specifically PBSA).
 - Address the need for resident parking schemes in Ardwick and Hulme.
 - Take all available steps to prevent further encroachment of students lets into areas characterised by traditional family housing.
- 3.15. Due to its age, the information in the strategy does not represent the latest status of affordability within the student housing market.

Report to the Executive: Purpose Built Student Accommodation (2019)

- 3.16. In November 2019, a MCC report to the Executive provided an updated context in which to consider proposals for PBSA on an interim basis ahead of a review of Core Policy H12. The report recommended revising the approach to PBSA within a review of the Core Strategy.

Report to Executive: Purpose Built Student Accommodation (2020)

- 3.17. In December 2020, a MCC report to the Executive provided details of a consultation exercise undertaken with key stakeholders on PBSA. The report requested the Executive's approval to use the outcomes to further inform a policy approach to PBSA, with a view of developing a policy position as part of the Local Plan review process.

Report to the Economy Scrutiny Committee and Executive: Purpose Built Student Accommodation (2023)

- 3.18. In May 2023, a MCC report to the Economy Scrutiny Committee and Executive assessed PBSA provision, highlighting significant market shifts since the December 2020 review.
- 3.19. While stating that Policy H12 of the Core Strategy remained relevant, the report recommended a review of its interpretation and application to address affordability concerns and ensure proximity to Higher Education Institutions. The report suggested investigating affordability benchmarks, proposing London's 35% affordable PBSA target as a potential model for Manchester.
- 3.20. The report identifies 20 sites that could potentially support circa 12,500 PBSA bedspaces. These capacities were determined through planning applications or feasibility studies undertaken by officers. Where this is not the case, defensible assumptions were established regarding the amount of development that could be accommodated in principle. The sites are:

Site	Ward	Number of beds
Cambridge Street Circus	Piccadilly/Hulme	750
Cambridge Halls	Hulme	720
Church Inn	Hulme	62
Deansgate South (Fusion)	Deansgate	534
First Street (Plot 10b)	Deansgate	600
Gamecock Pub	Hulme	197
Great Marlborough Street	Deansgate	834
ID Manchester	Piccadilly	0
IQ Echo Street	Piccadilly	650
IQ Masterplan Charles Street	Piccadilly	2350
IQ Masterplan Granby Row	Piccadilly	60
John Dalton East	Hulme	500
McDougall Centre	Hulme	1000
St Gabriel's Lodge	Ardwick	318
New Medlock House	Deansgate	300
Upper Brook Street	Ardwick	1700
Whitworth Park	Hulme	250
One Medlock Street	Deansgate	1000
88-90 Carmoor Road	Ardwick	172
Owens Park	Fallowfield	350
Moss Lane East	Moss Side	260

- 3.21. This pipeline exercise provided a useful point in time snapshot but needs to be updated annually for it to remain a valid dataset for use in planning applications.

Recent Examples in Planning Applications

- 3.22. A review has been undertaken of recent planning applications for PBSA in Manchester to understand how affordable PBSA is being considered in the current planning policy environment. A full schedule of the planning applications reviewed is included in Appendix C.

- 3.23. The review shows that the level of affordable student accommodation being provided in Manchester varies significantly across developments. Several recent schemes, such as Hotspur House, One Medlock Street, and Upper Brook Street, currently offer 0% affordable provision. In contrast, other approved or schemes awaiting decision commit to a percentage of affordable beds. For instance, Plot 9B First Street will provide not less than 15% (129 units) of discounted accommodation, while Cambridge Halls of Residence (being delivered in a Joint Venture with Man Met) commits to 413 rooms (just over 20%) at a discounted rate. Deansgate South (Fusion) includes a minimum of 100 beds (18.4%) as affordable, and Jadebricks Student proposes up to 20% affordability.
- 3.24. The iQ Weston Student Halls and Pendulum Hotel scheme, while awaiting decision, has committed to a financial contribution towards affordable housing via a Section 106 obligation, though the specific value is not yet set.
- 3.25. In these examples the format of affordable student accommodation primarily involves the provision of discounted beds. This is typically achieved by setting rent levels for a specified number of units at a rate below the market price, often expressed as a percentage of the equivalent market rate (for example no more than 80% of market rent as seen in Plot 9B First Street) or as a direct percentage discount (for example 15% discount at Cambridge Halls).
- 3.26. The variation is to be expected given the market pressure on affordability and the lack of a formal planning policy on affordable PBSA. This reinforces the need for affordable PBSA expectations to be defined in policy - which will help ensure consistency of approach, and meet an identified need.

4. PBSA Affordability and Market Dynamics

- 4.1. The majority of data sets for university information are recorded by institution, rather than by city. To capture a comparable average, data from the two largest institutions in each city has been averaged throughout this section. York and Oxford, whilst not considered comparable from an affordable PBSA policy position, are useful to compare for wider context – and are therefore analysed in this chapter.
- 4.2. Average PBSA price per month was considered but excluded from this report due to the large variances in types of product available on the market in each city. Average contract length was also investigated but varies significantly year to year, a broad range was observed with most sitting between the 42 and 52 week range.

Student Number Growth

	Manchester	London	Bristol	Oxford	York
Institution	<u>UoM</u>	<u>UCL</u>	<u>UoB</u>	<u>UoO</u>	<u>UoY</u>
14/15	38,590	29,945	21,555	26,005	16,835
24/25	46,305	51,315	32,435	26,225	22,345
Growth	20%	71%	50%	1%	33%
Institution	<u>Man Met</u>	<u>KCL</u>	<u>UWE</u>	<u>OBU</u>	<u>YSJ</u>
14/15	31,355	28,720	26,670	17,460	6,550
24/25	39,395	40,870	36,380	26,095	12,150
Growth	26%	42%	36%	49%	85%
14/15	54,268	44,305	34,890	34,735	20,110
24/25	66,003	71,750	50,625	39,273	28,420
Growth	22%	62%	45%	13%	41%

Source: HESA 2024/25 dataset.

- 4.3. Based on the average student number growth from 2014/15 to 2024/25, Manchester experienced a 22% increase in its student population. When compared to other university cities, Manchester's growth is notably lower than that of London (62%), York (41%) and Bristol (45%), which shows the highest projected growth among the cities analysed. This indicates that while Manchester is experiencing steady growth, it is not expanding its student numbers as rapidly as some other major university cities.
- 4.4. In real terms, 22% growth over 10 years is still significant and has a direct impact on the quantum of PBSA and specifically affordable PBSA that needs to be accommodated in Manchester.

Domestic / International Student Ratio

	Manchester	London	Bristol	Oxford	York
Institution	<u>UoM</u>	<u>UCL</u>	<u>UoB</u>	<u>UoO</u>	<u>UoY</u>
Domestic	27,780	24,705	21,530	16,455	18,190
International	18,515	26,610	10,900	9,755	4,150
Ratio	1.50	0.93	1.98	1.69	4.38
Institution	<u>Man Met</u>	<u>KCL</u>	<u>UWE</u>	<u>OBU</u>	<u>YSJ</u>
Domestic	35,720	25,175	27,305	23,140	7,645
International	3,645	15,690	9,030	2,945	4,510
Ratio	9.80	1.60	3.02	7.86	1.70
Domestic	63,500	49,880	48,835	39,595	25,835
International	22,160	42,300	19,930	12,700	8,660
Ratio	2.87	1.18	2.45	3.12	2.98

Source: HESA 2024/25 dataset.

- 4.5. Manchester exhibits an average domestic to international student ratio of 2.87, indicating that for every international student, there are approximately 2.87 domestic students. This ratio places Manchester in a mid-range position among the compared cities. London, with the lowest ratio of 1.18, demonstrates a significantly higher proportion of international students relative to domestic students, suggesting a more globally diverse student body. In contrast Oxford (3.12), and York (2.98) show slightly higher domestic student proportions than Manchester, indicating a marginally greater reliance on the domestic market. Therefore, while Manchester attracts a notable international cohort similar to Bristol, Oxford and York, its student body remains considerably more domestic-focused than London.
- 4.6. In real terms, there are 22,160 international students in Manchester which is a significant driver of demand for PBSA.

Percentage of Students from Low Income Backgrounds

City	University	%	University	%	Rounded City Average
Manchester	University of Manchester	11.90%	Manchester Metropolitan University	19.70%	16%
London	University College London (UCL)	14.30%	King's College London (KCL)	23.10%	19%
Bristol	University of Bristol	8.00%	University of the West of England (UWE)	10.00%	9%

Oxford	University of Oxford	7.90%	Oxford Brookes University	Not published	8%
York	University of York	8.20%	York St John University	16.60%	12%

Source: Individual university Access and Participation Plans for 2025-26 to 2028-29 - or most recent version if 2025-26 to 2028-29 not yet published.

- 4.7. Manchester has an average of 16% of its students that were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). This figure places Manchester in a mid-range position when compared to other university cities. London and Birmingham show higher proportions of FSM-eligible students, with averages of 19% and 20% respectively, indicating a greater representation of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in these cities. In contrast, Oxford reports a significantly lower percentage of 8% suggesting a student body with less FSM eligibility. York's average of 12% is also lower than Manchester's.
- 4.8. FSM is a key indicator of affordability requirements which needs to be considered for PBSA.

Student to Bed Ratio

- 4.9. The Student to Bed Ratio is a commonly used metric to measure the number of beds students compete for in a defined geography. It is calculated by defining a geography and then dividing the number of students within it by the number of beds available to rent (from Universities or private operators). A high ratio indicates a shortage of beds and a low ratio indicates a surplus of beds.

Manchester	London	Bristol	Oxford	York
1.7	3.6	3.5	1.5	2.5

Sources: Savills Blogs 'UK cities need much higher rates of student housing delivery', 2024 and 'UK Purpose-Built Student Accommodation Spotlight', 2023.

- 4.10. The student-to-bed ratios provide an indication of the likely affordability of student accommodation in these cities. Generally, a higher ratio (more students per available bed) suggests greater demand relative to supply, which typically leads to increased competition and, consequently, higher rental prices and lower affordability. Conversely, a lower ratio indicates a more balanced market or even an oversupply, which can lead to more stable or lower rental prices, thus improving affordability.
- 4.11. Comparing the student-to-bed ratios across these cities reveals varying levels of demand pressure for student accommodation relative to Manchester's ratio of 1.7. London exhibits the highest ratio at 3.6, indicating a significant undersupply of purpose-built student beds compared to the student population, making them considerably more competitive than Manchester. Similarly, Bristol, with a ratio of 3.5, and York, at 2.5, also show a higher number of students per available bed than Manchester, suggesting greater demand. In contrast, Oxford has a ratio of 1.5, which is slightly lower than Manchester's, implying a relatively more balanced market or potentially less intense competition for student accommodation in that city.
- 4.12. Applying this to the cities:
- 4.12.1. London (3.6), Bristol (3.5), and York (2.5): All these cities have significantly higher student-to-bed ratios than Manchester (1.7). This strongly suggests that student accommodation in these locations is likely to be less affordable than in Manchester. The high demand and limited supply will drive up rental costs, making it more challenging for students to find reasonably priced housing.

- 4.12.2. Oxford (1.5): With a ratio slightly lower than Manchester's (1.7), Oxford might experience a relatively better level of affordability compared to the other high-ratio cities, and potentially even slightly better than Manchester, assuming all other factors are equal. This lower ratio indicates a more balanced market where the supply of beds is closer to meeting student demand.
- 4.12.3. It's important to note that while the student-to-bed ratio is a key indicator, other factors such as the overall cost of living in the city, the type and quality of accommodation, and the presence of university-owned housing can also influence actual affordability. However, based purely on these ratios, London, Bristol, and York are likely to present greater affordability challenges for students than Manchester, while Oxford might offer a slightly more favourable situation.
- 4.12.4. Related to the student-to-bed-ratio, it is acknowledged there is anecdotal evidence in the industry that higher affordable requirements for PBSA may lead to an overall reduction in supply, due to viability challenges – which can worsen the student-to-bed-ratio. There are a wide variety of factors that influence supply and it is out of the scope of this report to assess any causation between the introduction of affordable requirements and the overall delivery of PBSA. Further evidence gathering and interrogation would be required to assess the level of causation that can be attributed to this.

Summary

- 4.12.5. The comparative analysis in this chapter has sought to position Manchester's student accommodation landscape against other comparable major UK university cities. While Manchester has experienced a substantial 22% student population growth over the past decade, this rate is slower than cities like London and Bristol, suggesting a less rapidly expanding student base in relative terms. However, Manchester's significant international student cohort (22,160) and its mid-range proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals (16%) indicate a specific demand for affordable accommodation, comparable to or even exceeding the needs in some other cities. Crucially, Manchester's student-to-bed ratio of 1.7, while lower than the highly competitive markets of London (3.6) and Bristol (3.5), still signifies unmet demand, placing it in a mid-tier position where affordability challenges persist despite being less acute than in some counterparts.
- 4.12.6. This positioning of the student accommodation landscape in Manchester has been used to inform the recommendations in Chapter 8.

5. Comparative Precedent Analysis

- 5.1. This section examines the approaches taken by London and Bristol in implementing policies to deliver affordable PBSA. As explained in Section 1, these areas have been considered due to their comparability to Manchester and because they have affordable PBSA policies. It explores the range of policy mechanisms employed, the effectiveness of these policies in addressing the need for affordable PBSA, and the challenges and successes encountered in their implementation.

London

The London Plan 2021

- 5.2. The London Plan 2021 provides a framework for the city's development over the next 20-25 years. As a statutory development plan, its policies inform planning application decisions. Given the significant economic and employment contributions of London's higher education institutions, ensuring adequate student accommodation is vital to maintain their attractiveness and growth potential.
- 5.3. Student housing needs, encompassing both Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and conventional shared housing, are factored into London's overall housing need, as established in the 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- 5.4. Consequently, new PBSA directly addresses existing housing demand, with Policy H15 outlining the current framework for PBSA development within London.
- 5.5. Policy H15 (Purpose-built student accommodation) specifies:
- “Boroughs should seek to ensure that local and strategic need for purpose-built student accommodation is addressed, provided that:*
- 1) at the neighbourhood level, the development contributes to a mixed and inclusive neighbourhood*
 - 2) the use of the accommodation is secured for students*
 - 3) the majority of the bedrooms in the development including all of the affordable student accommodation bedrooms are secured through a nomination agreement for occupation by students of one or more higher education provider*
 - 4) the maximum level of accommodation is secured as affordable student accommodation as defined through the London Plan and associated guidance:*
 - a) to follow the Fast Track Route, at least 35 per cent of the accommodation must be secured as affordable student accommodation or 50 per cent where the development is on public land or industrial land appropriate for residential uses in accordance with Policy E7 Industrial intensification, co-location and substitution*
 - b) where the requirements of 4a above are not met, applications must follow the Viability Tested Route set out in Policy H5 Threshold approach to applications, Part E*
 - c) the affordable student accommodation bedrooms should be allocated by the higher education provider(s) that operates the accommodation, or has the nomination right to it, to students it considers most in need of the accommodation.*
 - 5) the accommodation provides adequate functional living space and layout. B Boroughs, student accommodation providers and higher education providers are encouraged to develop*

student accommodation in locations well connected to local services by walking, cycling and public transport, as part of mixed-use regeneration and redevelopment schemes.”

5.6. The supporting text relevant to affordable PBSA states:

“The definition of affordable student accommodation is a PBSA bedroom that is provided at a rental cost for the academic year equal to or below 55 per cent of the maximum income that a new full-time student studying in London and living away from home could receive from the Government’s maintenance loan for living costs for that academic year. The actual amount the Mayor defines as affordable student accommodation for the coming academic year is published in the Mayor’s Annual Monitoring Report. Should the Government make significant changes to the operation of the maintenance loan for living costs as the main source of income available from the Government for higher education students, the Mayor will review the definition of affordable student accommodation and may provide updated guidance.

To provide greater certainty, speed up the planning process and increase the delivery of affordable student accommodation, a threshold has been introduced for PBSA schemes to take advantage of the Fast Track Route. To follow the Fast Track Route the amount of affordable student accommodation provided should be at least 35 per cent of student bedrooms in the development, or 50 per cent where required by Part B of Policy H5 Threshold approach to applications. If the required threshold for affordable student accommodation is not met, a scheme will be considered under the Viability Tested Route in line with Part E of Policy H5 Threshold approach to applications and the Mayor’s Affordable Housing and Viability SPG.

The affordable student accommodation should be equivalent to the non-affordable rooms in the development in terms of room sizes and room occupancy level. The rent charged must include all services and utilities which are offered as part of the package for an equivalent non-affordable room in the development. There should be no additional charges specific to the affordable accommodation.”

Evidence Base

5.7. The significant economic and labour market contributions of London's higher education institutions necessitate ensuring sufficient and affordable student accommodation to maintain their competitiveness and facilitate growth. The 35% requirement for affordable PBSA is in line with the affordable housing requirement in the London Plan.

5.8. London Plan Guidance (Purpose Built Student Accommodation) provides specific considerations for assessing affordable student accommodation (ASA):

- the acute and increasing need for C3 affordable housing
- the greater flexibility of C3 housing to meet a wider range of needs
- rising need for ASA, as student loans have not kept pace with inflation
- the only source of ASA being new PBSA development (no grant support for it)
- ASA provision being crucial to secure nominations agreements
- ASA being vital to enable PBSA to alleviate pressures on family housing by ensuring rents are more comparable to HMO rents
- ASA, when applied to wheelchair-accessible rooms, addressing an intersection of needs that is not typically addressed in the private rental or HMO sector

- ASA contributing to ensuring London's long-term inclusivity as many students become longer-term residents – so that an income-diverse student population contributes to the good growth objective of the city, continuing its tradition of openness, equality and diversity

5.9. It also notes the importance of the correct type of student accommodation being provided, to ensure it is affordable. Paragraph 2.5.8 of London Plan Guidance states *“for this reason, a significant proportion of cluster flats should be present in all PBSA schemes. Any redesign proposals that involve an increase of studios at the expense of cluster flats should also be discouraged on these grounds.”*

Defining Affordability

- 5.10. The London Plan defines affordable student accommodation as a PBSA bedroom rented at a cost for the academic year at or below 55% of the maximum income a new full-time student living away from home could receive from the government's maintenance loan.
- 5.11. The actual percentage may be adjusted annually by the Mayor and published in the Mayor's Annual Monitoring Report. The plan also encourages providers to develop models that bring rental costs closer to this affordable level for the majority of bedrooms.
- 5.12. 55% of the maximum maintenance loan is the National Union of Students definition of affordable for student accommodation. It was used in the evidence base for the London Plan (2021) and is a threshold that has since been adopted elsewhere in the UK. The key evidence for this figure was included in the Affordable Student Accommodation Planning Guidance Discussion Paper January 2015 (and January 2016 Addendum).
- 5.13. The discussion paper drew the following conclusions:
1. **Student Income:** An average student income was established, initially including maintenance loan/grant and summer work income (£10,295 for 2014/15). This was later revised in the 2016 addendum to solely the maximum maintenance loan (£10,702 for 2016/17) due to policy changes.
 2. **Actual Rent Analysis:** The paper analysed actual average rents for standard rooms in university-owned and operated Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in London. For 2014/15, this was £5,624 for a 38-week contract.
 3. **Percentage Calculation:** Comparing the actual average rent (£5,624) to the initial average student income (£10,295) showed that rent constituted approximately 55% of income.
 4. **Justification:** This higher percentage was deemed reasonable for PBSA because:
 - Student accommodation is typically short-term.
 - PBSA rents are often all-inclusive (utilities, internet), which would otherwise be additional costs for students.
- 5.14. The 2016 addendum updated the student income figure but maintained the 55% ratio as a reasonable proportion for rent.
- 5.15. To expedite the delivery of affordable student accommodation and enhance planning certainty, a 35% (50% on public land) affordable student bedroom threshold has been implemented for PBSA schemes utilising the Fast Track Route where no viability assessment has to be provided. This aligns with the affordable housing requirements and fast track pathway for standard residential in London. If not pursuing the Fast Track Route schemes are assessed under the Viability Tested Route which requires detailed supporting viability to be submitted in a standardised and accessible format as part of the application.

Monitoring Mechanisms

- 5.16. The policy states that key performance indicators will track the overall delivery of PBSA units, quantifying the amount of affordable accommodation provided within these developments. Furthermore, rental costs for both affordable and non-affordable PBSA rooms will be monitored continuously.
- 5.17. A 2024 CBRE report examined the implementation of Policy H15 (2012), intended to increase affordable PBSA provision in London, noting the Greater London Authority's (GLA) target of 3,500 new beds annually (CBRE, 2024).
- 5.18. The report indicates that 12,000 new beds received planning consent, with 25% (3,100) designated as affordable. However, actual annual growth (2,800 beds) fell short of the target, potentially due to multiple factors including planning complexities, borough-level variations that may have constrained affordable PBSA development, wider market conditions and economic impacts of geo-politics.
- 5.19. The monitoring shows that lower levels of affordable PBSA are being delivered than that sought by Policy H15.

Geography

- 5.20. Policy H15 encourages PBSA to be in locations well connected to local services by walking, cycling and public transport – but does not go as far as to define suitable areas for PBSA. The location of many higher education institutions in central London means it is not feasible to mandate a set proximity for PBSA developments. The locations in central London often have high land prices, a lack of available land and complicated historical grains – meaning opportunities for new development is restricted.

Case Studies ²

Application Ref	Borough	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
PA/20/01402	Tower Hamlets	24.6%	Under construction	Student Housing Demand & Supply Study submitted	Viability assessment provided which demonstrated 35% could not be provided
PA/21/02182/A1	Tower Hamlets	35%	Refused on 26.01.23	Demand Study for PBSA submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
PA/24/00812/A1	Tower Hamlets	0% (affordable residential dwellings proposed instead)	Approved 18.07.24	Student Demand Assessment submitted.	Financial Viability Assessment submitted
PA/24/00243/A1	Tower Hamlets	35%	Approved 29.05.25	Student Demand Study submitted.	N/A – Fast Track

² The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) ceased to be a Local Planning Authority on 1 December 2024. Since then, its planning powers have been transferred to the relevant London Boroughs, including Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, and Waltham Forest. As a result, any former LLDC planning case studies are included within their respective boroughs in the table.

Application Ref	Borough	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
PA/25/00516/A1	Tower Hamlets	0%	Refused 08.12.25	Student Demand and Supply Report submitted.	No viability assessment submitted
PA/26/00391/A1	Tower Hamlets	20%	Pending determination	PBSA Needs Assessment submitted.	Financial Viability Assessment submitted
PA/25/01770/A1	Tower Hamlets	50%	Refused 19.01.26	PBSA Demand Study referenced.	N/A – Fast Track
PA/25/01156/A1	Tower Hamlets	35%	Pending determination	PBSA Demand and Market Assessment submitted.	Financial Viability Assessment submitted
23/00101/FUL	Newham	36%	Approved 26.04.24	Student Demand and Supply Report submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
25/01687/FUL	Newham	35%	Pending determination	Student Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
24/00113/FUL_LLDC	Newham	35%	Approved 27.11.24	PBSA Demand & Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
23/00456/FUL_LLDC	Newham	35%	Refused 25.06.24	Student Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
23/00790/FUL	Newham	35%	Approved 14.08.25	Student Accommodation Demand Report submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
22/00178/FUL_LLDC	Newham	35%	Approved 28.08.25	Student Demand Study submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
22/00098/FUL_LLDC	Newham	35%	Approved 22.05.23	Demand Assessment & Market Analysis submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
23/00441/FUL_LLDC	Newham	35%	Approved 28.11.24	Student Demand and Supply Report submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
21/04536/FULL	Westminster	35%	Refused 21.04.22	Student Demand Report submitted.	Economic Statement submitted.
22/06928/FULL	Westminster	35%	Approved 02.02.24	Student Needs Demand Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
24/03600/FULL	Westminster	35%	Approved 27.03.26	Student Accommodation Demand And Supply Report submitted.	N/A – Fast Track

Application Ref	Borough	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
24/AP/3575	Southwark	0%	Pending determination Time Extension Letter submitted 25.03.26.	Demand and Market Assessment submitted.	Financial Viability Assessment submitted.
25/AP/2203	Southwark	0% (affordable residential on site provision)	Recommended for approval at committee (subject to S106)	Student Demand and Supply Report submitted	Viability assessment provided which demonstrated the maximum provision of affordable housing that was viable
25/AP/2480	Southwark	15% and all other units to be offered at below market rate	Approved	Education Needs Case covered in Planning Statement. Sets out the rationale for addressing the accommodation needs of the existing cohort of students at LSE, who are currently housed in private accommodation during their first year of study	Viability assessment provided which demonstrated the maximum provision of affordable housing that was viable
24/AP/2770	Southwark	0% (affordable residential on site provision)	Approved 27.02.26	Student Demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A
24/AP/0892	Southwark	0% (FVA states not viable to provide any)	Approved 04.09.	Student Demand covered in Planning Statement.	FVA submitted.
23/AP/1862	Southwark	0%	Approved 26.04.24	Student Demand covered in Planning Statement	FVA submitted.
24/AP/2314	Southwark	0%	Approved 01.01.26	Student Demand covered in Planning Statement	FVA submitted.

Application Ref	Borough	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
24/AP/3819	Southwark	0% (affordable residential on site provision)	Approved 11.12.25	Student Demand covered in Planning Statement	N/A – Fast Track
P2024/2598/FUL	Islington	0% (affordable residential offsite provision)	Pending determination	Student Accommodation Demand submitted.	Financial Viability Assessment submitted.
P2022/1943/FUL	Islington	35%	Pending determination	Demand Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
DC/22/127966	Lewisham	35%	Approved 03.11.23	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A – Fast Track
DC/23/131085	Lewisham	35%	Approved 18.03.25	Student Accommodation Demand Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
DC/24/135192	Lewisham	35%	Approved 15.10.25	PBSA Demands and Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
DC/21/122805	Lewisham	35%	Refused 14.12.21	Student Demand and Marketing Report submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
DC/25/141007	Lewisham	37.6%	Pending determination	PBSA Demand and Market Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
260282FUL	Ealing	0% Payment-in-lieu (s106)	Pending determination	PBSA Demand Assessment submitted.	FVA submitted
241397FUL	Ealing	35%	Approved 04.06.25	PBSA Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
243547FUL	Ealing	35%	Approved 13.03.25	PBSA Demand and Market Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
244093OPDCOB	Ealing	35%	Approved 08.01.26	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A – Fast Track
24/2634/F	Greenwich	35%	Approved 26.03.26	Student Need Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track

Application Ref	Borough	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
23/3847/F	Greenwich	35%	Refused 17.07.25	PBSA Demand and Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
23/2150/F	Greenwich	35%	Pending determination	Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
2025/4055/P	Camden	0% (affordable residential provided)	Pending determination	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A – Fast Track
2024/0479/P	Camden	0% (affordable residential provided)	Approved 27.11.24	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A – Fast Track
2025/1685/P	Camden	0% (affordable residential provided)	Validated 23.04.25	PBSA Demand and Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
2024/4953/P	Camden	0% (affordable residential provided)	Approved 30.07.25	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	FVA submitted
2024/5792/P	Camden	36.4%	Pending determination	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A – Fast Track
25/01803/FULMAJ	City of London	35%	Pending determination	Student Accommodation demand covered in Planning Statement.	N/A – Fast Track
24/00648/FULMAJ	City of London	35.02%	Approved 18.12.24	Student Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
22/00882/FULMAJ	City of London	35%	Approved 27.06.23	Student Housing Demand and Supply Study submitted.	N/A – Fast Track
21/00781/FULMAJ	City of London	35%	Approved 02.09.22	Student Needs Assessment submitted.	N/A – Fast Track

Average % Affordable Beds in Tower Hamlets: 24.95%

Average % Affordable Beds in Newham: 35%

Average % Affordable Beds in Westminster: 35%

Average % Affordable Beds in Southwark: 0% ³

³ Although the scope of this report focused on just the London Plan for London, the Southwark Local Plan is an interesting case study. Instead of Affordable PBSA, it seeks to prioritise C3 Affordable Housing as part of PBSA developments. The justification for this is “There is a need for more student

Average % Affordable Beds in Islington: 17.5%
 Average % Affordable Beds in Lewisham: 35.5%
 Average % Affordable Beds in Ealing: 26.25%
 Average % Affordable Beds in Greenwich: 35%
 Average % Affordable Beds in Camden: 7.28% ⁴
 Average % Affordable Beds in City of London: 35%

- 5.21. Analysis of planning applications validated between 1 April 2021 and 1 April 2026 revealed an average of 25.15% affordable PBSA beds across the selected London Boroughs. Lewisham and Newham demonstrated the highest provision at 35.5%, while Southwark recorded the lowest at 0%. As explained in footnotes 3 and 4, Southwark and Camden have Local Plan policies that prioritise / allow for affordable provision to be traditional C3 Affordable instead of PBSA Affordable Bed Spaces – this means that schemes deliver 0% Affordable PBSA. Therefore, if Southwark and Camden are excluded due to their policy variations, the average Affordable PBSA in the London case studies is 30.53%.
- 5.22. The location of PBSA in London is loosely related to the Higher Education Institutes but often requires students to commute. This is primarily due to lots of the institutions being located in central London where land is expensive and not readily available for development. In areas like Stratford where land is cheaper and more development sites are available, PBSA has been successfully co-located with the new UCL East Campus.
- 5.23. As can be seen in the case study table, most schemes across all the Boroughs assessed do provide a policy compliant level of affordable PBSA. There is no obvious correlation between the location the PBSA is provided in and the level of Affordable PBSA that can be provided. There are a multitude of factors that impact the percentage of affordable that is viable and there can be negotiation on other items in S106 Agreements to allow for a policy compliant level of affordable to be provided. There is also sometimes negotiation on the level of density and building heights which can sometimes be increased to allow a policy compliant level of affordable to be delivered.
- 5.24. It should be noted that Hillingdon Council's planning register did not facilitate specific searches for student accommodation so was excluded, and no PBSA applications were identified within the Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, or Kensington and Chelsea, between 1 April 2021 and 1 April 2026.

Bristol City Council (BCC)

Bristol Local Plan: Publication version November 2023 (currently Examination stage)

- 5.25. Draft Policy H7 (Managing the development of purpose-built student accommodation) outlines:
- “Affordable student housing Development in all locations will be expected to include an appropriate proportion of affordable student housing to meet identified need. Bed spaces provided as affordable student housing should be allocated by the relevant higher education provider to students it considers most in need of the accommodation. Where all bed spaces within a development are provided as affordable student housing proposals will not be expected to have the support of the relevant higher education provider.”*

accommodation across the whole of London. However, this needs to be balanced with making sure we have enough sites for other types of homes, including affordable and family homes. Whilst London as a whole has a recognised need for more student bed spaces, we have one of the largest provisions of student homes in London.”

⁴ The Camden Local Plan allows for affordable C3 to be provided instead of Affordable PBSA. It does not prioritise affordable C3 like the Southwark Local Plan but does state “where proposed student housing is not robustly secured as student housing that provides accommodation affordable to the student body in accordance with criterion (g), the Council will expect the development to provide an appropriate amount of affordable housing for general needs having regard to Policy H4 Maximising the supply of affordable housing.”

- 5.26. Draft Policy H7 aims to ensure that purpose-built student accommodation developments contribute to the city's overall housing needs while mitigating potential negative impacts on existing communities.
- 5.27. The supporting text states:
- "To ensure accommodation is affordable to all, the policy seeks a proportion (at least 35%) of bed spaces within the development as affordable. Affordable student housing is defined as a bed space within the development that is provided at a rental cost for the academic year equal to or below 50 per cent of the maximum income that a new full time-student living away from home could receive from the Government's Maintenance Loan (or any replacement state funding mechanism) for living costs for that academic year. Identified need could include students receiving the full Maintenance Loan or otherwise determined by the universities and agreed with Bristol City Council."*
- 5.28. The policy requires that affordable units be allocated by the relevant HEIs (University of Bristol or UWE) either through direct operation of the accommodation or via a nomination agreement with the accommodation provider. Monitoring would likely involve verifying the existence and adherence to these agreements.

Managing the Development of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation topic paper (April 2024)

- 5.29. In April 2024, Bristol City Council (BCC) issued a discussion paper on PBSA development management, in conjunction with the proposed Bristol Local Plan Policy H7. While encompassing various student housing aspects, the paper notably addresses the methods and rationale for securing affordable student accommodation.

Evidence Base

- 5.30. A 2021 data collection revealed that average annual student rental costs in Bristol constituted a substantial proportion (86% in 2021/22, rising to 92% in 2023/24) of the maximum government-funded Maintenance Loan, thereby indicating significant affordability challenges for students. This data encompassed rental costs for University-provided accommodation, private sector accommodation, and shared housing arrangements.
- 5.31. A Bristol City Council Local Plan Viability Assessment (BNP Paribas Real Estate, 2023) demonstrated that a 35% affordable housing provision within new PBSA developments would remain financially viable – which set the basis for the emerging Local Plan policy.

Defining Affordability

- 5.32. The Bristol policy defines affordable student housing as a bed space rented at a cost for the academic year at or below 50% of the maximum Maintenance Loan for living costs a full-time student living away from home could receive. The full Maintenance Loan is used as a proxy for a student's likely income.
- 5.33. The topic paper notes that spending no more than 50% of income on essential living expenses such as housing costs and bills is a general rule of thumb. It goes on to state:
- "An important consideration when assessing expenditure on student accommodation is the shorter period of occupation of student accommodation compared to the general population. As students will only occupy their accommodation for a few years they may be able to spend a higher proportion of their income on accommodation than an individual renting over the longer term. PBSA also differs from conventional market rental by including charges for utilities and other service costs within the rental agreement. Full-time students will also usually be exempt from council tax. For these reasons a greater proportion of a student's income may be available for rental costs than would be the case for the general population. On this basis student housing has been defined as*

affordable when set at a maximum of 50% of total income i.e. equal to or below 50% of the full Maintenance Loan.”

5.34. This definition is supported by the Bristol Student Union and the National Union of Students.

Monitoring Mechanisms

5.35. The primary mechanism would be the review of planning applications for new PBSA developments. The application process would require developers to demonstrate how they will meet the 35% affordable housing requirement.

Geography

5.36. The policy supports and directs PBSA to specific locations within Bristol, these being the University of Bristol residential sites; five identified growth and regeneration areas; areas where support for PBSA by local communities can be demonstrated. For PBSA in any other areas, the policy restricts PBSA to being part of mixed-use developments.

Case Studies

Application Ref	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
25/14807/F	0%	Pending determination	Student Need Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/04568/F	0%	Approved	No justification report submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/05143/F	0%	Approved on 12.09.25	Student Need Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/04568/F	0%	Approved on 04.09.25	Demand for PBSA outlined in the Planning Statement	Economic Assessment submitted
23/01301/F	0%	Approved on 24.07.24	Demand for PBSA outlined in the Planning Statement	Economic Assessment submitted
24/01927/F	0%	Approved on 13.06.25	Student Demand Study submitted	No viability assessment submitted
23/01583/F	0%	Approved on 07.06.24	Student Need Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
25/12494/F	0%	Pending determination	Student Need Assessment submitted	Economic Statement submitted
24/03137/F	0%	Pending determination	PBSA Demand and Needs Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/03528/F	0%	Pending determination	Demand Needs Assessment	No viability assessment submitted

Application Ref	% Affordable	Status	Need Justification	Viability
25/10491/F	0%	Approved on 30.03.26	Demand and Supply Report submitted	No viability assessment submitted
25/11778/F	0%	Pending determination	Student Need Assessment submitted	Economic Statement submitted
25/12551/F	0%	Pending determination	Demand for PBSA outlined in the Planning Statement	No viability assessment submitted
25/14807/F	0%	Pending determination	Student Need Assessment submitted	Economic Impact Assessment submitted
26/10185/P	0%	Pending determination	Demand for PBSA outlined in the Planning Statement	Economic Statement submitted
24/05143/F	0%	Approved on 12.09.25	Student Need Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/04568/F	0%	Approved on 04.09.25	Demand for PBSA outlined in the Planning Statement	Economic Assessment submitted
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24/02498/F	0%	Approved on 28.03.25	Student Need Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/03137/F	0%	Pending determination	PBSA Demand and Needs Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted
24/03528/F	0%	Pending determination	Demand Needs Assessment	No viability assessment submitted
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24/03137/F	0%	Pending determination	PBSA Demand and Needs Assessment submitted	No viability assessment submitted

Average % Affordable Beds: 0%

- 5.37. It was observed that, over the period from 1 April 2021 to 1 April 2026, Bristol's average affordable PBSA provision in these locations stood at 0%.
- 5.38. We believe this absence of affordable provision is linked to the fact that the city's new Local Plan is not yet adopted – and is currently undergoing Examination.
- 5.39. UWE is a campus university and therefore most PBSA associated with it is in close proximity. For the University of Bristol, it was observed that most PBSA was located in key regeneration areas such as the Temple Quarter, Bedminster, and the Whitehouse Street Enterprise Zone. While these are largely situated in the southern and southeastern parts of Bristol Centre, they are considered to be in close proximity to university facilities when accounting for the city's transport links.

6. Consultation Feedback

6.1. Deloitte consulted with representatives from the Estates Teams at UoM and Man Met in February 2026. The consultation sought to gather insights into:

- Projected PBSA needs.
- Definition of affordable PBSA in Manchester, potentially expanding on the London standard (55% of maximum student maintenance loan).
- Existing PBSA rental levels, demand, and price point analysis.
- Current pipeline of delivery on their sites.

6.2. A summary of the consultations is set out below.

UoM

PBSA Need and Planning

6.3. UoM believes the draft policy lacks clarity on the definition of need for additional student accommodation and how it will be used in planning decisions. UoM agree that need is an important factor in affordability as an undersupply increases rental levels. Therefore the policy position on need should be considered alongside affordability.

6.4. While acknowledging past undersupply and rising rents, UoM stressed the importance of striking a balance to avoid an oversupply of the wrong type and wrongly priced bedrooms, which could lead to voids. At this stage, ultimately UoM is seeking more PBSA development so that supply at least meets identified demand but acknowledges that this can be a difficult balance as void and vacancy will have its own challenges in the city centre.

6.5. UoM advocates for the 'Need Case' to be set out by MCC, rather than on a case-by-case basis with each application. UoM suggested a five-year plan produced by MCC in conjunction with UoM and Man Met, which sets out the projected need, taking in to account pipeline, and occupancy rates across existing PBSA. In addition to UoM and Man Met, all HE housing demand across GM should be considered. This should be reviewed annually by MCC in conjunction with the HE institutions, to take into account student intake numbers and characteristics, associated accommodation needs, and the availability of PBSA taking into account annual delivery levels. The review should include analysis of emerging trends impacting student demand (type/location/cost etc.) This would provide a consistent, robust benchmark for assessing development proposals.

6.6. Acknowledging that the proactive approach may be resource heavy. UoM agreed that the case-by-case approach of a developer setting out the need case would be workable as MCC would still be assessing each case so would have oversight; and there is still a requirement for an agreement with a HE institution. UoM agreed however that it would be advisable for each need case to follow the same methodology and advocating a comparison method of beds per students.

6.7. UoM is willing to provide up-to-date student numbers and analysis of need annually to support this evidence base.

Affordability of PBSA

- 6.8. UoM strongly welcomes the inclusion of an affordable provision clause but expressed concern that 80% of the market rate may not constitute truly affordable accommodation.
- 6.9. UoM highlighted the risk that providing a discount on 20% of beds could drive up rents in the remaining 80% of a development, as developers seek to maintain profitability.
- 6.10. UoM suggested using caution when considering the National Union of Students (NUS) definition of 55% of the maximum student maintenance loan as a reference point for affordability, noting the significant gap between this and current market rates, which could lead to further rent displacement. Ultimately it was agreed that a mid-level point between the 80% of market rate and 55% of student maintenance grant would be suitable.
- 6.11. UoM pointed out that the maintenance loan has not historically kept pace with inflation, exacerbating the affordability gap.
- 6.12. UoM actively provides affordable accommodation through its older stock (shared bathrooms being the lowest price point) and has introduced a means-tested accommodation bursary to assist students; it is focussed on those most in need (currently capped at 150 students) and they will review its effectiveness after a few years. UoM noted that the most disadvantaged can seek support via grants etc., but that the 'squeezed middle' who are not eligible for such support also struggle with affordability.

Allocation of Affordable Beds

- 6.13. The policy currently lacks guidance on how affordable bed spaces would be allocated to students.
- 6.14. UoM stated that for universities to effectively allocate affordable beds in private PBSA, formal nominations agreements are essential. Without such agreements, it would be too onerous for universities to manage the means-testing and allocation of the affordable units for direct-let PBSA . Even with nomination agreements there is still a question as to whether the HEs would have enough resource to take on this allocation.
- 6.15. While the ideal is to channel the most disadvantaged students into affordable rooms, UoM acknowledges that a more pragmatic approach (that is not dependent on universities allocating the rooms) would be to simply increase the overall supply of affordable rooms, even if not perfectly targeted (due to resource constraints), as their existence alone would benefit students.

Accommodation Type and Rental Levels

- 6.16. UoM expresses concern over the increase in expensive studio apartments (often exceeding £300/week) in new PBSA developments, which are largely out of reach for most students and contribute to the affordability challenge.
- 6.17. UoM seeks to influence the development of more affordable en-suite accommodation, as opposed to further studio provision.
- 6.18. UoM notes that PBSA contract lengths have historically been 43-44 weeks but recently increased to 51 weeks due to demand, significantly impacting annual costs. While recent supply increases have led to shorter contracts, PBSA rents remain much higher than UoM's.
- 6.19. UoM suggests exploring innovation in accommodation types to drive down build costs and rents, acknowledging that UoM itself has struggled to innovate in building cheaper, non-en-suite accommodation due to high student demand for en-suite rooms and limited rent differentials.

Collaboration and Impact

- 6.20. UoM is keen to collaborate with MCC and other HE institutions to address these challenges, including potentially attending workshop(s) with developers to explore innovative, affordable solutions.

Socio-Economic Data

- 6.21. The following data relates to UoM home undergraduates and gives a clear indication of the financial pressure that a proportion of its student population is under. It supports the need for the provision of affordable PBSA in Manchester.

Manchester Bursary

- 6.22. 24% of UoM's undergraduate home students are in receipt of the Manchester Bursary which is issued by UoM on the basis of the household income declared by students to their regional finance provider when they apply for student loans for undergraduate study. Payments are £2,600 per academic year if household income is under £31,000 and £1,300 if under £43,000K. 21% of home undergraduate students (c 4,500) came from households with less than £31,000 income.

Home Postcode data - Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

- 6.23. The postcodes of new home undergraduate students show the distribution over IMD quintiles. IMD places postcodes into quintiles – quintile 1 = most deprived > quintile 5 = less deprived. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation> [gov.uk])

- 6.24. In 2024-25 and 2025-26, Q1 and Q2 students (e.g. students from government definition high deprivation areas) have made up 35% of UoM's new home intake.

Home Postcode data - Acorn

- 6.25. UoM uses an Acorn tool (<https://acorn.caci.co.uk/what-is-acorn/> [acorn.caci.co.uk]) which places postcodes into categories numbered 1 to 7. Postcodes in categories 5 and 6 are the categories UoM uses to identify students. They represent "Urban Adversity: Areas with the highest levels of deprivation, characterized by low incomes, social renting, and high unemployment" and "Low Income Living: Individuals and families in lower-income brackets, often facing financial challenges and living in rented or social housing".

- 6.26. UoM students from categories 5 and 6 make up 20.56% of the Home UG student body this academic year. The figure for 2024/25 was 20.32%.

Future Provision

- 6.27. The University of Manchester initially submitted the Outline Planning Permission (138126/OO/2023), which was granted in January 2024. Subsequently, the university entered into a Joint Venture partnership with the Viridis Consortium, comprising Equitix, GRAHAM, and Derwent FM. Together, the JV submitted the Reserved Matters Application (ref. 142387/MO/2025), which received consent from MCC in September 2025. The project involves the phased demolition of existing buildings and the development of up to 3,300 new PBSA bedrooms, replacing existing 1960s halls.

Man Met

PBSA Need and Planning

- 6.28. Man Met has evolved from a regional to a national university with ambitions for international growth. Intake targets have also increased year on year, leading to a significant increase in demand

for student accommodation year-on-year (from increased student numbers and recruiting more students living outside of commuting distance of Manchester).

- 6.29. Historically, the supply of PBSA has not kept pace with the growth of Man Met and UoM.
- 6.30. Post-COVID, an initial undersupply led to both Man Met and UoM housing students in other cities (Liverpool, Preston, Huddersfield). However, Man Met now perceives a more balanced market, leading them to take fewer rooms through nominations agreements, confident the market can meet student need within the city.
- 6.31. Man Met conducts its own need assessments and is willing to supply this data annually to MCC for a published monitoring report. They forecast student numbers to 2030 (soft forecast, hardened annually) and know that approximately 50% of their home undergraduate students seek beds annually.
- 6.32. Man Met cautions against oversupply, citing examples like Preston with 30-40% occupancy rates, which can lead to voids and 'flipping' of sites to other uses.

Affordability of PBSA

- 6.33. Man Met notes the example of London which has seen a large drop in deliverability due to the affordability clause, suggesting it can hinder development.
- 6.34. While welcoming the inclusion of an affordability clause, which Man Met initially based on the rents in its premium Archway Hall, Man Met questions if a 20% discount on 20% of beds truly makes accommodation affordable. A benchmark closer to 70% of the maintenance loan would make rents more affordable, but it would be students in other rooms subsidising the rents of those in the affordable rooms, and this has to be factored into the whole affordability debate.
- 6.35. Man Met highlights that the student maintenance grant has not kept pace with inflation, exacerbating affordability challenges.

Allocation of Affordable Beds

- 6.36. Man Met does not allocate beds but allows students to choose. They acknowledge the challenge this presents in ensuring those most in need get affordable accommodation. They have tried to stagger the release of beds to address this, but it is still difficult to ensure the most affordable rooms go to the most deserving students.
- 6.37. Man Met expresses significant concerns about allocating affordable beds and noted that current systems rely on a University self-allocating beds (and assuming the students want these rooms because they are on a full maintenance grant when they may want other accommodation). Feedback from the private sector makes it clear they do not have the means to effectively identify students most deserving of affordable rooms.
- 6.38. Man Met suggests that the current model creates a polarising effect, where market-rate rooms pay a premium to subsidise affordable rooms, and developers have indicated this model is not working in London. As mentioned earlier, it is students living in the market rate rooms, often paying significantly more rent for exactly the same room as those designated affordable. The higher the % of affordable rooms (or the lower the affordable rent), the more the students in market rate rooms are having to pay to subsidise the affordable rents, taking their rents beyond market rates for that city.

Accommodation Type and Rental Levels

- 6.39. Students prefer to be as close as possible to the university. While en-suite rooms are heavily preferred, students will opt for non-en-suite University managed rooms close to campus in many cases than en-suite private halls at distance.
- 6.40. Man Met's experience with Archway Hall (492 en-suite beds, most expensive offer) selling out 13 times faster than Cambridge Hall (older stock) suggests that students are willing to pay for higher-quality, en-suite accommodation, within reason. Archway was c £2500 pa more expensive than rooms in Cambridge hall
- 6.41. Man Met is content with 44-week contracts as its core offer for UG students. They note that operators moved from 42-44 weeks c 6-7 years ago to 51-week contracts based on the substantial demand from post-graduate (international) students being recruited at UoM and the undersupply of PBSA in Manchester, with supply not keeping up with demand. With post-graduate (international) recruitment softening and an increasing supply, many providers are now shifting back to 44 weeks or less contract lengths. The ability for the Manchester Universities to control contract lengths is more feasible in a balanced or oversupplied market.
- 6.42. Man Met's preference is to consider the overall annual rent and which student group the PBSA is being marketed to, to determine which lever is best applied. For undergraduate home (first year) students, they do not want contracts longer than 44-week, continuing and post-graduate students will accept longer contract lengths, so rental discount can be more attractive.

Socio-Economic Data

- 6.43. Man Met highlights that 50% of its students come from the highest indices of multiple deprivation, indicating significant financial pressure on a large proportion of its student body.
- 6.44. Man Met notes that students in the middle (whose parents are assumed to pay but may not contribute) are often the most financially challenged but often not as easy to identify as in hardship (for the purposes of allocation of affordable rooms at the start of an academic year) those in receipt of a full maintenance grant.

Collaboration and Industry Standards

- 6.45. Man Met suggests the need for a national standard for affordability, led by universities, rather than relying on existing benchmarks like NUS or the London model.
- 6.46. Man Met stresses the importance of a viability caveat in policy to ensure flexibility and prevent development from being halted.
- 6.47. Man Met is keen to collaborate with MCC and other HE institutions to address these challenges, including potentially holding workshops with developers to explore solutions.

Future Provision

- 6.48. Man Met is currently undertaking a significant £286m redevelopment of its Cambridge Halls student village in a joint venture between Man Met and Unite Students. Unite Students will be responsible for building and operating the new accommodation entirely on behalf of Man Met, exclusively for their students. The two-phase project, featuring 30 and 24-storey towers, will deliver 2,302 beds, comprising a mix of studios and cluster apartments. This scheme will therefore deliver a net increase of approximately 1,537 beds, providing a solution for the chronic shortage of university-owned and nominated accommodation.
- 6.49. Demolition of existing structures commenced in early 2026, with Phase 1 (1,101 beds) expected by the 2029-30 academic year and Phase 2 (1,201 beds) by 2030-31, substantially increasing the University's accommodation capacity.

7. Research Findings

7.1. This chapter summarises the key findings from chapters four to six, grouped thematically.

Need for Genuinely Affordable PBSA in Manchester

7.2. The research highlights a need for genuinely affordable PBSA in Manchester. The research shows this is being driven by several interconnected factors:

- **Growing Student Population and Unmet Demand:** Manchester's student population grew by 22% between 2014/15 and 2024/25. Despite this growth rate being slower than some comparable cities like London and Bristol, it represents a considerable increase in absolute student numbers, directly translating to increased demand for accommodation. The current student-to-bed ratio of 1.7 signifies unmet demand, indicating that the supply of PBSA beds does not fully meet the student population's needs. This imbalance creates upward pressure on rental prices, making PBSA less affordable.
- **Socio-economic:** A proportion of students in Manchester's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are from low-income backgrounds, with an average of 16% eligible for Free School Meals. Both UoM and Man Met also highlighted the financial struggles of students just above the FSM threshold who do not qualify for bursaries. This demographic is particularly vulnerable to high rental costs, underscoring the critical need for lower-cost alternatives. Man Met further emphasised that 50% of its students come from the highest indices of multiple deprivation, reinforcing the severe financial pressures faced by a large segment of the student body.
- **International Student Demand:** Manchester's substantial international student population (22,160) is a key driver of demand for PBSA. International students often have fewer local housing options and frequently seek high-quality, purpose-built accommodation, which can contribute to higher market rates (Gabert-Doyon & Georgina Quach, 2026).
- **Stagnant Maintenance Loans:** Both UoM and Man Met consistently raised concerns that student maintenance loans have not kept pace with inflation, exacerbating the affordability crisis. This means that even with discounts, many students will continue to struggle, placing pressure on universities and the city to find more comprehensive solutions.

Definition of Affordability

7.3. The current draft Policy H5's definition of affordable PBSA (80% of market rate) and its 20% provision target diverge from what is being implemented elsewhere in the country. They both therefore require further interrogation and testing. The key reasons for this are:

- **Need to Test Current Affordability Definition:** UoM and Man Met believe that 80% of the market rate is insufficient for genuine affordability. This is supported by the comparative analysis, where London defines affordability at 55% of the maximum student maintenance loan, and Bristol at an even more stringent 50%. These benchmarks are student-income-centric, directly linking affordability to what students can realistically afford, rather than a discount on an already high market rate.
- **Higher Provision Targets in Other Cities:** London and Bristol both aim for higher affordable PBSA provision targets (35-50%) compared to Manchester's proposed 20%. A balance must be struck between aspirational policy and ensuring over ambitious targets do not stifle development of PBSA. To check whether 20% is the correct amount a more robust evidence base needs to be developed with scenario testing by a viability consultant.

- **Risk of Rent Displacement:** Both UoM and Man Met warned of the potential for rent displacement. If developers are required to offer discounts on a percentage of beds (e.g., 20%), they may compensate by increasing rents on the remaining market-rate beds to maintain profitability. This could inadvertently worsen overall market affordability for the majority of students, making the policy counterproductive. Man Met described this as a "polarising effect" where market-rate rooms subsidise affordable ones, potentially pushing market rents beyond sustainable levels.
- **Variance in Recent Provision:** A review of recent PBSA planning permissions in Manchester has shown that affordable student accommodation provision varies significantly across developments. Some schemes offer 0% whilst others commit to discounted beds, typically ranging from 15% to over 20% of units, or financial contributions.
- **Geography:** Both London and Bristol have a range of geographies in which PBSA is provided. The London example in particular is not comparable to Manchester where the majority of PBSA is provided within a specific area of the city centre, focused around the Oxford Road Corridor close to the HEIs. The research has highlighted that the geographical nuances of each city necessitate location requirements for PBSA should be decided on a case by case basis. When deciding location requirements, topics such as land prices, historic urban grain and available development land should be considered.

Accommodation Types and Contract Lengths

7.4. The type of accommodation and contract lengths offered impact overall affordability. This has an impact on viability and needs viability testing. The key issues the research has highlighted are:

- **Proliferation of Expensive Studios:** UoM expressed strong concern over the proliferation of expensive studio apartments (often exceeding £300/week), which are largely out of reach for most students. London's policy guidance directly addresses this by emphasising cluster flats over studios to enhance affordability.
- **Impact of Longer Contracts:** Both universities highlighted that longer contract lengths (e.g., 51 weeks, driven by past undersupply and international postgraduate demand) increase annual costs, making accommodation less affordable in real terms. Man Met's preference for 44-week contracts for undergraduate students, and the observed shift back to shorter lengths by some providers, indicates a positive trend towards better alignment with student academic calendars and financial capacities.
- **Student Preferences and Value:** While students show a willingness to pay for higher-quality, en-suite accommodation (as seen with Man Met's Archway Hall), they will also opt for more affordable, non-en-suite university-managed rooms if they are close to campus. This suggests a nuanced demand for diverse accommodation types where location and overall value can sometimes outweigh the desire for premium amenities. Whilst beyond the direct scope of this report, this finding suggests that the emerging policy in Manchester should be descriptive about location as well as level of affordable provision and type of accommodation.

Allocation Mechanisms

7.5. Feedback from the HEIs and research into the case studies in London have highlighted the need for clear processes, set out in policy, for allocating affordable beds and a strategic approach to PBSA development. The key findings are:

- **Challenges in Allocation:** Both UoM and Man Met highlighted the practical difficulties in allocating affordable beds to those most in need. A formal nomination agreements between developers/providers and HEIs, similar to those required by the London Plan, would ensure affordable beds reach vulnerable students. Without such agreements, universities face an onerous task of means-testing and allocation, potentially leading to inefficient targeting or in

the private sector beds being provided on a first come first served basis. Even with a formal nomination agreement, HEIs may not have the capacity to allocate rooms – there may be a need for financial obligations secured through S106 Agreements to help fund the administrative work associated with formal nomination agreements.

- **Need for Strategic Planning:** UoM advocates for a clear, annually reviewed five-year plan for PBSA development, developed in conjunction with the City Council and HEIs. This would provide a consistent, robust benchmark for assessing development proposals and ensure supply meets demand and affordability is managed. Man Met also conducts its own need assessments and is willing to supply this data annually to MCC. This proactive, evidence-based planning is crucial to avoid both undersupply (which drives up rents) and oversupply of the wrong type/price of bedrooms.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Gaps:** The experience in London, where policy targets do not always translate into delivered affordable units, underscores the need for robust monitoring. This allows policy makers to pivot if needed and ensure policy can respond to changing market conditions.

Collaboration

7.6. Both UoM and Man Met expressed a strong willingness to collaborate with MCC and other stakeholders to address these challenges. This collaborative spirit presents a valuable opportunity to:

- **Co-create Effective Policy:** Develop more effective, implementable, and genuinely affordable PBSA policies through shared expertise and resources.
- **Explore Innovative Solutions:** Hold workshops with developers to explore innovative, affordable solutions that balance commercial viability with student needs.
- **Strengthen Evidence Base:** Contribute up-to-date student numbers and analysis of need annually to support a robust evidence base for planning decisions.
- **Influence Industry Standards:** Man Met's suggestion for a national standard for affordability, led by universities, indicates a desire for a more consistent and effective approach across the sector.

Summary

7.7. In conclusion, while Manchester's student accommodation market may appear less competitive than some counterparts based on certain metrics, the absolute growth in student numbers, the demand from international students, and the proportion of students from low-income backgrounds collectively create a need for policy intervention. The insights from London and Bristol, coupled with the detailed feedback from UoM and Man Met, suggest that Manchester's draft Policy H5 requires scenario testing by a viability consultant to assess and potentially refine its definition of affordability, provision targets, allocation mechanisms, and wording on type of accommodation / length of contract. This will ensure the policy evidence base is robust and maximises the probability of it effectively addressing the student affordability issues.

8. Recommended Next Steps

- 8.1. Drawing on market dynamics, comparative precedents, and direct feedback from UoM and Man Met, the following steps are recommended to ensure Policy H5 effectively addresses student affordability.
- 8.2. The recommendations have been discussed and refined after the following meetings:
- 9 April 2026 – Meeting with MCC Planning to align with broader MCC Planning Strategy.
 - 17 April 2026 - Meeting with MCC Planning Policy Team and a viability consultant (3 Dragons) appointed by MCC, to discuss the viability testing that is required to test the recommendations.

1. Refine the Definition of Affordable PBSA

- 8.3. **Action:** Re-evaluate the current definition of affordable rent (80% of market rate) in draft Policy H5.
- 8.4. **Rationale:** UoM and Man Met’s concerns and the practices in London and Bristol (defining affordability as 50-55% of the maximum student maintenance loan) suggest that 80% of market rate is unlikely to be genuinely affordable for a significant proportion of students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. It does however need to be carefully balanced to ensure a polarising effect is not created, whereby the market price PBSA is significantly increased. Manchester has location specific affordability issues that do not get considered if the historic 50-55% definition is applied, which has not been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced.
- 8.5. **Recommendation:** Conduct viability analysis to establish a Manchester-specific affordability benchmark, potentially aligning with a percentage of the maximum student maintenance loan, while considering local market conditions and student income data. This should aim for a definition that ensures genuine accessibility for students with limited financial means. The three options that should be explored initially are:
- 80% of market rate (current option – unlikely to be affordable but this should be validated)
 - 70% of maximum maintenance grant (Man Met suggestion based on its own experience with Man Met Halls of Residence)
 - 55% of maximum maintenance grant (London and NUS standard)
- 8.6. A suggested matrix of options to be tested by a viability consultant is provided at the end of this chapter.

2. Confirm the Affordable Provision Target

- 8.7. **Action:** Validate the proposed 20% affordable bed spaces target in draft Policy H5.
- 8.8. **Rationale:** Compared to London and Bristol's targets of 35-50%, Manchester's 20% appears low given the identified unmet demand and the proportion of students from low-income backgrounds. In London, whilst most developments are meeting policy requirements, these are often not located in close proximity to Higher Education Institutions and there remains a large overall shortage of both market rate PBSA and affordable PBSA. In Bristol, PBSA developments continue to provide 0% affordable provision despite the draft policy being well progressed and currently under

examination. The situation across UK cities is also worsening due to recent increases in build costs, fire safety requirements and inflation.

- 8.9. The 2023 Report to the Economy Scrutiny Committee and Executive started to explore the rate, considering 35% but further analysis of alternative options is required to ensure draft Policy H5 is robust. Further viability analysis can help validate if 20% is the correct quantum for the market in Manchester. A summary of recent schemes in Manchester is included at Appendix C which shows provision of affordable student accommodation in Manchester is currently inconsistent, ranging from 0% to over 20% discounted beds or financial contributions. The wide range of provision highlights the need for a more prescriptive policy.
- 8.10. **Recommendation:** This can be via commissioning of a viability assessment, similar to Bristol's, to determine if the 20% target for affordable provision is appropriate for Manchester or if a higher target of 30% (in line with the emerging target for Affordable Housing could be viable). If viability analysis finds neither are viable, an alternative solution is to maintain the current arrangement where it is decided on a case-by-case basis dependent on a Viability Statement submitted with each application. A policy viability assessment could also potentially consider the long-term benefits of increased affordability for the city's student population and wider housing market.
- 8.11. A suggested matrix of options to be tested by a viability consultant is provided at the end of this chapter.

3. Develop Clear Mechanisms for Allocation and Nomination

- 8.12. **Action:** Integrate an explicit requirement on the allocation of affordable beds into Policy H5.
- 8.13. **Rationale:** UoM highlighted the need for formal nomination agreements between developers/providers and HEIs to ensure affordable beds reach the students most in need, such as the nomination agreements required by the London Plan. Without such mechanisms, the affordable bed spaces may not go to those who need them most. There is a risk that any allocation process could be onerous for universities and inefficient in targeting vulnerable students so the mechanics will need to be tested with both HEIs (including how this is secured, for example through a S106 obligation).
- 8.14. **Recommendation:** Include a policy hook requiring a nomination agreement to allocate affordable beds. Then hold a workshop with MCC and the HEIs to discuss the mechanics of formal nomination agreements (including how this might be secured through S106 Agreements and whether any financial contributions would be required to implement and track the nomination agreements). Once agreed, publish supplementary guidance so developers have a clear understanding of how nomination agreements must be completed for planning applications.

4. Prioritise Appropriate Accommodation Types and Contract Lengths

- 8.15. **Action:** Introduce policy guidance to favour more affordable accommodation types and allow alternative uses over summer months if shorter contract lengths are provided for students.
- 8.16. **Rationale:** UoM and Man Met expressed strong concern over the proliferation of expensive studio apartments and the impact of longer (e.g., 51-week) contracts on annual costs. Other cities, like London, emphasise cluster flats for affordability. Whilst helpful as guidance, it is not considered necessary to mandate this in policy as would be overly restrictive when considered in the context of the other new policy requirements.
- 8.17. **Recommendation:** Encourage and incentivise the development of more cost-effective options, such as cluster flats and affordable en-suite rooms through the supporting text for the policy. MCC should also seek to introduce guidance on use of PBSA over the summer months to avoid future debates such as that in the Upper Brook Street application (ref. 126402/FO/2020) – this could be resolved by adding a requirement for a Leasing Strategy in the Validation List. Any such guidance

could promote more flexible or shorter contract lengths (e.g. 38 – 42 weeks) that better align with student academic calendars and financial capacities – this can be offset by specifying that where shorter contract lengths are provided developers are permitted to use the PBSA for alternative purposes (such as short term accommodation / serviced apartments) during the summer months.

5. Strengthen the Evidence Base for the Need Case

- 8.18. **Action:** Publish a robust, annually reviewed five-year strategic plan for PBSA development in Manchester with input from UoM and Man Met.
- 8.19. **Rationale:** Ensuring the need case is demonstrated is crucial to ensuring a balanced market across all use classes. Engagement with the HEIs demonstrated the need to consider whether a proactive planning approach is essential to avoid an undersupply, which impacts overall affordability; or an oversupply of the wrong type/price of bedrooms. Publishing the information externally will avoid Need Assessments being submitted on a case-by-case basis with planning applications. Need assessments are usually produced by consultants on behalf of the applicant. As seen in other cities, the content of each therefore varies by application and requires verification each time.
- 8.20. **Recommendation:** Investigate the mechanics of externally publishing the PBSA Monitoring Report that is currently produced annually by MCC (but not published externally) and ensure the HEIs fully contribute to this. The 2023 Executive Report established an approximate PBSA pipeline on sites, some of which are owned by the Universities (e.g. Cambridge Halls by Man Met and Owens Park / Owens Park by UoM). Further engagement would allow MCC to understand the latest intentions of UoM and Man Met for developing out in-house PBSA; along with their overall need case.

6. Implement Robust Monitoring and Evaluation

- 8.21. **Action:** Develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring framework for affordable PBSA.
- 8.22. **Rationale:** The experience in London highlights that policy targets do not always translate into delivered affordable units, often due to viability challenges. Insufficient monitoring can mean this goes unchecked, and policy is not able to be amended in a timely and effective manner, or viability assumptions checked, in a way that facilitates the most effective translation of policy objectives into measurable outcomes. This monitoring evidence is then able to feed into strategic need plan updates and/or assessment of need on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.23. **Recommendation:** Consider whether a requirement for monitoring reports or a monitoring contribution should be secured through S106 agreements for PBSA developments. MCC should also establish clear Key Performance Indicators to track:
- The actual number and percentage of affordable beds delivered.
 - The rental costs of both affordable and market-rate PBSA.
 - The effectiveness of allocation mechanisms.
 - The types of accommodation being delivered.
 - The viability assumptions used in development proposals.
 - Regularly publish monitoring reports to ensure transparency and accountability.

Suggested Scenarios for Viability Consultant to Test

- 8.24. Following discussion with MCC we suggest testing the 6 scenarios set out below, which draw together recommendations 1 and 2.

	80% of Market Rate	70% of Maximum Maintenance Grant	55% of Maximum Maintenance Grant
20% Affordable	Scenario 1	Scenario 3	Scenario 5
30% Affordable	Scenario 2	Scenario 4	Scenario 6

8.25. Through discussions with MCC and the appointed viability consultant, the below list of assumptions has been agreed for all scenarios:

- Two scenarios for number of bed spaces, to align with the viability consultant's existing scenarios
- 50% studios / 50% clusters
- City centre land value
- Consistent contract length
- Consistent rental value
- A value per unit for s.106 nominations process
- Maintenance Grant figures obtainable from official Gov.UK Student Finance Calculator:
[Check how much student finance you could get - GOV.UK](#)

Additional Wider Recommendation: Foster Continued Collaboration

- 8.26. Not strictly related to affordability, but the below potential wider recommendation has emerged.
- 8.27. **Action:** Maintain and deepen the collaborative dialogue with UoM, Man Met, and other key stakeholders, such as PBSA providers, as work progresses on the draft PBSA Policy and through to implementation.
- 8.28. **Rationale:** UoM and Man Met's willingness to collaborate presents a valuable opportunity to co-create a more fully effective and implementable PBSA Policy; as well as consider student requirements going forward, and potential product evolution.
- 8.29. **Recommendation:** Organise a workshop or forum involving MCC, HEIs, and PBSA developers to discuss challenges, share best practices, and explore innovative solutions for delivering genuinely affordable student accommodation in Manchester. Use the evidence collected during this session to inform the draft PBSA Policy; implementation and ongoing review.

Appendix A – Draft Policy H5

Policy H 5

Purpose Built Student Accommodation

The provision of new Purpose Built Student Accommodation will be supported where the development satisfies the criteria below. Priority will be given to schemes which are part of the universities' redevelopment plans or which are being progressed in partnership with the universities, and which clearly meet Manchester City Council's regeneration priorities.

- Sites should be in close proximity to the University campuses;
- High density developments should be sited in locations where this is compatible with existing developments and initiatives, and where retail facilities are within walking distance;
- Proposals that can demonstrate a positive regeneration impact in their own right will be given preference over other schemes. This can be demonstrated for example through impact assessments on district centres and the wider area. Proposals should contribute to providing a mix of uses and support district and local centres, guided by relevant Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and other masterplans. Student accommodation should closely integrate with existing neighbourhoods to contribute in a positive way to their vibrancy without increasing pressure on existing neighbourhood services to the detriment of existing residents;
- Proposals should be designed to be safe and secure for their users. Consideration needs to be given to how proposed developments could assist in improving the safety of the surrounding area in terms of increased informal surveillance or other measures to contribute to crime prevention;
- Consideration should be given to the design and layout of the student accommodation and siting of individual uses within the overall development in relation to adjacent neighbouring uses;
- Where appropriate, proposals should contribute to the re-use of Listed Buildings and other buildings with a particular heritage value;
- Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for additional student accommodation or that they have entered into a formal agreement with a University, or another provider of higher education, for the supply of all or the majority of the bedspaces;
- Consideration should be given to provision and management of waste disposal facilities, that will ensure that waste is disposed of in accordance with the waste hierarchy;
- At least 20%* of all student bedspaces should be made available at an affordable rent and the same conditions as those outlined in Policy H 2 Affordable Housing will apply for developers claiming an exemption to this requirement. Affordable student housing is assumed to be 80% of the market rate;
- Applicants/developers must demonstrate to the Council that their proposals for purpose built student accommodation are deliverable; and
- Student accommodation should be accredited, be safe and of good quality. Private halls of residence should provide pastoral care and programmes which seek to provide an enhanced student experience; the provision of welfare care and extra-curricular activities are encouraged.

*this figure is subject to ongoing work on the evidence base and therefore is an assumption at this stage
Why this policy?

10.33 In National Planning Policy Guidance the Government requires strategic policy-making authorities to plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus.

10.34 In November 2019 Manchester City Council approved consultation on a set of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) draft policy proposals to be considered as part of the Core Strategy review. Following a targeted consultation with property developers, students and higher education establishments, the Council endorsed the approach in December 2020. The report highlighted market changes, which have seen higher numbers of second and third year students in particular living in the mainstream private rented sector in the city centre. It concluded that new policy should respond to affordability challenges and the need to locate accommodation in close proximity to the Higher Education Institutions. The above policy has been written guided by the agreed approach.

Close proximity to the University campuses means that PBSA should be located in the areas immediately adjacent to the core university areas, principally the Oxford Road Corridor area. This may include parts of surrounding neighbourhoods such as Hulme and Ardwick which are immediately adjacent to the university campuses.

As housing costs continue to increase, there is a need for affordable student accommodation. The requirement that 20% of all student accommodation should be affordable has been set assuming affordable student accommodation will cost 80% or less (subject to ongoing work on evidence base) of the market rate.

The policy requires PBSA to be safe and of good quality as the Council agreed that private PBSA should be encouraged to provide pastoral care and programmes which seek to provide an enhanced student experience. The three codes of practice required for higher education providers to ensure that accredited student accommodation is safe, good quality and reputable, in 2025, are:-*

- The Universities UK/GuildHE Code of Practice for University Managed Student Accommodation.
- The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for Student Accommodation Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishments.
- The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Developments for Student Accommodation NOT Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishment.

Appendix B – Policy H12

Policy H 12

Purpose Built Student Accommodation

The provision of new purpose built student accommodation will be supported where the development satisfies the criteria below. Priority will be given to schemes which are part of the universities' redevelopment plans or which are being progressed in partnership with the universities, and which clearly meet Manchester City Council's regeneration priorities.

1. Sites should be in close proximity to the University campuses or to a high frequency public transport route which passes this area.
2. The Regional Centre, including the Oxford Road Corridor, is a strategic area for low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure. Proposed schemes that fall within this area will be expected to take place in the context of the energy proposals plans as required by Policy EN 5.
3. High density developments should be sited in locations where this is compatible with existing developments and initiatives, and where retail facilities are within walking distance. Proposals should not lead to an increase in on-street parking in the surrounding area.
4. Proposals that can demonstrate a positive regeneration impact in their own right will be given preference over other schemes. This can be demonstrated for example through impact assessments on district centres and the wider area. Proposals should contribute to providing a mix of uses and support district and local centres, in line with relevant Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, local plans and other masterplans as student accommodation should closely integrate with existing neighbourhoods to contribute in a positive way to their vibrancy without increasing pressure on existing neighbourhood services to the detriment of existing residents.
5. Proposals should be designed to be safe and secure for their users, and avoid causing an increase in crime in the surrounding area. Consideration needs to be given to how proposed developments could assist in improving the safety of the surrounding area in terms of increased informal surveillance or other measures to contribute to crime prevention.
6. Consideration should be given to the design and layout of the student accommodation and siting of individual uses within the overall development in relation to adjacent neighbouring uses. The aim is to ensure that there is no unacceptable effect on residential amenity in the surrounding area through increased noise, disturbance or impact on the streetscene either from the proposed development itself or when combined with existing accommodation.
7. Where appropriate proposals should contribute to the re-use of Listed Buildings and other buildings with a particular heritage value.
8. Consideration should be given to provision and management of waste disposal facilities, that will ensure that waste is disposed of in accordance with the waste hierarchy set out in Policy EN 19, within the development at an early stage.
9. Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for additional student accommodation or that they have entered into a formal agreement with a University, or another provider of higher education, for the supply of all or some of the bedspaces.
10. Applicants/developers must demonstrate to the Council that their proposals for purpose built student accommodation are deliverable.

9.59 Manchester City Council's Student Strategy Implementation Plan identifies a number of key issues associated with the large student population that need to be addressed in partnership with the University

of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University, and sets these out under four main objectives, one of which is to provide better accommodation for students in appropriate locations.

9.60 Priority will be given to schemes which are part of the universities' own plans for additional or redeveloped accommodation (which involves surplus university-owned land and/or which are being progressed by developers with a university contracted to occupy the accommodation) and which clearly meet Manchester City Council's regeneration priorities.

9.61 The Council has received an increasing number of enquiries from developers regarding purpose built accommodation proposals recently. Recent planning applications show that there is currently a potential oversupply of student bedspaces in purpose built accommodation in the planning pipeline when matched against demand from both the projected growth in student numbers to 2014/15 and latent demand from students living in the general rented sector. The consideration of 'need' for additional student accommodation which developers should undertake should include, but not be limited to, waiting lists for existing places (both University and privately-owned stock) and an appraisal of schemes in the planning pipeline (under construction, with planning permission and current applications). Assessing proposals for new purpose built accommodation against the criteria above will ensure that schemes are progressed in appropriate locations which meet the Council's regeneration priorities; and the provision of further bedspaces in purpose built accommodation will assist in encouraging students to choose managed accommodation over HMOs. The impacts of a large number of students living in an area can be more easily mitigated when they are living in purpose built accommodation rather than unmanaged HMOs which have significant impacts on residential amenity for non-student neighbours.

9.62 In this context "close proximity" means within 500m which is defined in Planning Policy Statement 4 as being easy walking distance in terms of access to office development.

Appendix C –Recent PBSA Planning Permissions in Manchester

The table below shows the need justification and affordable provision that has been included in recent planning permissions for PBSA in Manchester.

Scheme Name	DoD	Status	Affordable Provision	Justification
College View 410 - 418 Moss Lane East 143434/FO/2025	Erection of part five, part three storey building for use as 132 studios for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) following demolition of 410-418 Moss Lane East and associated landscaping, servicing, cycle parking and other associated works. 132 beds.	Withdrawn (16.10.2025)	Withdrawn therefore no finalised Section 106 Agreement or formal planning conditions securing contributions such as affordable housing payments or discounted student beds.	Growing Demand: Manchester's student population is increasing, with significant growth at UoM and Man Met, leading to a rising demand for student accommodation. Low Quality Supply: There is a recognised shortage of high-quality PBSA beds in Manchester, with a city-wide student-to-bed ratio of 2.07:1, pushing many students into the private rented sector. Strategic Location: The Site is sustainably located on the edge of the Oxford Road Corridor, offering close walking distance to major university campuses (UoM: 10 min walk, Man Met: 25 min walk) and excellent public transport accessibility (GMAL score of 8). Policy Alignment:

				The proposal aligns with Manchester City Council's Core Strategy Policy H12, which supports PBSA provision in appropriate locations.
iQ Weston Student Halls And Pendulum Hotel 144791/FO/2025	Phased development comprising: (a) Partial removal of existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 50 storeys and one of 17 storeys with an 8-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, highways works, and change of use of the Pendulum Hotel to purpose-built student accommodation; and (b) Removal of remaining existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis), one of 33 storeys and one of part-24 and part-8 storeys with a 1-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, and highways works. 2,511 beds.	Awaiting decision (committee stage) – validated 16.12.2025	The client is committed to providing a financial contribution towards affordable housing within Manchester via a Section 106 obligation (not yet consented, so no set value). Payment is proposed in phases, 50% prior to the occupation of Phase A (2031/2032 academic year) and 50% prior to the occupation of Phase B (2034/2035 academic year).	Low Supply: Manchester faces a significant shortage of PBSA in the UK. Analysis by Cushman & Wakefield indicates a sustained and growing imbalance between student numbers and available dedicated accommodation. Growing Student Population: There has been substantial and sustained growth in higher education enrolment, with full-time student numbers increasing by 19% since 2018/19. Universities like UoM and Man Met continue to receive very high application volumes, demonstrating strong future demand. Student-to-Bed Ratio: Current student-to-bed ratio in Manchester is 2.32:1, meaning approximately 35,500 students cannot access PBSA. This represents a 75% increase in unmet demand since 2019. Even with all PBSA schemes currently in the pipeline, the ratio would only fall to around 2.0:1, still above the national position. Loss of Existing Stock: There has been a net reduction of 2% in PBSA bedspaces since 2020 due to the

				closure of older, ageing stock that no longer meets contemporary student expectations. Pressure on Private Rented Sector: The lack of dedicated PBSA displaces over 27,840 students into the private rented sector, increasing pressure on general housing availability and reducing options for non-student households. Providing more PBSA helps to free up general housing and support more balanced communities. Strategic Importance: Manchester City Council's Executive Reports (May 2023) confirm that demand for PBSA is expected to continue to rise and that high-quality, well-located PBSA development is required to support the growth of universities. The site for this development (Weston Halls and Pendulum Hotel) is specifically identified within the city's PBSA supply pipeline, recognising its strategic role in meeting future demand. Low Quality PBSA: The existing PBSA stock is often of poorer quality. New, high-quality PBSA is needed to enhance the student experience and maintain Manchester's competitiveness as a world-class education hub.
Plot 9B First Street 141786/FO/2024	Erection of part 12, part 33 storey purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) building	Approved 18.07.2025	The development will provide 129 units of discounted student accommodation. This represents	Location: The site is approximately a 10-minute walk from UoM, Man Met, and the

	(Sui Generis), alongside ancillary amenity space, landscaping, secure cycle parking and other associated works; and use of land east of River Street as a construction compound (Plot 9B). 861 beds.		not less than 15% of the total number of student accommodation units constructed on the site (Schedule 5, page 23 of the S106 Agreement). The rent levels for these Discounted Student Accommodation Units, inclusive of any service charges, will be set at a level of no more than 80% of the rent level of the equivalent Market Student Accommodation Units	Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). The development is strategically located to cater to these institutions. The Oxford Road Corridor, where the site is located, is identified as a focus for higher education within Manchester City Centre. Increase in demand for PBSA: The planning statement and committee report state that the UK's student population has steadily risen, with a significant increase in students in Greater Manchester (around 23,000 net increase since 2016/17). UoM and Man Met have seen substantial increases in applications, including a significant rise in international students. There is an acknowledged "accepted quantitative need for the proposed PBSA scheme" and a recognition that "it is not certain that there are enough schemes in the pipeline to meet PBSA demand over the next few years" within the appeal. Demand for higher quality PBSA: Changing attitudes have resulted in an expectation of higher quality student accommodation. International students, particularly from the Far East, are increasingly choosing to live in the City Centre and are "not generally attracted to living in shared houses and are willing to pay more for PBSA" (as stated in the committee report,
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				attached: 141786_FO_2024-PLOT_9B_FIRST_STREET-2718742). The proposed Plot 9B aims to provide high-quality studio apartments with outstanding amenity spaces. Policy Alignment: Manchester City Council (MCC) has acknowledged the need for new PBSA, particularly within the Oxford Road Corridor, through various Executive Reports (e.g., "Consideration of Policy H12: Purpose Built Student Accommodation Within the Changing Market Context" and "Purpose Student Accommodation in Manchester"). The reports are recognised within the planning statement. The scheme aligns with MCC's vision for PBSA concentration in the Oxford Road Corridor and meets criteria set out in Core Strategy Policy H12, which supports PBSA provision close to university campuses and public transport.
Cambridge Halls of Residence: Unite Students 142888/FO/2025	Demolition of existing halls of residence and erection of two buildings of 30 and 24 storeys above ground, plus basement and rooftop plant levels, comprising: purpose-built student accommodation with internal and external rooftop communal amenity space (Sui Generis); ground floor commercial and community uses	Approved 12.12.2025	Condition 19 of the Decision Notice states that <i>"The PBSA development hereby approved shall be carried out and managed in accordance with the Manchester Metropolitan University letter dated 23 July 2025 regarding discounted accommodation"</i> The letter itself states the following:	Growing Student Population: Manchester is home to one of Europe's largest student populations, with over 112,615 students across its three main universities. Man Met, the applicant in this case, has seen a significant increase in student numbers (62.5% since 2014) and currently has approximately 38,000 students. Low Supply:

	(Flexible Use Classes E, F1(a) or F2(b)); hard and soft landscaping; and associated highway works. 2,302 beds		<i>“Importantly, 413 of the 1,941 Manchester Met rooms (just over 20%) will be priced at a 15% discount compared to the other en-suite rooms in the new scheme. The target rent for these 413 rooms will also be set below the current rate at Archway Hall, ensuring a range of price points is available within our accommodation portfolio to meet the diverse needs of our student community.”</i>	A substantial number of students, particularly first-year and international students, require dedicated accommodation close to the university. The documents highlight that in 2022/23, Man Met had 3,150 students in private halls, 5,870 in private rented accommodation, and 12,055 in other rented accommodation, indicating a significant unmet demand. Pressure on the Private Rented Sector and HMOs: The under-supply of PBSA places considerable pressure on the mainstream housing market, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Providing new PBSA helps to alleviate this pressure by reducing the number of students competing for general housing. Wider Masterplan: The development is presented as a strategic regeneration opportunity within the All Saints Campus and the wider Oxford Road Corridor. It contributes to the city's economy through job creation during construction and operation, and by supporting the vitality of the university. Compliance with Policy: The proposal aligns with Manchester's Policy H12, which supports the provision of new PBSA where there is a
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				demonstrated need, particularly in locations close to universities and with good transport links.
Hotspur House 138805/FO/2023	Demolition of the former Hotspur Press Complex (Medlock Mill) and partial rebuilding and redevelopment of the site to provide purpose-built student accommodation (Sui Generis Use Class) above ground-floor commercial or community uses (Use Classes F(e), F2(a)(b) and E(b)), within a part 4/5-storey and part 36-storey (plus plant level and parapet) associated ancillary internal and external amenity space, public realm (including a new public square), hard and soft landscaping, and associated highway works. 595 beds.	Awaiting Decision	0% affordability offered.	Addressing PBSA Need: The proposed development addresses the established need for Purpose Built Student Accommodation within Manchester, as detailed in the original Planning and Tall Building Statement. High-Quality Design & Regeneration: The scheme is justified as a high-quality, well-designed development that regenerates a derelict site. It provides new public realm and contributes to the vitality of the city centre, enhancing the surrounding neighbourhood. Strategic Location: The site is strategically located in the city centre, offering excellent access to public transport and within walking distance to universities. Policy Alignment: The scheme aligns with the Development Plan and relevant policies, including Policy H12, which supports PBSA provision in appropriate locations.
Deansgate South (Fusion) 129406/FO/2021	Full planning permission for a 28-storey purpose built student accommodation building (Sui Generis).	Approved 04.06.2021	Minimum of 100 beds (18.4%)	Growing Student Population & Demand: Manchester is a top international city for higher education, with a significant

	514 beds.			and growing student population (over 100,000 students). UoM and Man Met have seen substantial increases in applications and student numbers. There is a clear demand for new PBSA, with a significant student-to-bed ratio imbalance. Alleviating Pressure on HMOs: The provision of high-quality PBSA helps to reduce pressure on the mainstream housing market and HMOs by offering dedicated accommodation for students, thereby freeing up housing stock for non-student households. Strategic Location: The site is in a highly accessible location within the Great Jackson Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) area, close to university campuses (UoM, Man Met) and well-served by public transport (train, bus, Metrolink, cycling). High-Quality PBSA: The development aims to provide high-quality, well-managed PBSA, contributing to Manchester's reputation as a world-class education hub. Regeneration: The scheme is part of the regeneration of a long-standing derelict site within the Great Jackson Street SRF,
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				contributing to the city's economic growth and urban renewal. Policy Alignment: The proposals align with Manchester City Council's Core Strategy Policy H12, which supports PBSA provision in appropriate locations where there is a demonstrated need. A Student Needs Assessment was submitted to support the application.
One Medlock Street 135419/FO/2022	Demolition of the existing hotel building and structures and redevelopment of the site to comprise two separate buildings: one 13 storey office building with commercial unit (Use Class E) at ground floor; a part 11, part 38 storey building comprising 1,014 purpose built student accommodation units (sui generis) with ground floor office/community uses (Use Class E, F1 or F2); and associated ancillary internal and external amenity space, hard and soft landscaping and associated highway works. 1,014 beds.	Approved 07.11.2023	0% affordability offered.	Increase in demand for PBSA: The planning statement highlights a significant and growing student population in Manchester, leading to a recognised need for high-quality PBSA. The scheme provides 1,014 PBSA bedrooms to meet this demand, consistent with MCC's expectations. A Student Need Assessment by Cushman & Wakefield was submitted to evidence this. Demand for high-quality PBSA: The development aims to provide high-quality, well-managed PBSA, contributing to the supply of modern student accommodation. Alleviating pressure on HMOs: By providing dedicated student accommodation, the scheme helps to reduce reliance on the general private rented sector for student housing, thereby freeing up stock for non-

				student households and supporting the wider housing market. Strategic Location: The site is located in a highly sustainable area within the First Street regeneration zone, served by public transport and within walking distance to the UoM and Man Met campuses, as well as local services and facilities. Regeneration: The development is part of the transformational change in the First Street area, contributing to the city's regeneration objectives. Policy Alignment: The proposals align with the Development Plan and other material considerations, including Policy H12, which supports PBSA where a demonstrated need exists.
Jadebricks Student 138808/FO/2023	Erection of 15-storeys plus plant level building to provide purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA - Sui Generis) along with site preparation works, works over the public highway and other associated works. 107 beds.	Approved 31.07.2024	Up to 20% (agreed via S106 Agreement).	Supply and Demand: The scheme comprises 107 studio bedrooms, contributing to the supply of PBSA in a part of the city centre consistent with Manchester City Council's expectations. High-Quality PBSA: Development of the site for a high-quality PBSA scheme offers the potential to improve the environmental quality of this part of Charles Street

				with a well-considered architectural design. Wider Housing Market Support: Delivery of high-quality PBSA will support the wider housing market by reducing reliance on the general private rented sector for student accommodation, freeing up stock for non-student households. Strategic Location: The site is vacant, located close to the Oxford Road Corridor, and is in a highly sustainable location served by public transport, within walking distance to UoM and Man Met campuses, and local services and facilities. Regeneration: The site is in an area undergoing transformational change and will contribute to the city's regeneration objectives. Policy Alignment: The proposals align with all policies of the Development Plan and other material considerations, including Policy H12, which supports PBSA where there is a demonstrated need. A PBSA Needs Assessment by Cushman & Wakefield was submitted.
Upper Brook Street 137399/FO/2023	Erection of a 6 to 9 storey building for Sci-Tech use (Use Class E (g)(ii)) and 265sqm of a	Approved 29.11.2024	0% affordability offered.	Growing Student Population & Demand:

	cafe/bar (Use Class E (b)), and a 9 to 23 storey building for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) (Use Sui Generis), comprising 737 bedrooms and 293sqm of community use (Use Class F2 (b)) and 80sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Class E), alongside new public realm, access, parking, and associated works following demolition of existing buildings. 737 beds.			The University of Manchester has stated that demand for student accommodation is outstripping supply, and MCC projects demand for new PBSA to be up to 11,320 beds by 2030. Strategic Location: The site is within the Oxford Road Corridor, identified as a focus for higher education, and is close to university campuses and public transport. Policy Alignment: The proposal aligns with Manchester City Council's Core Strategy Policy H12, which supports PBSA provision in appropriate locations. Alleviating Pressure on HMOs: Providing new PBSA helps to reduce pressure on the mainstream housing market and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by offering alternative accommodation for students. Wider Masterplan & Regeneration: The PBSA is an integral part of a wider masterplan that includes Sci-Tech facilities and community uses, contributing to the regeneration of the area and supporting the city's economy.
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