

Inspector's Question 116

National Guidance (paragraph 021, reference ID: 2a-021-20160401) advises that local planning authorities should 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. Whilst recognising that the evidence base acknowledges that about 1.5% of the private rented sector are occupied by students and that this element of student housing will be encompassed by generally applicable housing policies, it is remarkable that VALP includes no specific provision for other kinds of student housing which are differentiated in planning terms, despite the existence of a University (the Independent University of Buckingham) within the district. Would the Council confirm that it has considered and taken into account the need for student housing within the District?

AVDC Response

The approach to C2 housing for students is set out on page 9 of the HEDNA Methodology report

https://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/2015-05-12-Buckinghamshire-Councils-HEDNA-Methodology-FINAL.pdf as follows:

Communal Establishments

We use the same assumptions as CLG do about communal establishments;

- Older people: in the Model Care home places are assumed to increase as the number of older people increase (the % of those aged 75+ is considered).
- Students: the approach assumes that the number of students in halls of residence remains constant. If the number of students in an institution were to rise then we assume that bedspaces will rise in line with this. This will leave the private housing stock unaffected. Therefore, for institutions with growing student numbers, new halls of residence supply should not count as supply unless it is also counted in needs. Where supply may be counted is when it provides accommodation for households in the private housing stock. In this case it is freeing up the existing housing stock of the area.

ORS will provide detailed outputs about the assumed population living in Communal Establishments which will be considered within the overall Housing Need identified. The appropriate approach will depend on how the authorities plan to treat C2 provision in their future supply.

In Aylesbury Vale the only significant further education establishment which caters for wider than local needs is the private University of Buckingham. Its student C2 accommodation needs are however being specifically addressed by the university itself as recognised on page 31 of the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) in footnote 29. Their proposals are specified in policy HP2 of the BNP where two sites, the former Inov8 premises east of Bath Lane and the university's Verney Park site, are identified as the location "for 400 new rooms for University expansion". These two sites are included within the areas defined as 'University Education sites' in Figure 9.9 on page 55 of the BNP. Policy EE8 of the BNP addresses the development needs of the University.

As set out on the university's website "unlike some universities, we are able to guarantee accommodation for all new students for their first four terms of study". Bedspaces are therefore rising in line with rises in student numbers. Further to this statement the university has also consulted via its website on proposals for new accommodation at Chandos Road car park, Station Road, Buckingham <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/latest-news/public-consultation-station-road/>

The needs for student accommodation for the university are therefore being specifically addressed by the university itself and this is recognised and supported by the BNP. Hence the HEDNA did not need to address any unmet student housing need in the private housing stock and VALP does not need to address the matter given the content of the BNP. Potentially this could be set out in a minor modification to VALP to recognise this situation, but this would duplicate the content of the BNP.