



Background

This is one of a range of topic papers prepared to offer more detailed information and explain the approach of the Plan to different topics and issues affecting the Joint Local Development Plan Area. This paper will look specifically at 'Student Accommodation'. It will explain the background which will help to identify the issues, objectives and options for the Deposit Plan.

The Deposit Plan is the second statutory stage in the preparation of the Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP). The JLDP shapes the future growth of communities in the Joint Local Development Plan Area and will set out the policies and land allocations against which planning applications will be assessed.

The Deposit Plan will be submitted to the Welsh Government, which will appoint an independent inspector to assess the soundness of the Plan in the Examination in Public. If the inspector considers the Plan to be sound it will be recommended for adoption. When adopted the JLDP will supersede the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (2009) for the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Area and the Gwynedd Structure Plan (1993) and Ynys Môn Local Plan (1996) for the Ynys Môn Local Planning Authority.

This topic paper can be read in isolation or in conjunction with the other Topic Papers and Background Papers that have been prepared to give a full picture the Joint Local Development Plan Area.

You may refer to the Topic Paper as a basis for making comments about the Deposit Plan. It must be noted that only comments on the Deposit Plan will be considered by the Inspector at the Examination in Public rather than specific comment made on the Topic Papers.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the Topic Papers or Background Papers with a member of the Joint Planning Policy Unit you can contact us:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper addresses the issue of student accommodation, comprising of both Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and purpose built student accommodation.
- 1.2 A good standard of HMOs can provide a valuable source of affordable accommodation to people and help met local demand for student accommodation.
- 1.3 However, a large concentration of HMOs in a relatively confined area can lead to a number of cultural, economic, environmental and social problems that can result in a sharp decline in the quality of life for local communities.
- 1.4 HMOs that are poorly managed and of a low quality can result in neighbourhood disturbance, fear of crime, transience and imbalanced communities. Such a situation can be compounded when accommodation is concentrated in small areas.
- 1.5 It is a fundamental objective of the Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP) to achieve balanced and sustainable communities. The plan will undoubtedly need to safeguard and increase the supply of family homes overall and continue to tackle areas where the type and quality of housing stock is fuelling deprivation and transience.
- 1.6 The issue of HMOs is of particular relevance to Bangor, where there is a high concentration of students attending the university.
- 1.7 Bangor has historically reflected the situation through the United Kingdom in that the growth in student numbers has not been met by an adequate increase in purpose-built accommodation.
- 1.8 The lack of purpose-built accommodation in Bangor, as it has elsewhere, has led to an increased reliance on the private rented sector to meet student housing needs.
- 1.9 Since the University's policy guarantees a room in a Hall of Residence to all first year students, most bedspaces are taken up by first year students.
- 1.10 Returning students and postgraduate students that require accommodation locally generally tend to look to the private sector to satisfy their needs. This demand has historically been met by Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO).

2.0 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO)

- 2.1 There is no clear definition of HMOs in current planning legislation as the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 does not formally provide them with a formal classification.

Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987

- A dwelling house is defined under the C3 use class as a house used by a single person, or any number of persons living together as a family, or by no more than six people living together as a single household.
- A HMO is unclassified and therefore 'sui generis' (i.e. of its own class).

- 2.2 As a general rule, planning permission will be required before a dwelling house can undergo a material change of use to a HMO in planning terms.
- 2.3 Whether a material change of use has occurred is a matter of fact and degree and will be dependent on the circumstances of each particular case.
- 2.4 The only formal definition of HMOs is provided in the Housing Act 2004 and is somewhat different to the implied 'definition' provided in current planning legislation.

Housing Act 2004

A HMO is a house, or flat, that is:

- Occupied by 3 or more tenants forming 2 or more households who share a basic amenity such as cooking facilities, bathroom or toilet.
- Occupied by 3 or more tenants forming 2 or more households and is a converted building but is not entirely of self-contained flats.
- Converted into self-contained flats, but does not meet the requirements of 1991 Building Regulations, and at least a third of the flats are occupied under short tenancies.

And is occupied by more than one household:

- As their only or main residence; or
- As a refuge by persons escaping domestic violence; or
- During term time by students; or
- For some other purpose that is prescribed in regulations.

A household is defined as a family and their relatives, foster children and any domestic staff. Note that under this legislation, a property shared by a group of friends will be classed as a HMO.

2.5 There are various types of HMO classifications that are recognised. These include:

HMO Type	Description
Separate lettings i.e. bedsits	Houses, occupied as individual rooms where there is some exclusive occupation and some sharing of facilities (such as kitchen or bathroom) and a common living room.
Halls of Residence	Houses with some degree of shared facilities where occupation would normally be by people whose accommodation is ancillary to their employment or educations.
Hostels and Guesthouses	Occupation would normally be by people with no permanent place of residence, as opposed to hotels that provide accommodation for temporary visitors to an area.
Residential Care Homes	Where no 'personal care' is provided and the occupants are 'supported' then it is likely that the standards required will be those of a bedsit HMO.
Self-Contained Flats	Houses or other buildings which by erection or conversion comprise of dwellings which are self-contained and to which access is via a single front door from a common area.
Shared Houses	The occupiers each enjoy exclusive use of a bedroom but would share other facilities including a common living space.

2.6 Under Part 2 of the 2004 Act there are also licensing requirements for certain HMOs.

Mandatory Licensing

Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 introduces licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Descriptions) (Wales) Order 2006 requires that HMOs consisting of three or more storeys and five or more persons living as two or more single households and sharing some amenities are licensed.

Additional Licensing

Local Authorities have discretionary powers which they may apply to a particular designated area. Additional licensing requires all HMOs to be licensed (with the exception of HMOs already licensed under the Mandatory Licensing Scheme and those HMOs exempt by virtue of Schedule 14 of the Housing Act 2004).

Gwynedd Council has had additional licensing powers for the whole of the authority since 2010. Since September 2013 the Isle of Anglesey County Council has designated the whole of Anglesey under an Additional Licensing Scheme.

3.0 STUDENTIFICATION / DESTUDENTIFICATION

- 3.1 The majority of people who live in HMOs tend to be:
- low income because they are economically inactive, full-time students or working in low paid jobs;
 - people who use the premises as a weekday home;
 - transient, only living in the premises for a short-time;
 - young and single forming households.
- 3.2 The majority of these profiles can be easily applied to students living in and around the Bangor area.
- 3.3 The term ‘studentification’ can be defined as the cultural, economic, environmental and social changes caused by a very large number of students living in a particular area of a town.
- 3.4 Whilst the influx of students can help provide a cosmopolitan atmosphere and boost the local economy, there are also certain negative connotations that should also be addressed.
- 3.5 The following tables illustrate the potential positive and negative effects of having high concentration of students within a settlement.

Cultural	
Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
Creates a critical mass and demand for diverse range of cultural events.	A high concentration of HMOs can push out local families from an area.
Creates an international and cosmopolitan outlook.	Converted HMOs often are difficult to transform back into family homes.
Makes settlements more vibrant, dynamic and attractive.	Transient occupation leads to less community integration and cohesion.
Potential of students learning Welsh through courses at the University.	Potential dilution of Welsh speaking communities.

Economic	
Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
High demand provides stimulus to the local housing market.	A distinct shift from owner-occupiers to private student landlords.
Local retail businesses can be bolstered by the student presence.	A transient residential population can contribute less to the local economy.
Maintenance work benefits local construction and service industries.	Leads to steep rises in house prices, pushing out locals from the market.

Environmental	
Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
Properties may receive considerable investment by private landlords.	Increased student levels can lead to increased pressure on local services.
Younger people may be more aware of the importance of recycling waste.	Increased student levels can lead to an increase in squalor.
Rising properties prices can act as an incentive for upgrading properties.	High levels of on-street parking can lead to seasonal traffic congestion.

Social	
Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
A critical mass of students can help ensure community transport links.	There can be an increase in levels of anti-social behaviour.
Student accommodation can help prevent considerable depopulation.	Tensions can be created between permanent and transient residents.
The presence of students can increase levels of cultural diversity.	Increased competition for private rented houses.

3.6 Bangor Project Group Members have highlighted issues relating to the concentration of HMOs. The main issues raised focus upon:

- litter;
- parking problems;
- reduced availability of houses for the long-term resident populations;
- 'seasonable' nature of occupation, which in turn affects the character of areas.

3.7 There are certainly many negative aspects to the concentration of students in residential area that must be addressed and managed in order to create more balanced communities and a higher standard of living in these areas.

3.8 There are also many positive factors allied to the presence of students, such as their contribution to various sectors of the local economy. It must be acknowledged that these positives can be retained with more students residing in purpose built accommodation.

3.9 It is also necessary to examine the potential effects of students migrating outwards from residential areas.

3.10 'Destudentification' can be defined as the migration of students moving from rented properties in the private sector into purpose built accommodation, managed either by the University or private companies.

3.11 Whilst it is clearly preferable for the majority of students to reside in purpose built accommodation, it is important to examine the potential positive and negative impacts of this.

Destudentification	
Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
Former HMOs will be made available to local people and families to purchase.	The outward migration of students may not lead to local people returning to an area.
The outward migration of students is likely to lead to a decrease in anti-social behaviour and crime in residential areas.	If there is insufficient demand for former HMOs, this could result in vacant units or properties used by other HMO residents.
Former HMOs can make a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of permanent residents.	The cost of converting HMOs into family accommodation could be reflected in their asking prices.

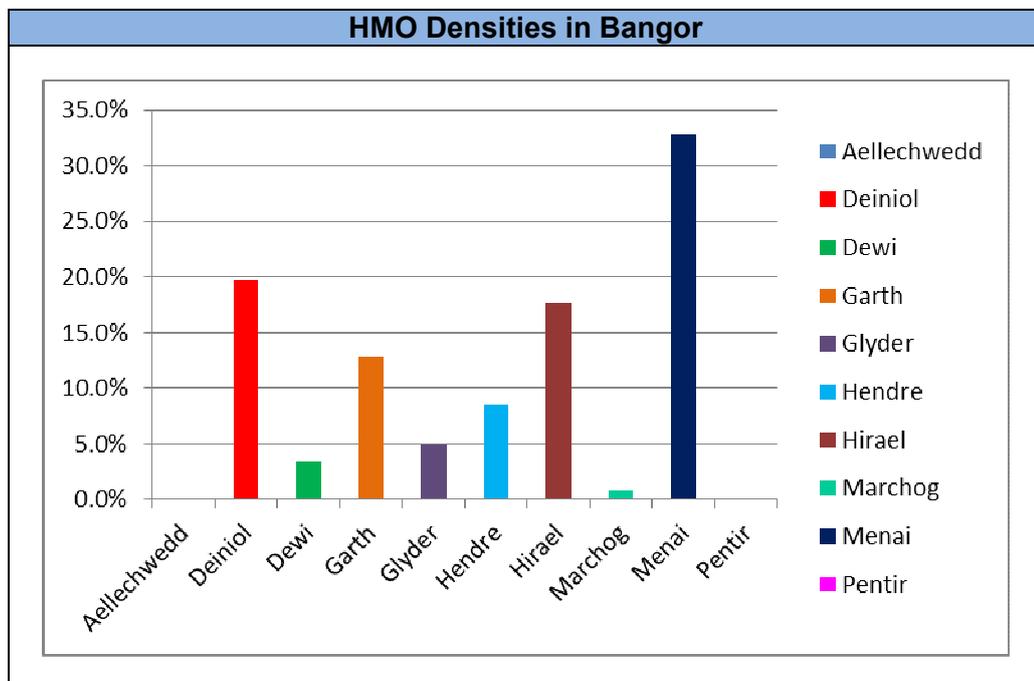
4.0 THE CURRENT SITUATION IN BANGOR

4.1 Based upon the 2011 Census, the dwellings totals for the electoral wards in Bangor are as follows. The latest available figures for HMOs provided by Gwynedd Council's Housing Service in 2013 are included in the table below.

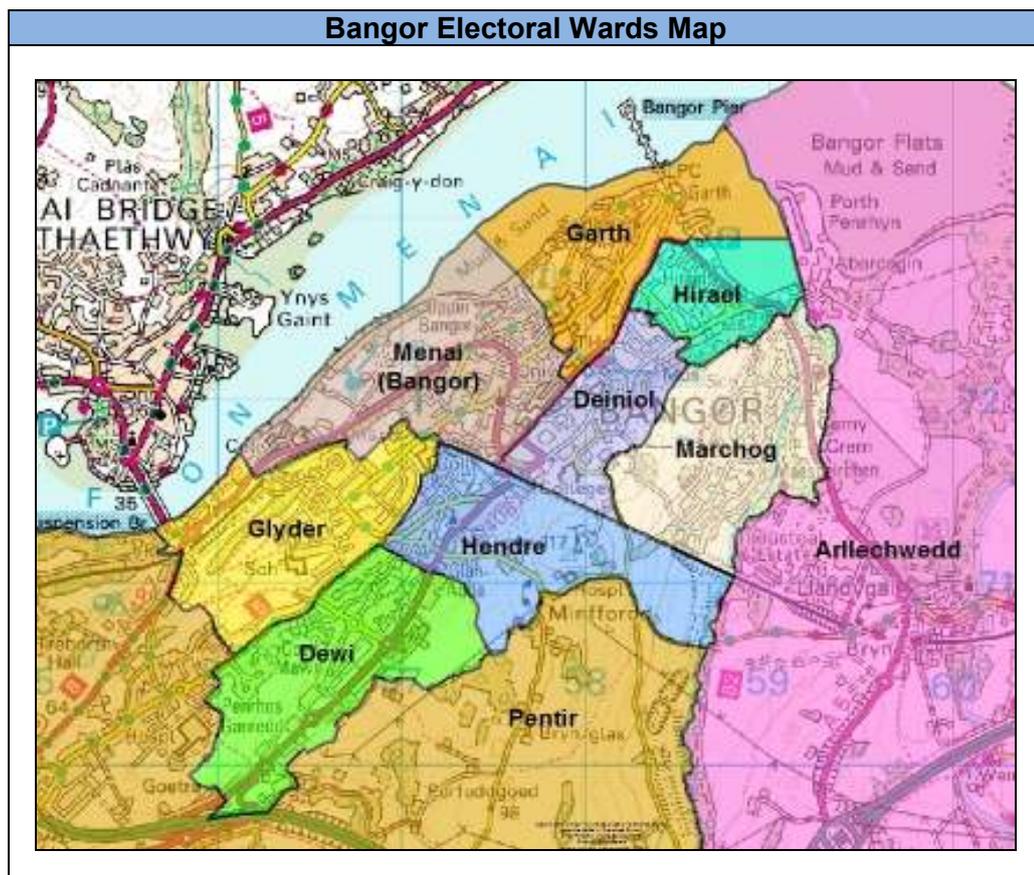
Bangor Electoral Wards		
Ward	Dwellings	HMOs
Aellechwedd	617	0
Deiniol	606	120
Dewi	712	24
Garth	326	42
Glyder	717	35
Hendre	647	55
Hirael	747	132
Marchog	1,057	8
Menai	728	239
Pentir	1,057	1

4.2 It is interesting to examine the HMO densities of the different electoral wards in Bangor.

Bangor Electoral Wards			
Ward	HMO Density (%)	Ward	HMO Density (%)
Aellechwedd	0	Hendre	8.5
Deiniol	19.8	Hirael	17.7
Dewi	3.4	Marchog	0.8
Garth	12.9	Menai	32.8
Glyder	4.9	Pentir	0.1



- 4.3 The National HMO Lobby, a network made up of fifty local community organisations across the UK, has identified a ‘tipping point’ in respect of concentrations of HMOs.
- 4.4 The tipping point is described as a threshold beyond which a community can ‘tip’ from balance to imbalance in terms of demographic composition. The Lobby considers that this tipping point occurs when HMOs exceed 10% of properties in an area recognised as a community.
- 4.5 The tipping point is not meant to be prescriptive and it is recognised that demographic profiles and capacity will differ from one area to another. However, the figure of 10% can be used as an initial indicator of levels of imbalance in a community.
- 4.6 Using the threshold of 10%, it is evident that four of the ten electoral wards in Bangor are imbalanced, with three well over this figure. These wards are Menai (32.8%), Deiniol (19.8%), Hirael (17.7%) and Garth (12.9%). Additionally, the ward of Hendre is close to the tipping point at 8.5%.
- 4.7 By examining Bangor as a whole, it is evident that the overall combined HMO density for all electoral wards is 9.1%. Whilst this figure is slightly below the National HMO Lobby’s tipping point of 10%, it is still considered to be a large proportion of the overall demographic profile of the settlement.



- 4.8 Unsurprisingly, the ward with the highest HMO density is Menai, where the majority of the University facilities are located. The other wards with high levels of HMOs adjoin the Menai ward.
- 4.9 Discussion with County Councillors and work associated with the North West Wales Local Housing Market Assessment drew attention to the issues arising from the need to accommodate students in Bangor.
- 4.10 Concerns relate to the concentration of shared residential accommodation and HMOs in a number of streets that are dispersed across Bangor. Frequently cited concerns include:
- The erosion of the sense of community and social interaction normally engendered in a stable, balanced community;
 - Exclusion of first time and young family buyers to the detriment of the social balance and community facilities, especially schools;
 - Congestion and disturbance during term time, sharply contrasted with an air of abandonment during vacations;
 - Higher incidence of anti-social behaviour, particularly at unsociable hours;
 - Poorer standards of property maintenance and repair;
 - Accumulation of waste and rubbish, particularly towards the end of the academic year;
 - Littering and fly-posting;
 - The proliferation of letting signs, adding to the impression of transience and detracting from the character of the street scene.
- 4.11 It would appear that the concerns about the impact on the local housing market are similar to the problems being experienced by some coastal settlements throughout North Wales where there are concentrations of second/holiday homes.
- 4.12 There is a more limited supply of residential properties available for local people in these coastal settlements and those that are available are often too expensive to purchase or rent.
- 4.13 Due to the proliferation of residential accommodation occupied by students there are a number of properties in Bangor that are exempt from council tax by virtue of being entirely occupied by students. However, it should be highlighted that not all properties exempt from council tax are HMOs and occupied by students.

Bangor Electoral Wards		
Ward	Not Paying Council Tax	HMOs & Not Paying Council Tax
Aellechwedd	0	0
Deiniol	130	82
Dewi	52	21
Garth	47	27
Glyder	55	34
Hendre	83	44
Hirael	160	113
Marchog	16	6
Menai	266	126
Pentir	0	0

- 4.14 The University has tried to tackle the issues by building purpose built student accommodation on its campuses and by making improvements to existing purpose built student accommodation. However, most of this accommodation is only available to first year students.
- 4.15 There may be more purpose built accommodation available on campus in the future that students can use throughout their stay. The private sector has also provided some purpose built student accommodation in Bangor. However, there are concerns locally that these may be located in areas that may exacerbate existing noise, anti-social behaviour, litter problems.

5.0 PURPOSE BUILT ACCOMMODATION

5.1 In the context of this topic paper, purpose built student accommodation is defined as follows:

Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Accommodation that is used during the academic term-time by persons who are undertaking a full-time course of higher or further education.

5.2 Purpose built student accommodation can potentially help rebalance local communities by providing accommodation for students who would usually take residence in HMOs, allowing the current housing stock to be available to local individuals and families.

5.3 It is important to examine the potential issues associated with purpose built student accommodation. The table below highlights the main effects that are typically associated with such accommodation:

Purpose Built Student Accommodation	
Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects
Purpose built accommodation has less impact on the housing market.	Purpose built accommodation brings large numbers of students into small areas, which can lead to significant disturbances on people living in adjoining properties if not properly managed by either the University or private company.
Helps free up existing housing stock for local people.	
The construction of purpose built student accommodation creates employments.	
The construction of purpose built student accommodation can often deliver physical regeneration on disused sites and buildings.	

5.4 As the table illustrates, the potential benefits of purpose built student accommodation outweigh the possible drawbacks, subject to site specific issues on a case by case basis. The creation of such accommodation not only has significant economic benefits, but also acts as a catalyst for positive social change by freeing up the existing housing stock for local people, thus helping to rebalance the composition of local communities.

5.5 The main potential drawback is that a large concentration of students can potentially lead to social problems in the area where the accommodation is sited. However, with the correct strategy in place, it is felt that problems associated with the high concentration of students can be adequately managed.

- 5.6 It is important to highlight the typical requirements for purpose built student accommodation:

Typical Requirements for Purpose Built Student Accommodation

- **New purpose built student accommodation should be located within reasonable walking distance to the University as possible in order to ensure that journeys are made by foot or bicycle and therefore reduce the need for a car.**
- **It is important to ensure that new accommodation offers a good standard of accommodation and provide a good quality living environment with space to study.**
- **Proposals should include a proportion of accessible bedrooms and servicing facilities in accordance with appropriate standards and regulations.**
- **Satisfactory provision should be made for car and cycling parking with the site of new proposals.**
- **Purpose built student accommodation can impact on a local area and should therefore be designed to relate to the character of the area.**

- 5.7 In 2012 Bangor University published its Estate Strategy. The strategy covers the period of 2012 to 2017 and its purpose is to provide an estate that is conducive to academic achievement.
- 5.8 The University has expanded its student base in recent years and has recruited increasing numbers of international students.
- 5.9 The University has always guaranteed a room in halls for first year undergraduates. However, the majority of returning second and third year undergraduates rely upon the private sector in Bangor for accommodation.
- 5.10 The strategy states that currently less than a third of international students are able to find a place in University halls.
- 5.11 Currently the University has about 2,300 places in Bangor. This will rise to about 3,000 places in September. All accommodation is self-catered.
- 5.12 The vast majority of the residential halls are currently situated at Ffriddoedd Village.
- 5.13 The Ffriddoedd Halls of Residence were built in the last five years and are contemporary halls, all self-catering with ensuite rooms.

- 5.14 The Ffriddoedd Halls consist of the following buildings:
Adda, Alaw, Braint, Crafnant, Enlli, Ffraw, Glaslyn, Gwynant, Idwal, Llanddwyn, Peris.
- 5.15 The following Halls of Residence were built in the 1990s are all self-catered and ensuite:
Y Borth, Cefn y Coed, Elidir, Y Glyder.
- 5.16 Neuadd Reichel was refurbished in 2011 and is a self-catered hall of around 120 rooms, with shared kitchens and bathrooms. It has a mix of standard, larger and small rooms.
- 5.17 Neuadd John Morris-Jones is a self-catering hall with ensuite bedrooms composed of two adjacent halls of residence at Ffriddoedd. These are known as Neuadd JMJ, Adeilad Tegfan and Neuadd JMJ, Adeilad Bryn Dinas. The two buildings are linked. The halls are primarily for Welsh speaking and Welsh learning undergraduate students.
- 5.18 The new St Mary's student village is under development and 600 new rooms will be available in September 2015, with a range of accommodation including studio apartments and townhouses.
- 5.19 St Mary's Village offers a number of different types of accommodation including ensuite rooms, budget rooms, townhouses and studios, consisting of:
Bryn Eithin, Cemlyn, Cybi, Penmon, St Mary's Studios, St Mary's Quad, Tudno Ensuite Rooms, Tudno Townhouses.
- 5.20 Whilst the University's Estate Strategy provides projected attendance figures, the latest actual figures are available from the HESA Student Record for 2013/14. According to the HESA figures, Bangor University had 10,646 students (8,705 full-time, 1,941 part-time). The accommodation status of the 8,705 full-time students was recorded as follows:

Accommodation Status of 8,705 Full-Time Students (2013/14)	
Accommodation Type	Number
Other rented accommodation	3,641
Institution maintained property	2,285
Parental/guardian home	1,016
Own residence	626
Not known	454
Private-sector halls	447
Other	235
Not in attendance at the institution	1
Total	8,705

- 5.21 These figures indicate that there is significant scope for additional purpose built student accommodation in the City.

- 5.22 The situation would suggest that a combination of both University and privately managed purpose built student accommodation is required in Bangor.
- 5.23 A table of schemes with planning permission for student accommodation is included in the appendix.
- 5.24 In delivering purpose built student accommodation there are a number of mechanisms the University and developers may use to address provision, including the following:

Purpose Built Student Accommodation Provision

• **University Owned Accommodation**

Universities may choose to own land and buildings. The University has total control over rental costs, rent durations, and the quality of the accommodation.

• **University Managed Accommodation**

Accommodation alternatively may be owned by a third party but let and managed by the University.

• **Private Sector Arrangements**

Student accommodation in the private sector may be directly let or let through an agreement between a private provider and the University.

• **Co-Operative Student Housing**

In a housing co-operative, the people that live in the houses are the members, who are then collectively their own landlord. This could provide greater choice and potentially lower cost student accommodation.

• **Social Landlord Student Housing**

A social landlord could potentially develop purpose built student accommodation. Options could then be explored to cross-subsidise the housing costs from other revenues generated again increasing choice and potentially offering more affordable accommodation.

- 5.25 As the demand for purpose built student accommodation is high, this section of the housing market is likely to remain buoyant and it is anticipated that there will be a number of new schemes put forward in the coming years.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO)

- It is recognised that HMOs provide an affordable and valued type of accommodation for many residents, including students, young professionals, migrants and people on low incomes, often on a transient basis.
- Due to the lack of available purpose built accommodation in the area, HMOs have provided students with affordable residences within close distance of the University.
- However, these high concentrations of students in HMOs have brought about rapid changes to the local population, housing markets and residential environment, predominantly in the wards around the University.
- The increase in the use of traditional family homes as HMOs in certain areas of the city has led to a number of negative cultural, economic, environmental and social effects arising in these neighbourhoods.

6.2 PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

- There is a clear requirement for more purpose built student accommodation in the Bangor area in order to reduce over-concentrations of HMOs across local communities.
- It is considered that the impacts of a large number of students living in an area can be more easily mitigated when they are living in purpose built managed accommodation rather than unmanaged HMOs which have significant impacts on residential amenity for non-student neighbours.
- Such developments can help reduce the need for further conversion and use of family housing stock, create sustainable locations for student housing and provide a stock of well-managed and secure environments.
- The provision of further bedspaces in purpose built student accommodation will assist in encouraging students to choose managed accommodation over HMOs.
- A number of options exist for the development and management of future purpose built student accommodation, either by the University or private companies.

6.3 SUMMARY

- The Council wants to make sure that local communities are balanced in terms of the mix and type of housing available and the people that live there.
- The Council aims to take a positive and proactive approach to new purpose built student accommodation to ensure that it is located in the most suitable places in terms of accessibility and impacts on the amenity of surrounding areas.
- Ensure that new developments of student housing are well managed and do not impact on existing residential communities in negative ways.

7.0 REFERENCES

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Appendix

Student Accommodation Schemes with Planning Permission (Since 2005)			
Ref No.	Description	Beds	Status
C14/0035/11/LL	Erection of student accommodation at St Mary's College, Bangor	602	Under Construction
C14/0004/11/LL	3 self-contained student units at Neuadd Willis, High Street, Bangor	3	Not Started
C13/0995/11/LL	Erection of building for 49 student bedrooms at 137, High Street, Bangor	49	Not Started
C13/0545/11/LL	Conversion of student residences at Ty Glyn, High Street, Bangor	60	Completed
C13/0203/11/LL	2 buildings providing 36 student beds at Plas Llwyd Terrace, Bangor	36	Not Started
C13/0671/11/LL	Conversion into multiple occupancy unit for students at High Street, Bangor	5	Not Started
C12/0211/11/LL APP/Q6810/A/ 12/2177709	Building for 200 bed student accommodation at Dean Street, Bangor	200	Under Construction
C13/0213/11/LL	Change of Use of offices into 8 bedroom HMO at College Road, Bangor	8	Completed
C12/1513/11/LL	Change of Use of offices into student accommodation at Llys Gwynedd, Bangor	6	Not Started
C12/0519/11/LL	Change of Use of care home into HMO for student accommodation at Nant y Gro, Bangor	12	Not Started
C11/0645/25/LL	Change of Use of dwelling into student accommodation at Rivendell, Bangor	2	Not Started
C10A/0123/11/LL	Student Hostel at 110/114, High Street, Bangor	97	Completed
C10A/0041/11/LL	HMO at Brynfa, Bangor	21	Completed
C08A/0596/11/LL	Change of Use into HMO at Y Waun, Bangor	21	Completed
C07A/0259/11/LL	Block J2, Victoria Drive, Bangor	80	Completed
C07A/0280/11/LL	Block J1, Victoria Drive, Bangor	80	Completed
C06A/0862/11/LL	Student accommodation at Former Plaza Cinema, Bangor	200	Completed
C06A/0142/11/LL	Student accommodation at Ffriddoedd Road, Bangor	661	Completed
C06A/0040/11/LL	Student accommodation at University of Wales, Bangor	479	Completed
C05A/0785/11/LL	Student accommodation at British Hotel, Bangor	173	Completed