

Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted 3 November 2020



Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose and Scope	1
1.2	Status of the Document.....	1
1.3	Houses in Multiple Occupation in Bristol.....	1
2.	Background	3
2.1	What is a House in Multiple Occupation?.....	3
2.2	Policy Context.....	5
2.3	When is Planning Permission Required?.....	5
3.	Additional Guidance.....	7
3.1	What is a Harmful Concentration?.....	7
3.2	What is a Good Standard of Accommodation?.....	8
4.	Assessment of Planning Applications.....	10
4.1	Sandwiching Assessment (Street level).....	10
4.2	HMO Threshold Assessment (Neighbourhood level).....	10
4.3	Achieving a Good Standard of Accommodation	15
4.4	HMOs and Purpose-built Student Accommodation.....	15
4.5	Information on Datasets	15
5.	Submission Requirements for Applicants	17
6.	Other Matters	18
6.1	HMO Licences.....	18
6.2	Property Management.....	18
6.3	Sound Reduction Measures	18
6.4	Reporting a Breach of Planning or Licensing Rules	19
	Appendix A: Local Plan Policy for HMOs	20
	Appendix B: Guideline Minimum Room Size Standards for HMO Development.....	22

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides further guidance on the implementation of policy [DM2: Residential Sub-divisions, Shared and Specialist Housing](#) in relation to HMOs set out in the *Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan*. The policy aims to encourage balanced communities in Bristol by preventing harmful concentrations of HMOs. It also aims to achieve good standards of accommodation where new HMOs are permitted.

The guidance identifies situations where harmful HMO concentrations are likely to arise. These include the sandwiching of residential properties by HMOs and areas where more than 10% of dwellings are occupied as HMOs.

The guidance also sets out space standards for HMOs where they are permitted.

1.2 Status of the Document

Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared in accordance with part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The document should be used alongside relevant Local Plan policies to determine all applications for new HMOs and for additional bed spaces within existing HMOs and constitutes an important material consideration in the decision-making process.

1.3 Houses in Multiple Occupation in Bristol

Bristol's stock of HMOs forms a significant part of the city's private rented provision, providing homes and contributing to people's housing choice. This form of accommodation is generally more affordable and flexible and therefore suitable for younger people and other households that are not living as families. As well as reducing housing costs for individuals, sharing homes can also have positive social benefits for occupiers, helping individuals, especially young people, form new networks and relationships.

Higher numbers of HMOs in recent years reflect changes in the Bristol Housing market. Increasing numbers of individuals are unable to buy a home or rent a flat in the city. For these individuals access to HMOs is important. For some people living in such accommodation is their only practical choice.

Whilst the city's stock of HMOs is contributing to meeting housing needs, increased numbers of multiple occupancy properties can have the potential to create harmful impacts. Concentrations within neighbourhoods can lead to imbalanced and unsustainable communities and can damage the residential amenity and character of surrounding areas. Harmful impacts associated with high numbers of HMOs can affect a community's health and wellbeing. Harmful impacts can include:

- **Reduced social cohesion** resulting from demographic imbalance.
- **Reduced housing choice** resulting from housing type/tenure imbalance (e.g. a shift from permanent family housing to more transient accommodation);

- **Reduced community engagement from residents** resulting from an increase in the transient population of an area;
- **Noise and disturbance** resulting from intensification of the residential use and/or the lifestyle of occupants;
- **Overlooking and loss of privacy** resulting from poorly considered internal layouts and intensification of use;
- **Detriment to visual amenity** resulting from poor waste management, poor property maintenance, accumulative external alterations to properties and use of frontage areas for off-street parking;
- **Reduced community services** resulting from a shift in the retail/business offer towards a narrower demographic;
- **Highway safety concerns** resulting from congested on-street parking and poor waste management.

A number of areas across the city have high proportions of HMOs housing a range of different groups.

Non-student HMOs are generally clustered in districts in east Bristol including Eastville, Easton and parts of St. George and Hillfields; districts in south Bristol including Southville, Windmill Hill and Bedminster and in north Bristol in particular Avonmouth. Some communities in these areas have expressed concern over increasing numbers of HMOs and the potential for damaging impacts should numbers increase.

The level of student population in the city is also a factor affecting the amount and distribution of HMOs. A number of residential areas have high student populations living in this form of accommodation. These areas directly surround or are accessible to the city's two universities. They include central districts such as Clifton and Cotham and outer districts such as Fishponds and those along or adjacent to the Gloucester Road corridor. The issues identified above have become intensified in these locations due to high HMO numbers. Significant concentrations in particular streets and neighbourhoods have had damaging impacts on local communities.

2. Background

2.1 What is a House in Multiple Occupation?

A property is broadly defined as an HMO if it is occupied by 3 or more persons from 2 or more households and there are shared facilities such as a toilet, bathroom or kitchen. A household can be a separate individual, a couple or a family. A family includes parents, grandparents, children (including foster children, step children and children being cared for), grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or cousins.

The full legal definition of an HMO is given under the Housing Act 2004. Types of living accommodation defined include:

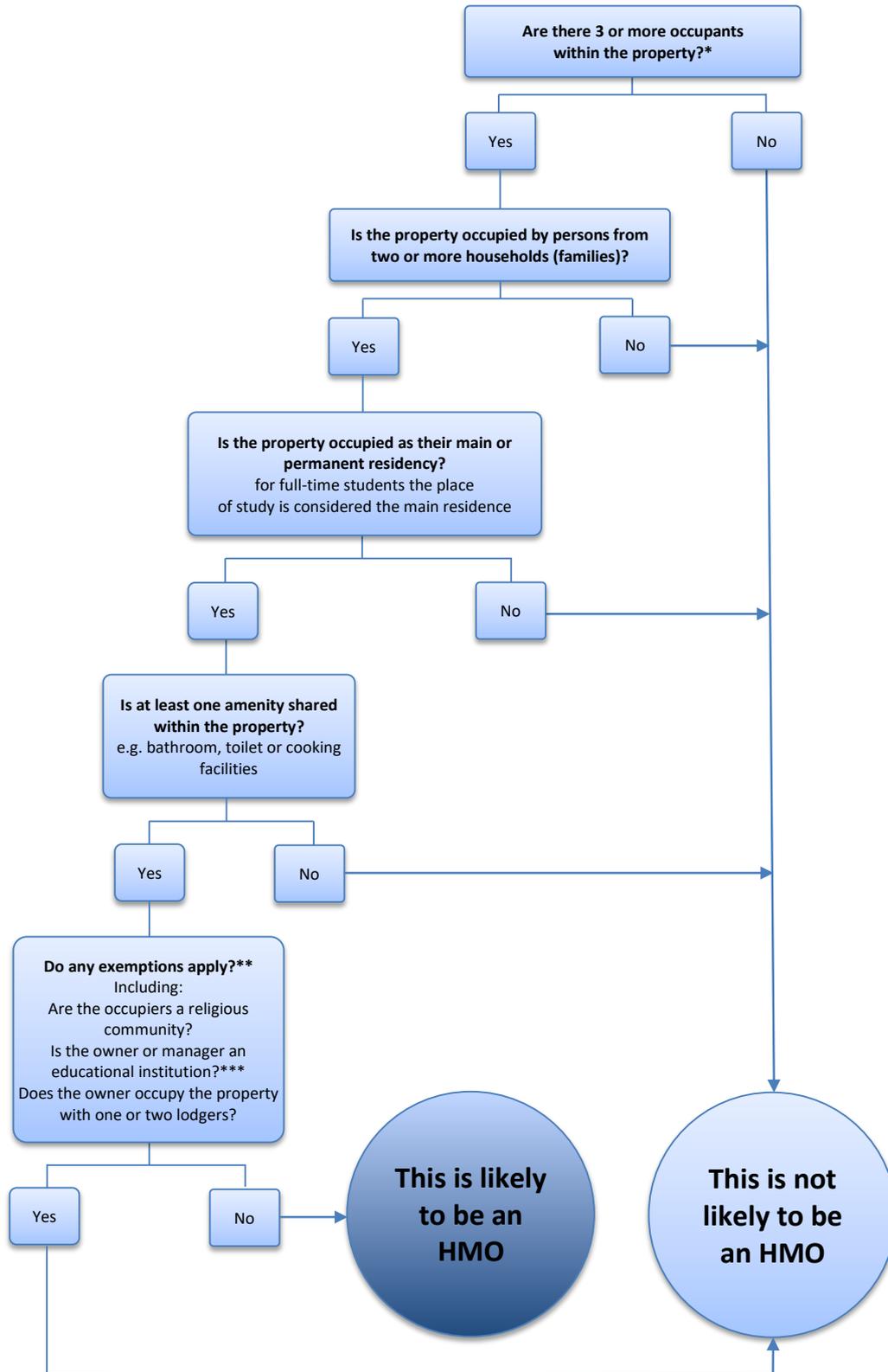
- One or more units of living accommodation within a building or part of a building not consisting of self-contained flats occupied by more than one household as their only or main residence with at least one person paying rent and two or more of the households sharing one or more basic amenities (or the building lacks an amenity) such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities.
- A self-contained flat within a building occupied by more than one household as their only or main residence with at least one person paying rent and two or more of the households sharing one or more basic amenities (or the building lacks an amenity) such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities.
- A converted building where new living accommodation has been created since its construction that is not a self-contained flat or flats and occupied by more than one household as their only or main residence with at least one person paying rent.
- A building or part of a building which has been converted into self-contained flats where the conversion works did not comply with 1991 Building Regulations and more than one third of the flats are not owner-occupied. These buildings/parts of buildings are currently excluded from mandatory licensing requirements and are not included in licensing schemes in Bristol.

The Act also defines types of living accommodation that are not HMOs. These include properties occupied by the owner and up to two lodgers, higher education halls of residence or other types of student accommodation and properties occupied by religious communities.

In 2010 a new planning Use Class - C4 - was created for dwellings occupied as HMOs by up to six residents. The planning meaning of the new Use Class was aligned with the definition of an HMO in the Housing Act 2004. HMOs with over 6 occupants do not fall within any specific Use Class. These are known as Sui Generis uses.

Fig. 1 provides a quick check to establish whether a property is likely to be occupied as an HMO. Further information is available on the [Council](#) and [Government](#) web sites. Advice can also be sought from the Council's Private Housing team.

Fig. 1: When is a Property an HMO?



* A building or part of a building.
 ** A full list of buildings which are not HMOs is set out in [Schedule 14 to the Housing Act 2004](#).
 *** Licensing requirements relating to buildings owned or managed by student accommodation providers are subject to a number of factors.
 Further information on exemptions and licensing requirements can be sought from the Council's Private Housing Team.

2.2 Policy Context

National

To achieve sustainable development the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects the planning system to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities as a key social objective. This includes provision of a sufficient range of homes and a built environment that supports a community's social wellbeing. In particular, policies within the NPPF expect Local Plans to reflect the range of housing types and tenures needed by different groups in the community and help achieve the creation of inclusive and safe places that promote social interaction and address identified wellbeing needs. National Planning Policy Guidance also identifies the delivery of more dedicated student accommodation as a way of relieving pressure from the private rented sector and increasing the overall housing stock.

Local

The Council's policies relating to HMO's, housing type and community health and well-being are set out in the Bristol Local Plan and are consistent with National Planning Policy.

Development of HMOs is covered by policy [DM2: Residential Sub-divisions, Shared and Specialist Housing](#) set out in the *Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan (SADMP)*. The policy provides an approach to addressing the impacts and issues that may result from this form of development and aims to ensure that the residential amenity and character of an area is preserved and that harmful concentrations do not arise. The relevant extracts from the full policy and supporting text relating to HMOs are set out at Appendix A.

Also of relevance is *Core Strategy Local Plan* policy [BCS18: Housing Type](#) and *SADMP Local Plan* policy [DM14: The Health Impacts of Development](#). Policy **BCS18** ensures that all residential development contributes to the mix of housing in an area to support mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This includes a need to redress any housing imbalance that exists. Policy **DM14** ensures that all new development contributes to and does not result in unacceptable impacts on health and wellbeing. Development resulting in harmful concentrations of HMOs will be contrary to these policies.

Other Local Plan policies relevant to the development of HMOs are set out in relevant sections of this document.

2.3 When is Planning Permission Required?

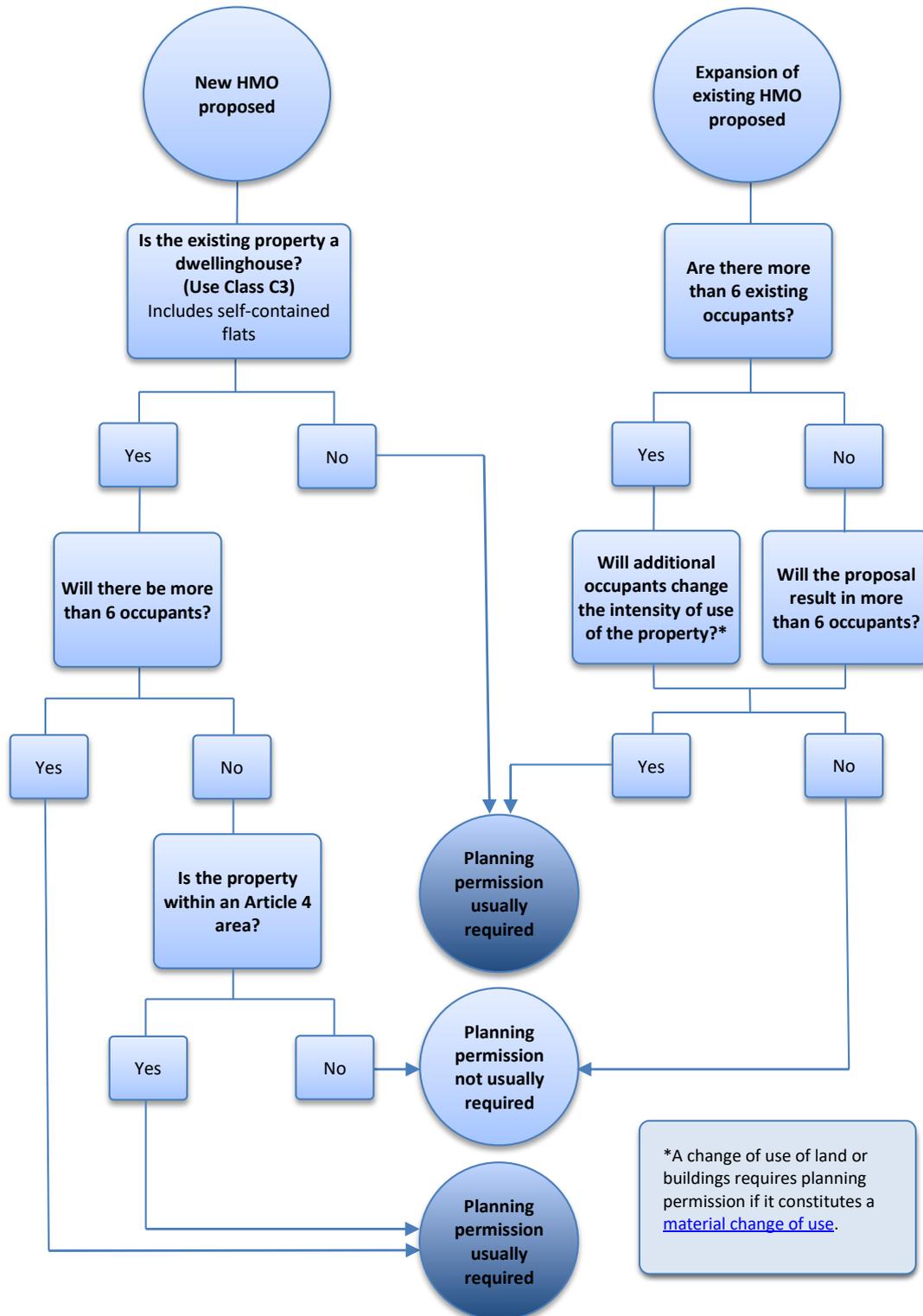
A planning application is not always required for the development of an HMO. Fig. 2 provides a quick check to establish when planning permission should be sought. If a planning application is required a fee will payable in all circumstances. Further information on [making a planning application](#), [fees](#), [publicity required](#) and [how to comment](#) can be found on the Council's website.

Article 4 Directions

The Council has widened planning control over HMOs by making Article 4 Directions in a number of areas across the city. The Directions remove permitted development rights that allow a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to change to a small HMO (Use Class C4) without the need for planning permission. Since the date of introduction of each Article 4 Direction such a change of use has

required and will continue to require a planning application. The location of all Article 4 Directions can be viewed using the Council’s web mapping tool [Pinpoint](#) available on the Council’s website (see section 4.5).

Fig. 2: HMO Development - Requirement for Planning Permission



3. Additional Guidance

3.1 What is a Harmful Concentration?

Local Plan Policy [DM2: Residential Sub-divisions, Shared and Specialist Housing - General Criteria](#) section (ii) does not permit new HMOs or the intensification of existing HMOs where development would create or contribute to a harmful concentration within a locality. The policy identifies a harmful concentration as a worsening of existing harmful conditions or a change to the housing mix that reduces housing choice.

The supporting text to the policy provides further detail on when harmful concentrations are likely to arise. This is where issues associated with HMOs (see section 1.3) cumulatively result in detrimental effects on the qualities and characteristics of a residential area; These are defined as generally quieter surroundings; a reasonable level of safe, accessible and convenient car parking; a well-maintained or visually attractive environment and the preservation of buildings and structures that contribute to the character of a locality. It is also where the choice of housing available no longer provides for the needs of different groups within the community. The supporting text also states that assessments should consider impacts at street, neighbourhood and ward levels.

To further support assessments of HMO development against policy **DM2** and to support the objectives of policies **BCS18** and **DM14** additional guidance on what constitutes harmful concentrations at a street and neighbourhood level is provided as follows:

Sandwiching Assessment (Street level)

A harmful concentration can arise at a localised level when an existing dwelling is sandwiched between two HMOs. This can intensify impacts on individual households even if few HMOs exist locally and can create an imbalance between HMOs and other housing at a street level.

Harmful concentration - HMO Sandwich

Proposals for the development or intensification of houses in multiple occupation are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy where the development would create a harmful concentration of such uses as a result of any residential property or properties being located between two houses in multiple occupation as described in section 4.1.

HMO Threshold Assessment (Neighbourhood level)

A harmful concentration can arise when HMOs exceed a certain proportion of the dwelling stock in any given neighbourhood. Evidence of harmful impacts on residential amenity and character arising from HMO concentrations is well documented in numbers of communities across Bristol. Analysis of housing in these areas identifies HMO levels at 10% or more of the dwelling stock. Areas at or above this level also differ significantly from citywide norms on housing mix and population profile. A threshold proportion of **10% HMOs** in any neighbourhood is therefore considered a likely tipping point, beyond which negative impacts to residential amenity and character are likely to be experienced and housing choice and community cohesion start to weaken. The neighbourhood area is defined in section 4.2.

Harmful concentration - 10% HMO threshold

Within a neighbourhood area as defined in section 4.2 proposals for the development of houses in multiple occupation are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy where the development would result in more than 10% of the total dwelling stock of the neighbourhood area being occupied as houses in multiple occupation.

Within a neighbourhood area as defined in section 4.2 proposals for the intensification of existing houses in multiple occupation are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy where 10% or more of the total dwelling stock of the neighbourhood area is already occupied as houses in multiple occupation.

3.2 What is a Good Standard of Accommodation?

Local Plan Policy [DM2: Residential Sub-divisions, Shared and Specialist Housing - General Criteria](#) expects HMO development to provide a good standard of accommodation by meeting relevant requirements and standards set out in other development plan policies.

The supporting text to the policy explains that consideration should be given to layout, internal living space, external amenity space, outlook, privacy, adaptability, security, cycle and car parking and refuse and recycling storage. The text also refers to specific policies where requirements and standards are set out but does not provide a definitive list.

To further support assessments of HMO development against policy **DM2** additional guidance on other Local Plan policy requirements and standards is provided as follows.

Internal Living Space

Core Strategy Local Plan policy [BCS18: Housing Type](#) expects all residential developments to provide sufficient space for everyday activities and enable flexibility and adaptability by meeting appropriate space standards. To meet the policy expectation for HMOs development should have regard to the current minimum room size standards applied by the Council to licensable HMO properties. The standards in use at the time of this SPD's adoption are set out at Appendix B. The current [standards for HMO properties](#) are published on the Council's web site.

Cycle and Car Parking

SADMP Local Plan policy [DM23: Transport Development Management](#) expects all development to provide an appropriate level of safe, secure, accessible and usable parking provision having regard to the [parking standards](#) where applicable (set out at Appendix 2 of the *SADMP Local Plan*), the parking management regime and the level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. Guidance on cycle parking is set out in the Council's guidance note [A guide to cycle parking provision](#).

Core Strategy Local Plan policy [BCS21: Quality Urban Design](#) and *SADMP* policy [DM26: Local Character and Distinctiveness](#) expect new development to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. *Core Strategy Local Plan* policy [BCS22: Conservation and the Historic Environment](#) and *SADMP* policy [DM31: Heritage Assets](#) seek to ensure that all new development safeguards or enhances the historic environment. These policies

are relevant to proposals that involve the creation of off-street car parking. Detailed guidance is provided in the Council's Policy Advice Note [Off-street Residential Parking in Conservation Areas](#).

Where HMOs are granted planning permission future residents may not be eligible for parking permits where these are required. Further information on [restrictions on parking permits](#) can be found on the Council's website.

Refuse and Recycling Storage

SADMP Local Plan policy [DM32: Recycling and Refuse Provision in New Development](#) sets general requirements for the provision of recycling and refuse facilities in all development. Detailed guidance is provided in the Council's guidance note [Waste and Recycling: Collection and Storage Facilities - Guidance for Developers of Residential, Commercial and Mixed-Use Properties](#) including any subsequent additional or replacement guidance.

Container types and capacities for recycling and refuse will depend on numbers of HMO occupants proposed. For further information on recycling and refuse arrangements contact the Bristol Waste Company.

Outlook and Privacy

Core Strategy Local Plan policy [BCS21: Quality Urban Design](#) expects development to safeguard the amenity of existing development and create a high quality environment for future occupiers. SADMP Local Plan policy [DM29: Design of New Buildings](#) expects new buildings to achieve and existing development to maintain appropriate levels of privacy, outlook and daylight. SADMP Local Plan policy [DM30: Alterations to Existing Buildings](#) expects extensions and alterations to existing buildings to safeguard the amenity of the host premises and neighbouring occupiers.

Good standard of accommodation

Proposals for the development or intensification of houses in multiple occupation should provide a good standard of accommodation. Development should be consistent with relevant Local Plan policies and guidance and have regard to the standards set out at Appendix B or as current.

4. Assessment of Planning Applications

4.1 Sandwiching Assessment (Street level)

Proposals for the introduction of new HMOs resulting in an existing residential property or properties (Use Class C3) being sandwiched by HMOs on both sides are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy. In addition, proposals for additional bed spaces within existing HMOs sandwiching residential property are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy. Potential sandwiching situations include:

1. Up to three single residential properties in a street located between two single HMO properties;
2. Single HMO properties in any two of the following locations: adjacent, opposite and to the rear of a single residential property;
3. A residential flat within a sub-divided building where the majority of flats are HMOs.
4. A residential flat within a sub-divided building in a street located between two other sub-divided buildings with at least one HMO flat in each building;
5. A residential flat within a sub-divided building located between two HMO flats above and below;
6. A residential flat within a sub-divided building located between two HMO flats on both sides;

Variations of these sandwiching situations may also occur. Sandwiching situations apply irrespective of limited breaks in building line, such as a vehicular or pedestrian access, apart from a separating road.

Fig. 3 shows worked examples of the sandwiching assessment.

The datasets used to identify HMOs are set out in section 4.5. The location of identified HMO properties can be viewed using the Council's web mapping tool [Pinpoint](#) available on the Council's website. Further details on the use of *Pinpoint* are also provided in section 4.5.

4.2 HMO Threshold Assessment (Neighbourhood level)

Proposals for the introduction of new HMOs which would result in more than 10% of the total dwelling stock being occupied as HMOs within a 100 metre radius of the application property or site are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy. In addition proposals for additional bed spaces within an existing HMO where 10% or more of the total dwelling stock is occupied as HMOs within a 100 metre radius of the application property or site are unlikely to be consistent with Local Plan policy.

The 100 metre radius is given to represent the immediate neighbourhood and is measured from a point within the application property or site as defined by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). Dwellings on the edge of the 100 metre radius will only be included if the property point, as defined by LLPG, falls within the radius.

When considering applications the Council's Development Management service will use Bristol City Council software to calculate the proportion of dwellings that are occupied as HMOs within any given 100 metre radius of the application property or site.

Fig. 4 shows a worked example of the HMO threshold assessment which includes an explanation of the calculation.

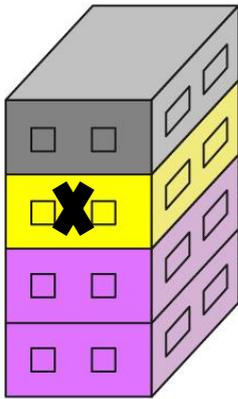
Application of the HMO threshold at the neighbourhood level should not preclude any assessment of the impact of the proportion of dwellings occupied as HMOs at street level.

The datasets used to identify HMOs are set out in section 4.5. The location of identified HMO properties can be viewed using the Council’s web mapping tool [Pinpoint](#) available on the Council’s website. Further details on the use of *Pinpoint* are also provided in section 4.5.

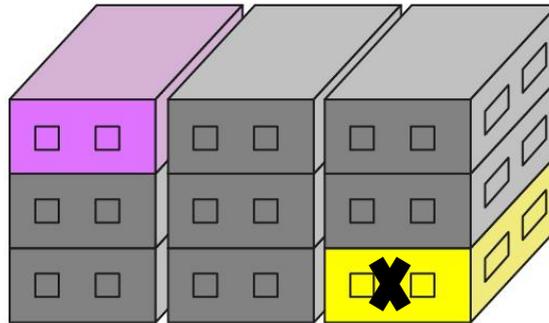
Fig. 3: Sandwich Assessment - Worked Examples



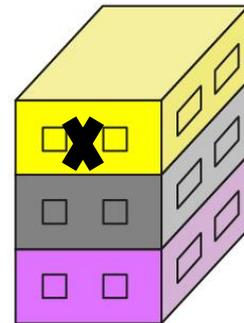




Situation 3:
Dwelling is within a sub-divided building where the majority of units will be HMOs



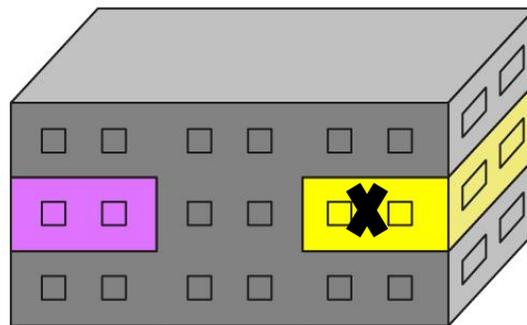
Situation 4:
Dwellings are sandwiched between HMOs in sub-divided buildings either side



Situation 5:
Dwelling is sandwiched between HMOs above and below in the same building

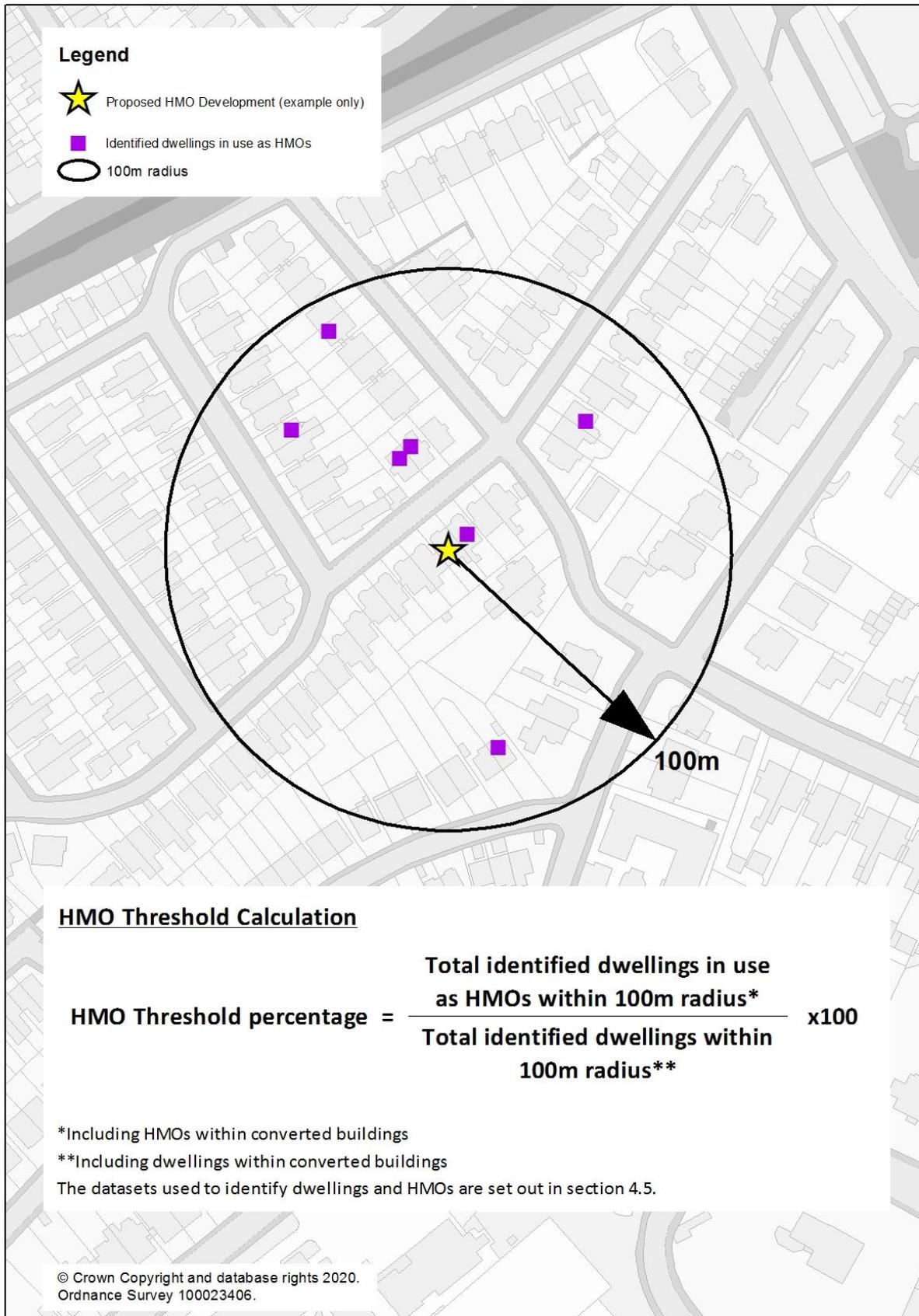
Legend

- Existing HMO
- Existing dwelling
- Proposed HMO



Situation 6:
Dwelling is sandwiched between HMOs either side in the same building

Fig. 4: HMO Threshold Assessment - Worked Example



4.3 Achieving a Good Standard of Accommodation

To achieve a good standard of accommodation proposals for the development or intensification of HMOs should be consistent with relevant Local Plan policies and guidance, as identified in section 3.2, and have regard to the standards set out at Appendix B or as current.

4.4 HMOs and Purpose-built Student Accommodation

Other forms of shared housing, specifically purpose-built student accommodation, can result in negative impacts when concentrated within areas. These can include noise and disturbance caused by increased levels of activity surrounding such developments, the creation of imbalances in the type and tenure of housing supply within an area and a reduction in the mix of uses across an area affecting its character. Harmful conditions could arise in a locality when any of these impacts resulting from existing purpose-built student accommodation are significant in their own right, or, are combined with impacts from existing and/or proposed HMO development.

When determining applications for HMO development within neighbourhood areas containing purpose-built student accommodation the following matters should be considered:

- The extent of concentration of purpose-built student accommodation bed spaces in the local area compared to the citywide average;
- The proportion of HMOs calculated under the HMO Threshold Assessment as set out in section 4.2;
- The type of any purpose-built student accommodation and its location in relation to the proposed HMO;
- Whether the combined impact of the above considerations would result in the proposed HMO development creating or contributing to a harmful concentration of HMOs in combination with the impacts of any purpose-built student accommodation.

The dataset used to identify student bed spaces is set out in section 4.5. The location of known purpose-built student accommodation can be viewed using the Council's web mapping tool [Pinpoint](#) available on the Council's website. Further details on the use of *Pinpoint* are also provided in section 4.5.

4.5 Information on Datasets

HMOs

The datasets used to calculate the proportion of dwellings that are occupied as HMOs in any given area include total identified dwellings (the denominator) and total identified dwellings in use as HMOs (the numerator).

Total identified dwellings are based on residential records held within the Bristol Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and include all approved residential classifications but exclude garages, residential car parks and provisional records.

Total identified dwellings in use as HMOs include:

- All licensed HMOs including properties with a mandatory licence or an additional licence (in areas of the city where additional licensing schemes have been declared);

- All planning permissions and other authorisations for HMOs that are not licensed.

HMO datasets are updated on a quarterly basis to ensure current HMO numbers are available to help determine planning applications. Not all HMOs can be identified as licences and/or planning permission/authorisation is not required for all properties. Improvements to HMO recording will be sought over time. This may involve the use of additional and/or alternative datasets.

Student Bed Spaces

The dataset on purpose-built student accommodation bed spaces is drawn from annually updated records of all completed schemes and schemes with planning permission. The update is carried out as part of the Council's annual [Residential Development Survey](#).

Pinpoint

The location of HMO licensed properties, HMOs with planning permission, purpose-built student accommodation and Article 4 Direction areas can be viewed using the Council's web mapping tool [Pinpoint](#) available on the Council's website.

To view the location of HMO licensed properties in *Pinpoint* open the 'Housing and property' section under 'Local information' and check the 'map' boxes relating to 'Property Licence - Additional HMO' and 'Property Licence - Mandatory HMO'.

To view the location of HMOs with planning permission, purpose-built student accommodation and Article 4 Direction areas open the 'Environment and planning' section under 'Local information' and check the map boxes relating to 'HMO planning permissions', 'Student accommodation' and 'Article 4 Directions'.

The location of all properties and all Article 4 Direction areas (including Directions not relating to HMOs) will be visible on the map. A zoom function allows the map to be viewed at different scales. Click on the 'Legend' tab of the 'Map options' box on the right hand side of the screen to view further information.

5. Submission Requirements for Applicants

To determine planning applications for new HMOs or additional bed spaces within existing HMOs the following information should be submitted:

- Completed application form;
- Block plan of the site (at a scale of 1:100 or 1:200) showing site boundaries and any on-site car parking;
- Maximum number of occupants;
- Existing and proposed floor plans showing all room sizes (square metres), room uses and number of persons occupying each bedroom/bedsit;
- Cycle parking facilities;
- Details of the location, layout, design, volume, management and collection arrangements for all recyclable and waste materials;
- Details of any associated building works.

In some cases additional information may be required to help determine the planning application. Further information on submitting a planning application is available on the Council's website.

6. Other Matters

6.1 HMO Licences

The Council operates a mandatory licensing scheme for larger HMOs in Bristol. An HMO must have a licence if it is occupied by 5 or more people.

Additional licensing schemes for HMOs are also operated in the Eastville and St. George areas of Bristol and across the central Bristol wards of Ashley, Bishopston and Ashley Down, Central, Clifton, Clifton Down, Cotham, Easton, Hotwells and Harbourside, Lawrence Hill, Redland, Southville and Windmill Hill.

All HMO property licence holders must comply with their [licence conditions](#). The planning status of an HMO cannot be considered when making a decision on whether to grant or refuse a property licence.

Further information on [HMO licensing schemes](#) is available on the Council's website.

6.2 Property Management

All HMO property licence holders must comply with the [West of England - Code of Good Management Practice](#).

The [West of England Rental Standard Rent with Confidence](#) is a voluntary set of realistic standards and requirements that sets out clearly what landlords and agents need to do when letting or managing a property.

6.3 Sound Reduction Measures

Proposals for the development or intensification of HMOs may be subject to building regulations requirements relating to sound reduction. The requirements are set out in [Approved Document E: Resistance to the passage of sound](#). Where sound reduction measures are required existing and new party walls/floors will be tested to demonstrate compliance with relevant performance standards set out in the approved document. Further advice on requirements should be sought from the Council's Building Control team.

In some circumstances a condition seeking sound reduction may be attached to a planning permission for new HMO development exclusive of any building regulations requirement.

In all circumstances applicants should consider on a voluntary basis the provision of a range of easy to install sound reduction measures where appropriate. Measures could include:

- Use of soft-closers on internal doors and external doors;
- Replacement of door knockers with doorbells/keyless systems;
- Sound-deadening material on stair treads;
- Location/design of bathroom sanitary ware to avoid noise transmission through party walls;
- Plan layouts that avoid positioning of communal rooms opposite bedrooms in adjoining properties and restriction of access to elevated external areas (i.e. balconies, roofs).

- Noise mitigation where access to properties is from the rear via external steps and walkways (such as HMOs above commercial premises). These can include enclosed lobbies and walkways or creation of an entrance on the main street.

6.4 Reporting a Breach of Planning or Licensing Rules

The Council can investigate complaints related to the status and operation of HMOs. Further information on [reporting a breach of planning rules](#) or [reporting a rogue landlord](#) can be found on the Council's web site. To report a breach of licensing conditions contact private.housing@bristol.gov.uk.

Appendix A: Local Plan Policy for HMOs

'Policy DM2: Residential Sub-divisions, Shared and Specialist Housing

The Core Strategy sets out the overall approach to developing new homes in the city. It proposes an overall number of homes, seeks affordable housing and aims for a broad housing mix. This Development Management policy offers an approach to addressing the impacts and issues of certain forms of housing; in particular..... shared housing.....

The supply of shared housing provide an important contribution to people's housing choice. The policy aims to ensure that such development also preserves the residential amenity and character of an area and that harmful concentrations do not arise. The policy also aims for a good standard of accommodation.....

Residential Sub-divisions, Shared and Specialist Housing – General Criteria

Proposals for:

-
- **the conversion of existing dwellings or construction of new buildings to be used as houses in multiple occupation;**
- **the intensification of existing houses in multiple occupation;**
-
- **other forms of shared housing**

will not be permitted where:

- i. **The development would harm the residential amenity or character of the locality as a result of any of the following:**
 - **Levels of activity that cause excessive noise and disturbance to residents; or**
 - **Levels of on-street parking that cannot be reasonably accommodated or regulated through parking control measures; or**
 - **Cumulative detrimental impact of physical alterations to buildings and structures; or**
 - **Inadequate storage for recycling/refuse and cycles.**
- ii. **The development would create or contribute to a harmful concentration of such uses within a locality as a result of any of the following:**
 - **Exacerbating existing harmful conditions including those listed at (i) above; or**
 - **Reducing the choice of homes in the area by changing the housing mix.**

Where development is permitted it must provide a good standard of accommodation by meeting relevant requirements and standards set out in other development plan policies.

.....

For the purposes of this policy shared housing includes houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), bed-sits, hostels, housing for older people and specialist student accommodation. The council has established an Article 4 Direction to control small HMOs within the wards of Ashley, Cabot, Clifton, Clifton East, Cotham, Lawrence Hill and Redland. Small HMOs are defined as small shared houses or

flats occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals who share basic amenities. This means that a planning application is required for this type of development.

General Criteria

Whilst making a valuable contribution to the city's housing requirements shared housing can have an impact on residential amenity and the character and housing mix of an area. Specific issues common to both forms of housing can include:

- Noise and disturbance associated with intensification of the residential use and/or the lifestyles of occupants;
- Pressure for on-street parking;
- A shift from permanent family housing to more transient accommodation;
- Impacts on social cohesion;
- A shift in the character of shops and businesses supporting the community;
- Impact of external alterations;
- Poor waste management.

When making assessments on new development, consideration is to be given to the particular qualities and characteristics of a residential area or residential uses that might contribute to it being an enjoyable or otherwise satisfactory place to live. These usually include generally quieter surroundings; a reasonable level of safe, accessible and convenient car parking; a well-maintained or visually attractive environment and the preservation of buildings and structures that contribute to the character of a locality. Harmful concentrations are likely to arise when issues commonly associated with these uses, listed in para. 2.2.5 above, cumulatively result in detrimental effects on these residential qualities and characteristics. Harmful concentrations will also result where the choice of housing is reduced and no longer provides for the needs of different groups within the community.

Assessments should consider the relative impacts at street, neighbourhood and ward levels.

The policy also seeks the provision of a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers. Consideration should be given to layout, internal living space, external amenity space, outlook, privacy, adaptability, security, cycle and car parking and refuse and recycling storage. Relevant requirements and standards are set out in the policies listed in the Policy Links section.

.....

Application Information

For major developments analysis should be undertaken of the type of housing in the area, including where relevant the number of..... HMOs or specialist student housing accommodation, at street, neighbourhood and ward levels. Data is available from the Census that corresponds to these geographies.'

(Local Plan - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies - Adopted July 2014)

Appendix B: Guideline Minimum Room Size Standards for HMO Development

The standards used at the time of this SPD's adoption are set out below. The current [standards for licensable HMO properties](#) are published on the Council's web site.

Room sizes where the room is for the sole use of the occupier(s)

Room space	Number of Persons		
	1 person under the age of 10	1	2
Kitchen	N/A	4 m ²	5 m ²
Combined kitchen & living room	N/A	11 m ²	15 m ²
Bedroom	4.64 m ²	6.51 m ²	10.22 m ²
Combined bed and living room	N/A	9 m ²	14 m ²
Combined bedroom, living room & kitchen	N/A	13 m ²	19 m ²

Room sizes where the room is shared by occupiers

Room space	Number of Persons							
	1-3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10*
Kitchen	5m ²	6m ²	7m ²	9m ²	10m ²	10m ²	11m ²	11m ²
Total communal living space	13.5m ²	17m ²	18m ²	20m ²	22m ²	24m ²	26m ²	27.5m ²

*For more than 10 persons, please contact the Private Housing Team to discuss proposed room sizes

