

Development Strategy

Topic Paper

Appendix 13: Meeting the accommodation needs of students



Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Topic Paper published as part of the Proposed Submission
Local Plan - Regulation 19 consultation (August 2026 -
September 2026)

Development Strategy Topic Paper 2026

Appendix 13: Meeting the accommodation needs of students

Background

1. Student accommodation is an important area of consideration for Greater Cambridge reflecting the presence of the University of Cambridge (UoC) and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) as major higher education institutions, alongside further education institutions and specialist schools and colleges.
2. Engagement was undertaken with higher and further education institutions, specialist schools and colleges in Greater Cambridge in 2023 to identify their accommodation needs, and the results and analysis of this engagement is published in the [Development Strategy Topic Paper 2025](#) (see Appendix 12: Faculty Development and Student Accommodation Needs – Results of Engagement).

Scope and Purpose

3. This appendix considers the representations received on the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan in relation to student accommodation needs, and the outcomes of specific engagement undertaken with the UoC, its Colleges and ARU in 2026 relating to the identified student accommodation needs and their approach to meeting this need. From this analysis, this study provides conclusions on the identified need for student accommodation in Greater Cambridge for inclusion in the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan.
4. This study also provides an update on the supply of student accommodation in Greater Cambridge, through analysis of actual completions and current commitments.

Policy Context: National Planning Policy and Guidance

5. Paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) outlines the overall aim for areas to meet their identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. Paragraph 63 adds that local authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including those who require student housing, and ensure that this is reflected in planning policies. Paragraph 71 specifically outlines the benefits of mixed tenure sites with a mixture of ownership and rental tenures, as well as housing designed for specific groups including student accommodation.
6. National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on [Housing needs of different groups](#) (Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 67-004-20190722) articulates how strategic policy-making authorities should plan for sufficient student accommodation for both communal halls of residence and self-contained dwellings, on and off campus. It advises that encouraging more dedicated student accommodation may provide low cost housing that takes pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock. Strategic policy-making authorities are therefore encouraged to consider options which would support both the needs of the student population as well as local residents before introducing caps or restrictions on students living outside university-provided accommodation. Consultation with universities and other higher educational establishments will be needed to ensure they understand their student accommodation requirements in their area.
7. PPG on [housing supply and delivery](#) (Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 68-034-20190722) sets out that communal (use class C2) accommodation provided in the form of bedspaces for students can, in principle, be counted towards delivering the housing requirement based on the amount of accommodation those new bedspaces release to the wider housing market (by allowing existing properties to return to general residential use); and / or the extent to which it allows general market housing to remain in such use, rather than being converted for use as student accommodation. The [Housing Delivery Test measurement rulebook](#) sets out the ratios to be used to convert bedspaces to dwellings for student accommodation.

Comments on the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan in relation to student accommodation needs

8. In December 2025, in addition to general notifications to the public and stakeholders regarding the local plan consultation, officers notified via email the higher and further education institutions, specialist schools, and colleges in Greater Cambridge that the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan was out for public consultation, and encouraged them to have a look at the approach taken to both identifying the student accommodation needs for Greater Cambridge (given that it reflected the conclusions from the engagement undertaken in 2023), and how this need was to be met. A copy of the email sent is included in Appendix A.
9. Through the Draft Local Plan consultation, responses were received from the UoC, 10 UoC Colleges, ARU, and a specialist/language college. However, only the response from ARU specifically included comments relating to the accommodation needs of students. Appendix B includes:
 - a list of the higher and further education institutions, specialist schools, and colleges contacted,
 - whether representations were submitted to the consultation on the Local Plan, and
 - whether their representations made any comments on the accommodation needs of students.
10. Officers also met with the UoC and bursars from two Colleges on 12 January 2026 and ARU on 10 February 2026. The records of the discussions at these meetings are included in Appendices C and D. Further information was also provided by ARU following the meeting, and this information is included in Appendix E.

Analysis of accommodation needs of students: UoC and its Colleges

11. In 2023, UoC and its Colleges provided the following information:
 - between 2016/17 and 2023/24, postgraduate student admissions increased by an average of 3% and undergraduates by just over 1%,
 - UoC Colleges are responsible for provision of all student accommodation for

the UoC, therefore no accommodation need was identified by the UoC,

- the majority of Colleges that responded were either not seeking to increase their numbers of undergraduate students to 2032/33 or did not have undergraduate students, however 5 Colleges that responded noted their intention to increase their intake of undergraduates by between 0% and 2% each year to 2032/33, and Lucy Cavendish College responded that it was seeking a 4% increase over 3-5 years,
- 10 Colleges that responded anticipated no annual growth of postgraduate students, however 14 Colleges anticipated annual growth rates of between 1% and 2.5%,
- the majority of Colleges that responded outlined that over 80% of their undergraduate students are living in UoC or College maintained accommodation,
- for postgraduate students, for the Colleges that responded there is a much wider range of proportions of students occupying UoC or College maintained accommodation – between 27% and 100%,
- for undergraduates, the majority of Colleges that responded noted their intention to maintain proportions students living in UoC or College maintained accommodation, with the exceptions of Lucy Cavendish College that intended to increase the proportion from 84% to around 95%, and St John's that envisaged an approximate 16% increase,
- for postgraduates, the majority of Colleges were seeking to increase the current proportion of postgraduates living in UoC or College maintained accommodation, with Darwin College highlighting an intention to increase the proportion by 13.8%,
- from the Colleges that responded a need for 1,242 units was identified, comprising of 355 undergraduate units and 887 postgraduate units,
- five Colleges that responded identified a need for self-contained or ensuite units for academic staff over 5-10 years, totalling approximately 45 units, and
- most Colleges that responded indicated that the anticipated need for staff accommodation would be met through reorganisation or redevelopment of existing owned College properties.

12. Through the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation, 10 Colleges made

representations on policies and allocations included in the Local Plan. However, none of these representations made any comments on the overall identified student accommodation needs, or provided any updated information on anticipated student or staff accommodation needs for their College.

13. Through the engagement with the UoC and two Colleges in January 2026, the UoC Interim Head of Planning, the Chair of the Bursars Planning Sub-committee, and the Chair of Bursars committee provided the following feedback:

- general support for the approach that the Local Plan takes to student accommodation,
- specific support for the principle of the Local Plan being relatively permissive around expansion of accommodation on core college sites,
- confirmed that in terms of forecast growth for numbers of students that the Local Plan evidence/numbers are broadly in line with the university overall growth trajectory, and that it is only a limited number of colleges which are actually looking to grow undergraduate student numbers, but more growth likely in postgraduate numbers, and.
- highlighted that the Local Plan assumes part time students are not growing at UoC, but this is a growing area especially as the government is encouraging all universities to grow part time university courses and Colleges will likely need to accommodate these part time students.

14. The Councils have therefore continued to assume that the identified student accommodation need from the UoC and its Colleges for 2024/25 to 2032/33 is 1,242 units, comprising of 355 undergraduate units and 887 postgraduate units. The Councils have also continued to assume that there is a small need for approximately 45 units for staff accommodation.

Analysis of accommodation needs of students: ARU

15. In 2023, ARU provided the following information:

- 12,800 students in 2021/22, comprising of 8,300 undergraduates and 4,500 postgraduate students,
- anticipated ongoing growth in student numbers over 10 years, with a five-

year annual rate of expansion for undergraduates of approximately 4.35% annually and 4.10% for postgraduates,

- portfolio of student accommodation in Cambridge providing 1,594 rooms comprising of a mixture of ARU owned purpose-built student bedrooms, ARU owned HMOs, nomination/partnership agreements for purpose-built student bedrooms, and leased privately owned HMOs,
- 58% of students commute daily or occupy HMOs not directly controlled by ARU and 42% of students live in Cambridge within ARU controlled accommodation,
- seeking to increase the numbers of students living in purpose-built accommodation either owned by ARU or through nomination/partnership agreements, and
- 800 additional student bedrooms needed by 2025/26.

16. ARU provided a response to the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation setting out that:

- the identified student accommodation need within the Draft Local Plan did not reflect their latest projections,
- the identified need does not cover the whole of the plan period
- their latest evidence suggests that 70% of their students live within a 5 kilometre radius of the East Road Campus, within rented accommodation, ARU owned accommodation, own residence, parental/guardian home and private sector halls,
- student numbers at ARU are anticipated to increase by 19% during the plan period, from 12,745 students in 2024/25 to 15,165 students in 2044/45, based on annual predications up to 2029/30 before then transitioning to a 5 year assumption up to 2044/45,
- assuming the same proportion of students live in Cambridge (i.e. 70%) that this would mean 10,616 ARU students living in Cambridge by 2044/45, an uplift of 1,695 students compared to 2024/25, and
- the latest Development Framework for ARU shows the potential to deliver approximately 388 bedrooms at Severn Place and Mackays.

17. Through the engagement with ARU in February 2026, the Strategic Estates Manager and their agent provided the following feedback:

- the data previously shared with the Councils only related to a very short term period up to 2026,
- based on revised projections of student growth (medium growth scenario) and 70% of students living within a 5 km radius of the campus, the identified need is 1,695 student bedrooms by 2045,
- there are limited opportunities for developing student accommodation for ARU within original campus (East Road South),
- do not have specific sites identified that will provide student accommodation to meet all of the identified need, but the Local Plan needs to support ARU's strategy for responding to need,
- acquired Severn Place and Mackays sites, and working on plans for redevelopment of these sites - looking to provide student accommodation (388 student beds) at Severn Place, and
- ARUs model of provision of student accommodation is different to UoC, however, having greater ownership of student accommodation is preferable.

18. Through further engagement with ARU between March and May 2026, their agent has provided the following feedback:

- anticipated growth in student numbers (based on the medium growth scenario) shows an increase of 2,420 students between 2024/25 and 2044/45, or 744 students between 2024/25 and 2032/33,
- for the period 2024/25 to 2032/33, depending on the proportion accommodated in purpose built student accommodation and / or ARU owned accommodation, this results in an identified need of between 312 and 521 additional student bedrooms,
- ARU would like to accommodate 70% of their students within 5km of their East Road Campus through a mixture of rented accommodation, own residence, parental/guardian home, and private sector halls,
- 52% of current students are accommodated in rented accommodation or halls of residence, and maintaining this proportion would result in an identified need of 387 additional student bedrooms by 2032/33 or 1,259 student bedrooms by 2044/45,

- existing portfolio of student accommodation in Cambridge providing 1,682 rooms, and
- Severn Place anticipated to deliver approximately 308 student bedrooms.

19. Taking account of the updated information from ARU, the Councils consider that it is appropriate to identify a need for student accommodation from ARU that would reflect the anticipated growth in students at the university (using the medium growth scenario) alongside maintaining the proportion of students living within rented accommodation or halls of residence (i.e. 52%). This results in an identified need of 387 student bedrooms for ARU between 2024/25 and 2032/33.

20. Identifying this level of need does not prevent ARU from seeking to increase the proportion of students living in purpose built student accommodation during the plan period, or from bringing forward proposals for additional purpose built student accommodation beyond their level of identified need. It also does not prevent student accommodation from being brought forwards in the second half of the plan period, for which the Councils are not seeking to identify a specific level of need.

21. The Councils have therefore amended the identified student accommodation need from ARU to 387 units for 2024/25 to 2032/33, from the previously identified need of 800 units.

Analysis of accommodation needs of students: non-university institutions

22. In 2023, very few responses were received from non-university institutions and no specific needs were identified for additional student accommodation, other than in relation to additional rooms for short-stay English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

23. The Bell Educational Trust provided a response to the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation setting out that Bell Educational Services are no longer trading, but that allocation S/EOC/BS (Bell School, Babraham Road) could still be used to deliver much needed student accommodation for other institutions within Cambridge, and contribute towards meeting the identified new homes and student

accommodation needs.

24. The Councils have therefore continued to assume that there is no identified student accommodation need from the non-university institutions.

Identified accommodation needs for students in Greater Cambridge

25. Taking account of the engagement undertaken in 2023, responses to the consultation on the Draft Local Plan, and engagement undertaken with the UoC, its Colleges and ARU in 2026, the identified student accommodation need for 2024/25 to 2032/33 is 1,629 units. This consists of an identified need of 1,242 units from the UoC and its Colleges and 387 units from ARU. There is also a modest need for approximately 45 units for staff accommodation.

Supply of student accommodation to meet needs

Completions 2024/25

26. In 2024/25, 393 student bedrooms (net) were completed in Greater Cambridge on the following sites:

- 5 High Street, East Chesterton: 91 new student bedrooms.
- South of Mill Lane, Cambridge: 94 new student bedrooms.
- Fossdene, Whinside, The Gables and The Knott, Mount Pleasant, Cambridge: 37 student bedrooms demolished.
- Land off Wilberforce Road, Cambridge: 245 new student bedrooms.

Commitments

27. The Greater Cambridge housing trajectory (published in the [Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Housing Land Supply Report – April 2026](#)) includes 771 anticipated completions of student bedrooms by 2032/33 from the following sites:

- 12 & 13 Mill Lane, Cambridge: 13 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2027/28.

- Old Press / Mill Lane, Cambridge: 243 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2032/33 (125 bedrooms) and 2033/34 (118 bedrooms).
- Orchard Park (Com4): 138 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2026/27.
- Bell School: 100 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2032/33.
- John Banks Honda, 444 Newmarket Road, Cambridge: 140 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2026/27.
- St Edmunds College, Cambridge: 16 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2032/33.
- Fitzwilliam College, Storeys Way, Cambridge: 17 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2026/27.
- Fossdene, Whinside, The Gables and The Knott, Mount Pleasant, Cambridge: 138 new student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2027/28.
- 19-35 Regent Street, Cambridge: 26 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2027/28.
- Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge: 8 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2025/26.
- 64 & 65 Bridge Street, Cambridge: loss of 13 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2025/26.
- Downing College, Regent Street, Cambridge: 6 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- Owlstone Croft, Cambridge: 45 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2027/28.
- Granby Court: 33, 35, 36 & 37 Bridge Street and Coach Houses to the Masters Lodge, St John's College, Cambridge: 12 student bedrooms anticipated to be completed in 2026/27.

28. There are a further 1,675 new student bedrooms with outline planning permission at North West Cambridge (Eddington) and 118 new student bedrooms at Old Press /

Mill Lane (as identified above) that are currently anticipated to be delivered after 2032/33, but which could be delivered sooner if necessary to meet the identified need.

29. ARU are also intending to bring forward new student bedrooms at Severn Place and Mackays, known as its East Road North campus (see Appendices D and E), which are anticipated to provide at least 300 bedrooms.

30. It is also important to acknowledge there are likely to be other windfall developments for student accommodation, and strategic sites (other than Eddington) may also choose to deliver student accommodation as part of their housing mix. Strategic sites provide an opportunity to deliver specialist accommodation for students, alongside other types and tenures of housing, to ensure that new communities meet the needs of different groups in sustainable locations with access to services and facilities.

Supply of academic staff accommodation to meet needs

31. For academic staff accommodation, most Colleges that responded indicated that the delivery of staff accommodation would be met through reorganisation or redevelopment of existing owned College properties. Therefore, it is likely that proposals for academic staff accommodation will be brought forward as windfall developments. Additionally, North West Cambridge (Eddington) includes affordable housing to meet the needs of the University of Cambridge and its Colleges key workers. The delivery of this key worker accommodation would exceed the staff accommodation needs identified by the Colleges.

Conclusions

Undergraduate and postgraduate student accommodation

32. Taking account of the engagement undertaken in 2023, responses to the consultation on the Draft Local Plan, and engagement undertaken with the UoC, its Colleges and ARU in 2026, the combined identified student accommodation need

for 2024/25 to 2032/33 is 1,629 units. This consists of an identified need of 1,242 units from the UoC and its Colleges and 387 units from ARU.

33. An additional 1,164 student bedrooms are anticipated to be delivered between 2024/25 and 2032/33, which would meet 71% of the identified need. There are a further 1,793 student bedrooms with outline planning permission or allocated that are currently anticipated to be delivered after 2032/33, but which could be delivered sooner. ARU are also intending to bring forward at least 300 new student bedrooms at its East Road North campus. It is also important to acknowledge there are likely to be other windfall developments for student accommodation, and other strategic sites may also choose to deliver student accommodation as part of their housing mix. Including all these additional sources of supply of student bedrooms, this would result in provision of student units beyond the currently identified need.

Academic staff accommodation

34. Taking account of the engagement undertaken in 2023, responses to the consultation on the Draft Local Plan, and engagement undertaken with the UoC, its Colleges and ARU in 2026, the Councils have also continued to assume that there is a modest need for approximately 45 units for academic staff accommodation.

35. For academic staff accommodation, most Colleges that responded indicated that the delivery of staff accommodation would be met through reorganisation or redevelopment of existing owned College properties, and therefore, it is likely that proposals for academic staff accommodation will be brought forward as windfall developments. Additionally, North West Cambridge (Eddington) includes affordable housing to meet the needs of the University of Cambridge and College key workers. The delivery of this key worker accommodation would exceed the staff accommodation needs identified by the Colleges.

Appendices

Appendix A: Template of email sent

To / BCC: all higher and further education institutions

Subject: Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan – accommodation needs of students

Dear all

As you may be aware, we are currently consulting on the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan until 5pm on 30 January 2026.

The draft Local Plan sets out how we think the area should develop over the next 20 years, including setting out how much additional purpose-built student accommodation is needed and how this will be provided.

Our approach to purpose-built student accommodation in the draft Local Plan has been informed by our engagement in early 2023 with higher and further education institutions in Greater Cambridge. Chapter 2 (Development Strategy) of the [draft Local Plan](#) sets out the identified need for purpose-built student accommodation in Greater Cambridge (within Policy S/JH: New jobs and homes), and how this need will be met (within the supporting information for Policy S/DS: Development strategy).

The results of our engagement in 2023 and the details of the developments that are anticipated to meet our needs are set out in Appendix 12 of the [Strategy Topic Paper](#).

We encourage you to have a look at our approach to the provision of purpose-built student accommodation in Greater Cambridge, the results of the engagement, and the developments that we have identified to meet our need, and particularly to let us know if anything has changed since we engaged with you in 2023.

If you do have any comments to make, please let us know by responding to the consultation – details on how to do this are included in the email below or can be found on our [Local Plan webpage](#).

Additionally, if you have any questions or queries as you consider this aspect of the draft Local Plan, or would like to discuss anything about our approach to the provision of purpose-built student accommodation in Greater Cambridge, please get in touch using my contact details below.

Appendix B: List of Institutions and whether they responded to the Draft Local Plan consultation

Institution	Type	Responded?	Comments relating to accommodation needs?
ABC Languages Cambridge	Language School	No	-
Bell Educational Services Ltd	Language School	Yes	Partly
Cambridge Academy of English (CAE)	Language School	No	-
Cambridge Centre for Languages	Language School	No	-
Cambridge Language and Activity Courses (CLAC)	Language School	No	-
Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC)	Language School	No	-
Central Language School	Language School	No	-
EC English Language Schools (formerly Embassy)	Language School	No	-
EF Language School, Cambridge	Language School	No	-
Eurocentre, Cambridge	Language School	No	-
Kaplan International College	Language School	No	-
Language Studies International (LSI)	Language School	No	-
OISE Cambridge	Language School	No	-
Regent Cambridge	Language School	No	-
Select English Cambridge	Language School	No	-
St Giles International (the New School of English)	Language School	No	-
Stafford House School of English	Language School	No	-
Studio Cambridge English Language (SCEL)	Language School	No	-

Institution	Type	Responded?	Comments relating to accommodation needs?
Bodyworks	Specialist College	No	-
Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts (CSVPA) (Cambridge Education Group)	Specialist College	No	-
Lite Regal Education	Specialist College	No	-
Oxford & Cambridge Summer Academy	Specialist College	No	-
Reach Cambridge	Specialist College	No	-
Stephen Perse Foundation	Specialist College	No	-
Lite School	Specialist College	No	-
Pitman Training	Specialist College	No	-
Cambridge Seminars College	Specialist College	No	-
St Andrews College	Specialist College	No	-
Eastern Region Ministry Course	Higher Education	No	-
Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge (KLC)	Higher Education	No	-
Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology	Higher Education	No	-
Ridley Hall	Higher Education	No	-
The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide (CCCW)	Higher Education	No	-
The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion	Higher Education	No	-
The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies	Higher Education	No	-
Wesley House	Higher Education	No	-
Westcott House	Higher Education	No	-
Westfield House	Higher Education	No	-

Institution	Type	Responded?	Comments relating to accommodation needs?
Westminster College	Higher Education	No	-
Woolf institute	Higher Education	No	-
Anglia Ruskin University	Higher Education	Yes	Yes
Cambridge Regional College	Further Education	No	-
Mander Portman Woodward (MPW)	Further Education	No	-
Abbey College Cambridge	Further Education	No	-
Cambridge Arts and Sciences Ltd (CATS College)	Further Education	No	-
Christ's College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Churchill College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Clare College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Clare Hall	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Corpus Christi College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Darwin College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Downing College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Emmanuel College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Fitzwilliam College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Girton College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Gonville and Caius College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Homerton College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Hughes Hall	University of Cambridge college	No	-

Institution	Type	Responded?	Comments relating to accommodation needs?
Jesus College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
King's College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Lucy Cavendish College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Magdalene College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Murray Edwards College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Newnham College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Pembroke College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Peterhouse College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Queens' College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Robinson College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Selwyn College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
Sidney Sussex College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
St Catharine's College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
St Edmunds' College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
St John's College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Trinity College	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Trinity Hall	University of Cambridge college	Yes	No
Wolfson College	University of Cambridge college	No	-
University of Cambridge	University of Cambridge	Yes	No

Appendix C: Record of Engagement: Meeting with University of Cambridge and its Colleges

Greater Cambridge, University of Cambridge and Colleges, Accommodation Needs of Students Meeting - 12 January 2026

Attending:

- Jonathan Dixon - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Planning Policy Manager)
- Lauren Wilkinson - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Planning Policy Team Leader)
- Jenny Nuttycombe - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Principal Planning Policy Officer)
- Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Senior Planning Policy Officer)
- Mark Parsons - University of Cambridge (Interim Head of Planning)
- Tim Harvey-Samuel - Trinity Hall College, Cambridge (Chair of the Bursars Planning Sub-committee)
- Richard Anthony - Jesus College, Cambridge (Chair of Bursars committee)

Overview of Key areas of discussion:

- a) Current and future student numbers (undergraduate and postgraduate)
- b) Part-time students
- c) Academic staff accommodation
- d) University owned student houses of multiple occupation (HMOs)
- e) Affordable housing obligations for student accommodation
- f) Exploring the definition of what constitutes the 'core site' of the colleges
- g) North-West Cambridge (Eddington)
- h) Updated evidence, including the University of Cambridge (UofC) estates strategy

Accommodation needs of students in relation to University of Cambridge / Colleges:

The UofC Interim Head of Planning, the Chair of the Bursars Planning Sub-committee, and the Chair of Bursars committee, provided feedback and comments on:

- a. The approach that the UofC/Colleges will take to providing comments on the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Draft GCLP):
 - i. The Bursars Planning Sub-committee will submit a response that covers common issues, however likely that some colleges will also make representations on more specific issues individually.
 - ii. UofC will also submit a response.
- b. The need for the Local Plan to consider the context that operates in Cambridge, with the Colleges being responsible for the provision of student accommodation rather than the UofC:
 - i. The provision of student accommodation is a college by college activity and responsibility.
 - ii. Requires thinking about the individuality of a particular college campus and being pragmatic in this regard.
 - iii. The colleges need accommodation that is appropriate to both the demographics and number of students.
- c. Their view on the approach taken in the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan regarding the accommodation needs of students and academic staff:
 - i. General support for the approach that the Draft GCLP takes to student accommodation.
 - ii. Specific support for the principle of the Local Plan being relatively permissive around expansion of accommodation on core college sites, which is well precedented and in line with adopted Local Plans and is very important to UofC/Colleges. The overall impetus is to consolidate student accommodation within/around college sites, but there is work to do around precisely how a college 'core site' perimeter is defined as needs to reflect reality.
 - iii. Confirmed that in terms of forecast growth for numbers of students that

the Draft GCLP evidence/numbers are broadly in line with the university overall growth trajectory, and that it is only a limited number of colleges which are actually looking to grow undergraduate student numbers, but more growth likely in postgraduate numbers.

- iv. Highlighted that the Draft GCLP assumes part time students are not growing at UofC, but this is a growing area especially as the government is encouraging all universities to grow part time university courses. It is not yet determined how this will play out in practice, however the course requirements for UofC are likely to include specific intense residential teaching periods and Colleges will likely need to accommodate these part time students. Raised concern that the Draft GCLP student accommodation policy does not allow for accommodation for part time students in the policy wording.
- v. Definition of 'an existing university or college campus site' in affordable housing policy needs to be carefully considered – currently the draft policy could prevent the Colleges trying to consolidate student accommodation within their sites. Needs to allow for buildings in close proximity to existing sites to become part of campus, especially as intensification of development within existing campus is constrained in many cases by being in historic city.

Approach to meeting the identified need taken by University of Cambridge / Colleges

The UofC Interim Head of Planning, the Chair of the Bursars Planning Sub-committee, and the Chair of Bursars committee, provided feedback and comments on:

- a. Further evidence and data to be published by the UoC, which can be provided to the GCSP in order to support robust policy making.
- b. UofC / Colleges highlighted that there is greater demand for purpose built accommodation for postgraduates due to the overall availability of accommodation in the housing market.
- c. Highlighted that houses in multiple occupation (HMO) policy in Draft GCLP would restrict Colleges from bring forwards further HMOs for their students, and that some Colleges are looking to increase stock of HMOs as part of

consolidating their accommodation for students.

- d. The numbers of academic/non-academic college support staff numbers are not high or significant to impact on a need for change in policy approach; recognised that draft GCLP policy does not change direction of how this accommodation has been provided in practice.
- e. Further consideration being given to how any student accommodation provided at North-West Cambridge (Eddington) can fulfil the requirements of colleges, given ongoing need for student accommodation but also acknowledging that the Colleges are consolidating student accommodation within their campuses.

Appendix D: Record of Engagement: Meeting with Anglia Ruskin University

Greater Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University, Accommodation Needs of Students Meeting - 10 February 2026

Attending:

- Jonathan Dixon - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Planning Policy Manager)
- Lauren Wilkinson - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Planning Policy Team Leader)
- Jenny Nuttycombe - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Principal Planning Policy Officer)
- Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Senior Planning Policy Officer)
- Liz Craig - Anglia Ruskin University (Strategic Estates Manager)
- Claire Mills – Savills (acting on behalf of Anglia Ruskin University)

Overview of Key areas of discussion:

- a) Accommodation needs of students at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)
- b) Approach to meeting the identified need taken by ARU, including the development of East Road North campus
- c) Affordability of student accommodation in Cambridge
- d) Affordable housing requirements on sites providing student accommodation
- e) Cambridge Green Belt - Howes Close

Accommodation needs of students in relation to ARU

The Strategic Estates Manager and their agent provided feedback and comments on:

- a. The approach that ARU has taken to calculating their student accommodation needs for the plan period:
 - i. The data previously shared with the Councils only related to a very short term period up to 2026.

- ii. The representation submitted on the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan provides projected growth in student accommodation needs up to 2045. Based on detailed projections up to 2029/30 and then applying 5% growth for the subsequent five year periods (medium growth scenario). The identified need is 1,695 student bedrooms.
 - iii. The calculations are based on 70% of students living within a 5 km radius of the campus (excluding Milton), and only taking account of growth in students. This includes students living in halls of residence, private rented accommodation (including HMOs), their own residence or with parents.
 - iv. The calculations and data behind the need identified in the representation were not submitted, but can be provided.
 - v. More uncertainty in anticipated growth beyond the first five years, due to various factors influencing growth such as Government policy.
 - vi. ARU has seen rapid growth in student numbers in the past, and can provide this historic data.
- b. The need for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan to provide flexibility to support ARU's growth agenda:
- i. Cambridge is a constrained city, and there are limited opportunities for developing student accommodation for ARU within original campus (East Road South).
 - ii. Demand for student accommodation for ARU will continue through the plan period, and need to ensure that the Local Plan allows ARU to respond to this.
 - iii. Do not have specific sites identified that will provide student accommodation to meet all of the identified need, but the Local Plan needs to support ARU's strategy for responding to need.
 - iv. Possibility of defining the two separate but linked campuses on East Road within a policy area that supports proposals for faculty uses and / or student accommodation.
 - v. New restrictions on HMOs are likely to cause issues for ARU as HMOs are used to meet some of its student accommodation needs.

Approach to meeting the identified need taken by ARU, including development of East Road North Campus

The Strategic Estates Manager and their agent provided feedback and comments on:

- a. Proposed development of student accommodation at East Road North Campus:
 - i. Acquired Severn Place and Mackays sites, and working on plans for redevelopment of these sites.
 - ii. Looking to provide student accommodation (388 student beds) at Severn Place, however there is an extant planning permission for housing on this site that needs to be considered. Already discussed proposals with Development Management, and expecting to submit a planning application for student accommodation this year.
 - iii. Likely that Mackays site will be a mixture of student accommodation and teaching spaces.
- b. Future provision of purpose built student accommodation:
 - i. ARUs model of provision of student accommodation is very different to University of Cambridge, however, having greater ownership of student accommodation is preferable.
 - ii. No conversations taken place with any of the promoters / developers of strategic sites (e.g. Eddington, Cambridge East) about the inclusion of student accommodation for ARU. Logical to look at these sites, if they would provide opportunities for ARU.
 - iii. Locations for new student accommodation would need to have good transport links (i.e. bus route) to campus.
- c. Creation of East Road Campus North:
 - i. Currently consists of Compass House, Young Street, Severn Place and Mackays sites.
 - ii. Becoming a hub for ARU that is separate to (but still linked to) the East Road South campus.

Affordability of student accommodation in Cambridge

The Strategic Estates Manager and their agent provided feedback that:

- a. A lack of supply of student accommodation pushes prices up.
- b. Important that there is affordable student accommodation given the mix of students at ARU and what they can afford.

Affordable housing requirements on sites providing student accommodation

The Strategic Estates Manager and their agent provided feedback and comments on:

- a. Feasibility of delivering financial contribution (equivalent of 40% affordable housing) on sites providing student accommodation:
 - i. Build costs make it difficult to deliver any requirements beyond the provision of student accommodation.
 - ii. The representation submitted on the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan provides a holding position on the viability of this requirement. Viability work being done, and can be shared once completed.
 - iii. Would be open to the possibility of affordable student bedrooms or affordable housing for those working for ARU.
- b. Wording of the policy requirements:
 - i. The wording 'within an existing university or college campus site' or 'redevelopment of existing purpose-built student accommodation owned by a university or college' would not apply to ARU, particularly East Road North (e.g. Severn Place), and therefore would be required to provide affordable housing.
 - ii. The two linked campuses on East Road need to be recognised in the Local Plan or policy needs to make clear that it does not apply to 'ARU owned land' irrespective of existing use, to enable student accommodation to be provided for ARU without affordable housing requirements.

Cambridge Green Belt - Howes Close

The Strategic Estates Manager and their agent queried the long term potential of Howes Close, which is within the 'Girton Gap' and has a current lawful use for sports pitches.

Appendix E: Further information from Anglia Ruskin University provided between March and June 2026

ARU Student Numbers – High Level Projection (provided in March 2026)

Below are the requested student numbers (in FTE) for our ARU's Cambridge Campus.

Please note that Projections are subject to high uncertainty driven by national policy (including student visa rules), international demand conditions, currency effects in key markets, cost-of-living pressure, conflicts/instability (e.g. wars, sanctions) and macroeconomic volatility. We therefore provide scenario ranges rather than a single point estimate from 2030 to 2045.

The table below presents actual data for last year (2024/25), along with projected numbers for 2025-26 to 2029-30.

Academic Year	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/25	2028/29	2029/30
Grand Total	12,745	12,000	12,200	12,500	12,700	13,100

Based on our most recent commuter data, around 70% of our students live within a radius of 5km of our Cambridge campus.

High-level projection between 2030 and 2045

The table below provides three scenarios from low to high/significant growth (favourable policy environment, strong recruitment markets)

2035	2040	2045	Scenarios
13,755	14,443	15,165	Medium Growth
+5%	+5%	+5%	Medium Growth
14,410	15,851	17,436	Significant growth
+10%	+10%	+10%	Significant growth
13,362	13,629	13,902	Low growth
+2%	+2%	+2%	Low growth

ARU Student Numbers (provided in May 2026)

We have sought to obtain some more detailed breakdowns of the residential figures. In the first instance, we should reiterate that ARU consider that the Plan should cover the full plan period to 2045, as reflected in representations to date.

In terms of the 42% figure referenced in 2023, please note that this evidence does not reflect the latest ARU position, was not 'like for like' with the 70% dataset and crucially, it did not fully cover the different types of residence (see below). The latest figures seek to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the residential patterns of existing ARU students in Cambridge- using a 5km radius.

The 70% figure is based on all students recorded as residing within 5km of Cambridge. The 70% includes private rented accommodation – including HMOs.

It seems that a more detailed breakdown of the 70% figure would be useful and as such please see the below:

- Rented accommodation (this can include HMOs): 35%
- Own residence: 12%
- Parental/guardian home: 5%
- Private sector halls: 17%

For this combined group, the percentage for 25/26 is 69.3%, compared with 69.5% in 23/24 - so broadly stable.

Please note that if policy on HMOs is becoming increasingly restricted, PBSA will be all the more important. Not only to allow for student growth but it is also likely that the overall quantum of HMOs could reduce.

If the Council were to exclude the percentages residing in a 'Parental/Guardian Home' or 'Own residence' from the future need, this would appear reasonable

(although noting it does not allow for those students residing at home that may prefer to have independent lodgings if affordability allowed). The resulting figures would be a need for circa. 387 student beds by 2033 and 1,259 student beds by 2045.

However, the need for flexibility within the Plan is still reiterated to allow for rapid changes in the higher education sector and there should be allowance for policies to facilitate growth.

Please also note that the 1,594 bedroom figure in 2023 is generally similar to the latest room numbers (see the Cambridge Property Comparison Chart that was supplied with the Reg 18 reps - we add it up to be 1,682, though noting there have been some modest changes to stock). This figure will inevitably change at a given point in time.

In terms of expected rooms at Severn Place, the latest figures are indicating circa. 308 beds. Potential numbers at Mackays remain unknown.

Year	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40	2040/41	2041/42	2042/43	2043/44	2044/45
Number of Students	12,745	12,000	12,200	12,500	12,700	13,100	-	-	-	-	13,755	-	-	-	-	14,443	-	-	-	-	15,165
Number of Students - annual (based on medium growth)	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,228	13,358	13,489	13,621	13,755	13,890	14,026	14,163	14,302	14,442	14,585	14,727	14,872	15,018	15,165
Accommodation based on 42%	5,353	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,665	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,369
Accommodation based on 70%	8,922	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,442	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,616
Accommodation based on 52%	6,627	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,014	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,886
Accommodation Growth (remaining at 42%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	312	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,016
Accommodation Growth (remaining at 70%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	521	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,694
Accommodation Growth (remaining at 52%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	387	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,258