

Policy DM1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

2.1.1 The Bristol Core Strategy provides a positive and flexible framework for meeting the development needs of the city. It is supported by a set of Development Management policies which help to ensure new development is compatible with the core planning principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

When considering development proposals a positive approach will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Bristol City Council will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the city.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Bristol Local Plan and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Development Plans will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then planning permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

2.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally. The Planning Inspectorate considers that its suggested model policy wording is an appropriate way of meeting this expectation. This policy closely reflects the model wording. It is applicable to all development and should be read in conjunction with paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, including the footnotes to that paragraph.

Application Information

There are no specific submission requirements associated with this policy.

Housing and Economy Policies

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

2.2.1 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, sub-divisions, shared housing, specialist student accommodation and housing for older people.

2.2.2 The sub-division of existing accommodation and 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.

2.2.3 Student numbers in the city have risen substantially since 2001 creating demand for a range of private rented accommodation. The population of older people will also increase in the coming years creating specific housing requirements. The policy aims to ensure that future specialist housing for students and older people meets appropriate standards and is sensibly located.

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

Proposals for:

- the sub-division of existing dwellings to flats;
- 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;
- specialist student housing; and
- 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.

Specialist Student Housing – Location Criteria

Specialist student housing schemes will be acceptable within the city centre. Other locations may be suitable subject to the general criteria set out above.

Older Persons' Housing – Criteria

A range of housing and care options that promote and maintain housing independence for older people will be encouraged. Older persons' housing schemes should aim to meet the following criteria:

- i. Located close to shops, services, community facilities and open space appropriate to the needs of the intended occupiers or provided on-site; and
- ii. Located close to good public transport routes; and
- iii. Provision of level access; and
- iv. All units built to the Lifetime Homes standard; and
- v. 20% of units designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users.

2.2.4 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

2.2.5 Whilst making a valuable contribution to the city's housing requirements both sub-divisions of existing accommodation and 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.

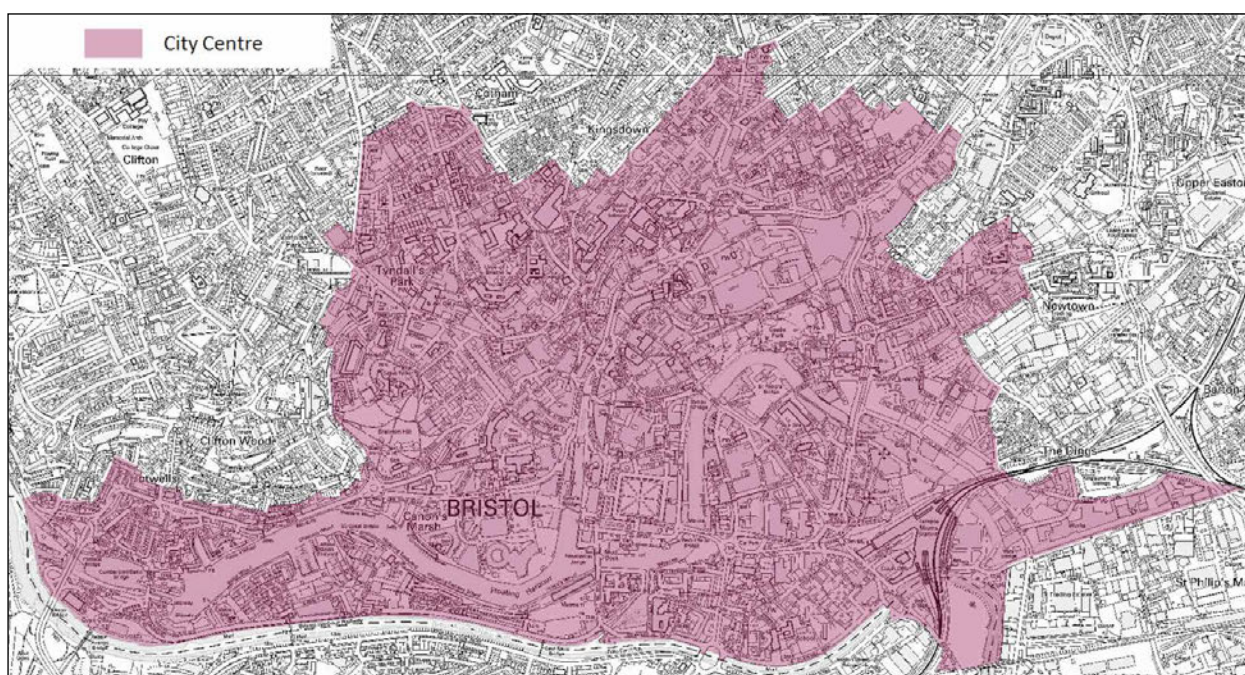
2.2.6 When making assessments on new development, consideration is to be given to the particular qualities and characteristics of a residential area or residential uses that might contribute to it being an enjoyable or otherwise satisfactory place to live. These usually include generally quieter surroundings; 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.

- 2.2.7 Assessments should consider the relative impacts at street, neighbourhood and ward levels.
- 2.2.8 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.

Specialist Student Housing

- 2.2.9 The expansion in higher education in recent years has increasingly seen the development of specialist student housing schemes. Much of this development has taken the form of managed residential accommodation comprising either 'cluster units' or individual small apartments (Cluster units are self-contained apartments each having a number of individual bedrooms/study units sharing communal facilities. The accommodation usually has an on-site management team). This type of housing can help to ease demand for student accommodation and relieve pressure on the local housing stock. Continuing provision of this type of accommodation is generally supported.
- 2.2.10 Bristol City Centre remains, in principle, an acceptable location for this type of development. Most parts of the city centre are within reasonable walking distance of the University of Bristol and good public transport connections exist to the University of the West of England. Student accommodation can help make a positive contribution to the mix of uses within the city centre and is less likely to result in harmful impacts on residential amenity. Further policy criteria are provided in the Bristol Central Area Plan. The definition of the city centre boundary is shown on Map 2 below. Other locations outside of the city centre may also be suitable provided development meets the policy's general criteria. No sites are specifically allocated for Student accommodation.

Map 2: Bristol City Centre boundary



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Older Persons' Housing

2.2.11 This includes all forms of purpose-built residential accommodation for older people that fall within Use Classes C2 and C3. The policy sets out criteria to establish appropriate locations for older persons' housing that promote opportunities for social interaction and independence. The policy also sets out criteria to ensure that appropriate design and accessibility standards are met. This includes the application of the Lifetime Homes standard (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk) to all units provided and 20% of units designed to be wheelchair accessible (Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, 2nd edition, Stephen Thorpe/Habinteg Housing Association, 2006) or easily adaptable to wheelchair users. As a guide, public transport connections should be within 400 metres of the accommodation. Connections should have a high frequency of service. Accommodation for older persons will be acceptable on all sites allocated for housing subject to the policy criteria.

Policy Links

Bristol Local Plan Core Strategy – Lead Policy

- BCS18: Housing Type

Bristol Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies

- BCS17: Affordable Housing Provision

- BCS21: Quality Urban Design

- BCS22: Conservation and the Historic Environment

Application Information

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

Policy DM3: Affordable Housing Provision: Smaller Sites

2.3.1 Core Strategy policy BCS17 sets out the general approach to the provision of affordable housing in the city. The policy identifies the proportions of affordable housing to be sought from residential developments of 15 dwellings or more, but also makes provision for an appropriate contribution from developments below 15 dwellings. This is justified given the high levels of affordable housing need in the city and the likely contribution to supply derived from smaller schemes.

2.3.2 To support the Affordable Housing Provision policy in the Core Strategy the council commissioned detailed viability work. Part of this work included a 'small sites analysis' to determine the capacity of smaller schemes to contribute towards affordable housing. The assessment concluded that on many smaller sites, the scheme economics were not significantly different from sites above the 15 unit threshold. Building on this work further financial appraisals were commissioned to determine the likely range of financial contributions that could be secured from different scheme sizes in different areas of the city.