

**ANNEX 1: Controlling the
Concentration of Houses in Multiple
Occupation Supplementary Planning
Document Consultation Statement
(March 2012)**

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Consultation statement

SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING
DOCUMENT

**Controlling the
Concentration of Houses
in Multiple Occupation**

March 2012

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the draft Controlling the Concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation. The responses from this consultation have been used to develop the revised SPD.
- 1.2 The consultation commenced on 23 January 2012 and a number of consultation techniques were used in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2007). Consultation ran until the 5 March 2012. During this consultation period a Focus Group Event was held.
- 1.3 This report outlines the consultation documents that were produced; sets out who was consulted; outlines the methods and techniques used during the consultation, and summarises the key issues raised in the responses received.

2.0 Consultation Documents

- 2.1 A number of documents were produced as part of the consultation to inform people about what the process involved, how they could respond and also ways in which they could contact the Integrated Strategy team.
- 2.2 The following main consultation documents were produced:
 - Draft Controlling the Concentration of HMOs SPD;
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report; and
 - Comments Form, incorporating a questionnaire.
- 2.3 Previously all SPDs were subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The purpose of which is to promote sustainable development through the better integration of sustainability considerations into policy development. Sustainability Appraisals included the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is a system of incorporating environmental considerations into policies, plans, programmes and strategies. When the regulations were amended in 2009¹, the requirement for Sustainability Appraisal for SPDs was removed. However, SPDs are still subject to the requirements set out by the SEA. Accordingly, the draft SPD was subject to a screening report to determine the need for an SEA and to support the Draft SPD consultation. The three statutory bodies for the SEA process are English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency. As set out in Annex 1, these statutory bodies were consulted, as required.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009

2.4 As well as the main consultation documents, it was considered appropriate to include the following additional supporting reports which were made available as part of the consultation:

- City of York Council Houses in Multiple Occupation Technical Paper (2011);
- 'Student Housing' Report to the Local Development Framework Working Group 6 September 2010 and Minutes;
- 'HMOs and Article 4 Directions' Report to the Local Development Framework Working Group 10 January 2011 and Minutes;
- 'Minutes of Working Groups' Report to Executive 1 February 2011 and Minutes;
- 'The Distribution and Condition of HMOs in York' Report to Cabinet 1 November 2011 and Minutes; and
- Article 4 Direction and Plan.

2.5 There were several ways in which people and organisations could comment on the consultation documents. These were by:

- filling in the comments form (electronically or in writing);
- writing to the Integrated Strategy team using the address found in the documents and publicity material. This was a freepost address;
- emailing the Integrated Strategy team using the email address found in the documents and publicity material; or
- using the Council's 'consultation finder' and completing an online survey, taken from the questionnaire incorporated in the comments form, which could be found on the Council's website.

3.0 Document Distribution and Publicity

3.1 To support the production of York's Local Development Framework (LDF), the Council have compiled a database to include statutory consultation bodies and key stakeholders, alongside individuals who have registered an interest in the York LDF process or have expressed an interest to be informed of the progress of planning documents in York. The LDF database comprises a number of categories; specific consultation bodies, general consultation bodies, other groups/organisations and individuals. These groups of consultees (approx. 2,900) were sent an email or a letter informing them of the consultation and the opportunity to comment, alongside details of the web page and where to find more information. Please see Annex A for further information. As set out in Annex A, each of the Local Strategic Partnership boards, as well as other groups such as the Open Planning Forum, Youth Council, Environment Forum and Property Forum were informed of the consultation and how to make comments. A copy of the letter sent to consultees can be found at Annex B.

- 3.2 Key stakeholders relevant to HMO issues, not already on the LDF Database were also identified and sent an email or letter to inform them about the consultation. This included the York Residents Association, York Residential Landlords Association alongside student representatives and accommodation staff at all of York's Higher Education Institutions.
- 3.3 Those individuals who had expressed an interest in HMOs either through their local Councillor or the Article 4 Direction consultation were also sent an email or a letter informing them of the opportunity to comment and details of the web page and where to find more information.
- 3.4 An internal consultation was also undertaken with relevant Officers and all Members were informed of the consultation and how to comment.
- 3.5 All of the consultation documents were made available to view and download on the Council's website. A link to the online survey was also posted on the Council's website. Hard copies of the consultation documents were placed in all of the City of York Council libraries and at the Council's receptions at 9 St. Leonards Place, the Guildhall and Library Square. It was also possible for those who required hard copies to ring or email the Integrated Strategy team and request a copy of the documents.
- 3.6 In addition to writing to consultees and distributing the documentation, the Council sought to further publicise the consultation and give details on how and when comments could be made. This was achieved through the following:
- A City of York Council press release was issued to coincide with the start of the consultation period on 23 January 2012 which can be seen at Annex C;
 - A notice was placed in the features section of the City of York Council website homepage publicising the consultation and providing a direct link to the Draft SPD webpage as shown at Annex D;
 - A public notice was published in the Evening Press on Wednesday 25 January 2012. This set out what is being consultation upon, the consultation period and ways to respond alongside where the documents are available for inspection. Please see Annex E for a copy of the notice;
 - Whilst there was not an edition of Your Voice/Your Ward published within the consultation period information about the consultation was provided to all Neighbourhood Management Officers to include, as appropriate, in the powerpoint presentations that run during ward committee surgeries;
 - There was no meeting planned for the Inclusive York Forum during the consultation period, to ensure that its' members were aware of the consultation and the opportunity to comment information about the consultation was circulated via email to those on the Inclusive York Forum distribution list; and
 - Information was provided to the chair of the York Residents Association who briefed their Members on the consultation and how to comment. Representatives were also sought to attend the Focus Group Event.

4.0 Events and Meetings

- 4.1 Details about the events held as part of the consultation are outlined below.

Focus Group Event

- 4.2 A Focus Group Event was organised by the Council and held during the consultation period on 21 February 2012. The purpose of the event was to cover a range of issues relating to HMOs, including the impacts of large concentrations of HMOs, how the Council should assess change of use planning applications to HMO when the city's Article 4 Direction comes into force and raising standards in the Private Rented Sector, including the introduction of an Accreditation Scheme in York. The half day event was well attended and was pitched as structured but informal to encourage discussion. A range of stakeholders were invited including residents, landlords and representatives from the Universities. Care was taken to invite an equal mix of interested parties to ensure a balanced debate. The event was attended by 37 people.
- 4.3 The Focus Group Event used a consultation technique known as 'carousel' style. It began with a short presentation setting the context for the event. Attendees then took part in three break-out sessions: (1) Balanced communities (2) Residential amenity (3) Raising standards in the private rented sector. A note of the event can be found at Annex F which broadly captures the diverse range of views and opinions of those who attended the event.

Osballdwick Parish Council Public Meeting

- 4.4 Officers were invited to attend a public meeting by Osballdwick Parish Council to discuss the Draft SPD. This took place on 20 February 2012. Following a short presentation by Officers there was a questions and answer session. A range of issues were discussed as set out in Annex G.

5.0 Consultation Response

- 5.1 A total of 85 responses were received. 47 people completed the questionnaire as part of the comments form, of which 25 completed it online via the online survey. A copy of the comments form which included the questionnaire can be found at Annex H. Representations were received from a variety of groups, organisations and individuals.

6.0 Summary of Responses

- 6.1 The following sections set out a summary of the main issues raised by respondents who submitted comments as part of the Draft SPD Consultation. Following an overview of the responses to the questionnaire, comments have been grouped under thematic headings. It should be noted that the views

expressed below are of those who submitted representations as part of the consultation and not necessarily the views of City of York Council.

- 6.2 For the issues raised by attendees at the Focus Group Event and by residents at the Osbaldwick Parish Council Public Meeting please see Annex F and G.

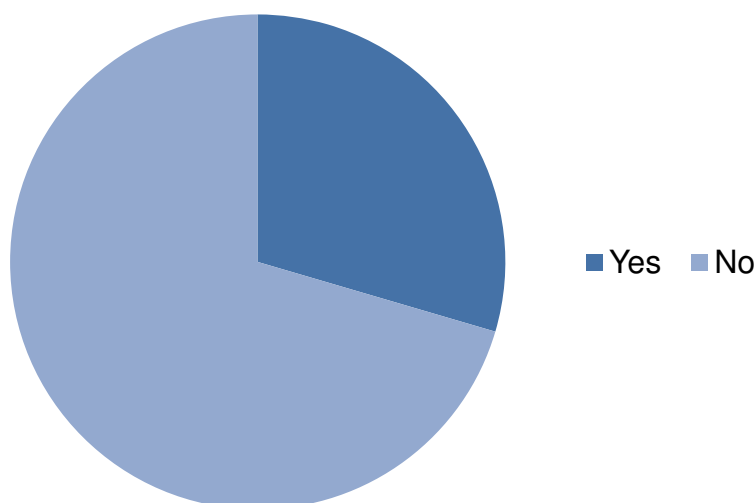
Questionnaire

- 6.3 The following provides a summary of those respondents who completed the questionnaire, either by filling in the comments form or completing the online survey. Detailed comments from the questionnaire, including alternative thresholds, are set out in the sections following this one. It should be noted that in some instances respondents answered the questions only as a 'least unacceptable' policy approach, if one 'had to be taken' and did not think there should be a policy for controlling HMOs.

Question 1

- 6.4 Figure 1 below shows that the majority of people who responded to the questionnaire did not think that a threshold of 20% is appropriate across a neighbourhood area. This represents almost three quarters of respondents.

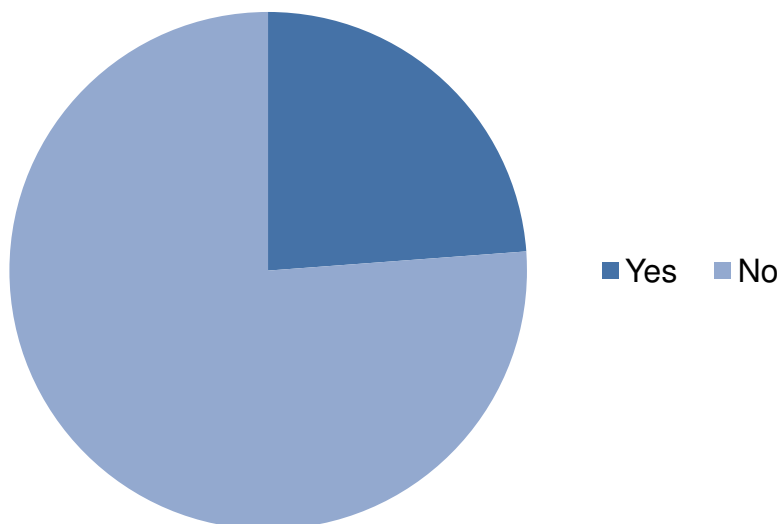
Figure 1: Do you think a threshold of 20% is appropriate across a neighbourhood area?



Question 2

- 6.5 When asked whether they thought a threshold of 20% is appropriate for a street level assessment of HMOs the majority of respondents said no (76%), as shown overleaf at Figure 2.

Figure 2: Do you think a threshold of 20% is appropriate for a street level assessment of concentrations of HMOs?



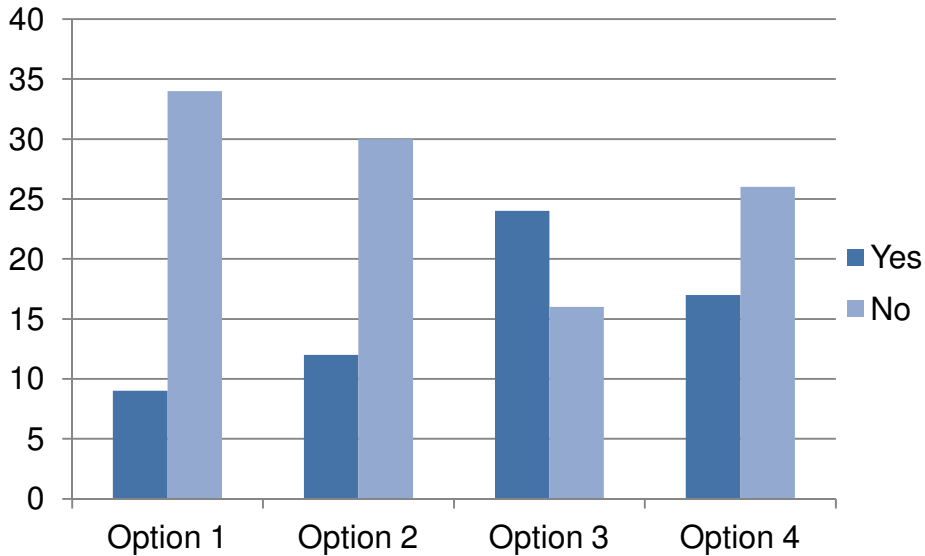
Question 3

6.6 Question 3 asked people which of four options they thought was the most appropriate for managing HMOs. The options are set out in the Draft SPD and comprise:

- Option 1: Do you think the neighbourhood approach set out in option 1 is the best way to manage concentrations of HMOs?
- Option 2: Do you think the street by street approach set out in Option 2 is the best way to manage concentrations of HMOs?
- Option 3: Do you think a neighbourhood and street level approach set out in Option 3 is the best way to manage concentrations of HMOs?
- Option 4: Do you think there is another approach not covered by Options 1, 2 and 3 that would be the best way to manage concentrations of HMOs?

6.7 The results of question three are shown in the bar chart at Figure 3. This shows that the preferred option by respondents was the neighbourhood and street approach, followed by another alternative approach. Please see paragraph 6.21 below for detail on the alternative approaches suggested. The least favoured option was Option 1, the neighbourhood approach.

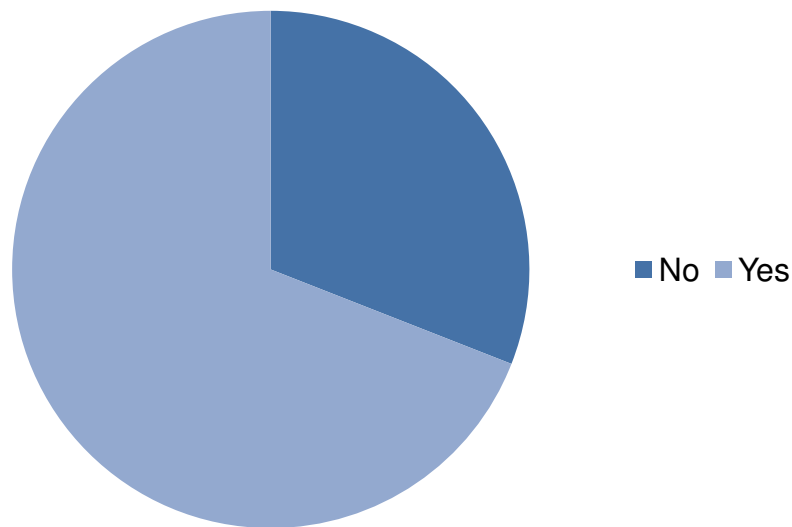
Figure 3: Which of the options do you think is appropriate for managing HMOs?



Question 4

6.8 Respondents were asked whether they think the right amenity issues has been adequately covered in the Draft SPD. The majority (69%) thought that we had got it right as shown at Figure 4.

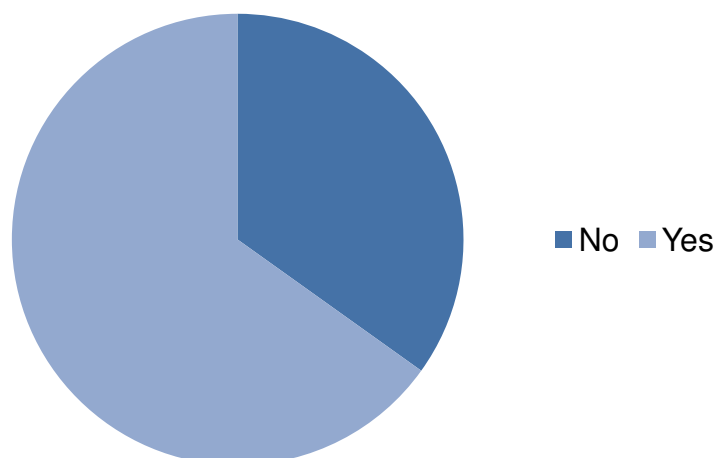
Figure 4: Do you think the right amenity issues have been adequately covered?



Question 5

6.9 Following on from question 4, respondents were asked whether they thought the guidance in the draft SPD would contribute to addressing amenity issues. The majority of respondents thought that it would (65%), with only 35% of respondents suggesting that amenity issues wouldn't be addressed through the measures in the draft SPD as shown at Figure 5.

Figure 5: Do you think the guidance would contribute to addressing amenity issues arising from concentrations of HMOs?



Neighbourhood Area Approach

- 6.10 It was considered by several respondents that 20% is too high a threshold at the neighbourhood area level and that 10% or less would be more appropriate, with several other respondents suggesting 5% to ensure that no street had over 20% and to protect estates of family housing. It was also suggested that the ideal would be to have no HMOs at all but that a threshold of less than 5% would be acceptable. Whilst one respondent suggested that at 20% the balance of a neighbourhood has been destroyed, another respondent suggested that this is not the case and that a threshold of more than 20% should be used. One respondent suggested a threshold of 40% would be appropriate.
- 6.11 Another respondent suggested that a neighbourhood area approach could be manipulated by interest groups and be problematic for the Council to manage. It was also suggested that the neighbourhood approach is too obscure. There was also concern from a number of respondents that this approach would not prevent clusters of HMOs on individual streets and that it is too vague and would still result in hotspots of HMOs.
- 6.12 One respondent suggested that 20% is acceptable across a neighbourhood area but consideration must be given to location given that some areas (Hull Road for example) operate at a higher level. It was suggested that what is appropriate in one area may not necessarily be appropriate in others. Another respondent commented that 20% is incorrect as a threshold and referred to the National HMO Lobby's approach of 10% of all properties or 20% of the population as the tipping point in a neighbourhood.

Street Level Approach

- 6.13 A large number of respondents supported this approach. Whilst there was support for allowing each case to be taken on its merits more easily through a

street level approach, one respondent felt that a street only approach would still allow for large concentrations of HMOs to be created in neighbourhoods which would impact upon local schools and amenities. One respondent suggested that 1 property in 5 is an imbalanced community and that the threshold should be 1 property in 10 i.e. 10% rather than 20%. It was suggested that a street level approach would prevent the clustering of HMOs along streets and that it is street level where the effects of high concentrations of HMOs can be most keenly felt.

- 6.14 Another respondent suggested that a 20% threshold at street level was acceptable but that in certain saturated areas where there is an acceptance that it is already a 'student area' then allowing the threshold to be broken would make little effect. Other respondents suggested that a 10% or 15% threshold at street level would be more appropriate because higher concentrations can alter the residential 'feel' of an area. One respondent suggested that 5% may be acceptable in areas of family housing. Examples of other Local Authority approaches were given where lower than 20% threshold have been pursued, for example Manchester where 10% has been selected. Another respondent referred to the National HMO Lobby's threshold approach which would see 20% of properties but 40% of the population. It was also suggested that the street level approach should be applied in streets that have not yet been saturated by HMOs.
- 6.15 If a threshold approach has to be taken one respondent suggested that this approach is the most preferred, albeit a higher than 20% threshold should be used, with 40% being proposed by one respondent. Another respondent suggested that 100m is too long for the street frontage and it should instead be reduced to 50m frontage in order to protect individual household from being surrounded by HMOs.
- 6.16 It was suggested that under a street level approach, once streets with properties most suited to HMO use have reached the threshold surrounding streets comprising other property types may come under threat, even if they are bungalows and not suited to conversion of HMO. Another respondent suggested that 10% at street level would prevent the clustering of HMOs where there are properties that are most suitable to be used as HMO.

Neighbourhood and Street Level Approach

- 6.17 A large proportion of respondents supported this approach as being the most effective at preventing overly high concentrations of HMOs. It was suggested that this approach would be beneficial as it looks beyond numbers and considered the impacts on and the nature of the existing community. It was also considered by respondents to be the fairest approach and the most straight forward. It was suggested by another respondent that this approach offers the most robust approach however another respondent suggested that it was too complicated. A number of respondents suggested that applying a 10% threshold at both a neighbourhood and street level is most appropriate and would see a fairer spread of HMOs across areas, such as the Badger Hill estate. Whilst one respondent suggested that in taking this approach they

would not like to see delays in the determination of applications because of planning appeals another respondent commented that the Council should not be deterred from adopting this approach because it might be subject to legal challenge.

- 6.18 If this approach was adopted, one respondent suggested that a threshold of 10% or 15% should be used as a first preference, but that if 10% or 15% was used for street level assessment the neighbourhood threshold could be increased to 20%. It was suggested by another respondent that this approach should be applied to those areas where the tipping point at street level has been exceeded.

Alternative Approaches

- 6.19 It was suggested by one respondent that all of the proposed approaches in the draft SPD will create anomalies and are too complicated; other comments were received suggesting that the proposed method of calculating HMOs is unreliable in so far as establishing HMOs which are unlicensed or not occupied by students and that this underestimates the number of HMOs. Both the University of York and University of York Student Union did not support the threshold concept and suggested that it was artificial and implies that students should be treated differently than other members of the community.
- 6.20 Several respondents did not agree with any of the options put forward. One respondent suggested that the draft SPD was based on best practice from other Local Authorities and that the Council should consider leading on the issue rather than following. It was suggested that this is because in York the University is not centrally located as in other cities and impacts on suburban neighbourhoods which are less able to absorb the impacts. Another respondent commented that there might be a better approach than the ones set out in the draft SPD which will come to light as Local Authorities evaluate their chosen policy approaches which may result in them being reviewed and modified.
- 6.21 A number of alternative approaches were proposed by respondents:
- One respondent suggested that no more than one HMO in a frontage of six properties should be permitted and if permission is granted all landlords should be required to submit a management plan.
 - It was stated that HMOs contain more residents than family houses and as such an approach that explored population density rather than property density would be more appropriate.
 - In the place of 'neighbourhood areas' it was suggested that clearly identifiable communities should be used, such as Badger Hill.
 - Several respondents indicated that there should be specific controls in certain areas of the City and that the threshold should be flexible across the City. Badger Hill was given as an example where it was suggested a threshold of 10% across the Badger Hill estate, to take

account of the fact that some streets have properties that are not suitable for change of use to HMOs.

- The University of York suggested that those streets with existing high concentrations of HMOs should be treated as exceptions because of the impact on the remaining owner occupied who may find it difficult to sell their properties. Another respondent agreed with this approach and suggested that exceptions should apply to areas with over 80% HMOs.
- It was suggested that there should be no threshold other than that achieved through normal buying and selling of properties and that the council should let the market dictate the threshold and occupancy rate of HMOs.
- Another respondent suggested that the needs of an area should be taken into consideration and the effect that HMOs could have on each individual neighbourhood.
- It was suggested by several respondents that a threshold approach is artificial and will impart a presumption in favour of change of use to HMO. Instead it was suggested that each application for change of use to HMO should be dealt with like any other planning application, on its own merits.
- An output area (approximately 125 properties, taken from the Office for National Statistics) is considered to be the most defensible and robust level to assess HMOs and it was proposed that integer values should be used rather than percentages which could cause confusion. 20 properties per output area was proposed.
- It was suggested that the Article 4 Direction has been introduced to deal with student HMOs and that the SPD will impose blanket controls for all HMOs which could be occupied by non student HMOs. This could lead to a serious shortage of HMOs for non students. It is proposed that one solution would be to amend the Article 4 Direction boundary around those areas where students are likely to be concentration rather than covering the entire main urban area.
- Several respondents suggested that the universities should provide more on campus or purpose build accommodation to take the pressure of the City's housing stock.

Residential Amenity

General

- 6.22 A number of comments were received in support of the policy approach set out in the draft SPD relating to consideration of residential amenity, stating that the Council's powers, policies and procedures are listed fully. Some respondents suggested that the wording in this section of the SPD should be strengthened; using the word 'will' rather than 'may' to make it more concrete and meaningful. It was also suggested that to tackle some amenity issues such as bin collection and recycling there should be more information available on the Council's website providing details of services relevant to people living in HMOs.

- 6.23 Several respondents commented that guidance on residential amenity alone will not contribute to addressing amenity issues and that the measures should be put in place to ensure that the guidance is enforced. It was also suggested that adequate Council resources for effective enforcement is essential for addressing amenity issues. The University of York Student's Union suggested that a number of the residential amenity issues covered in the draft SPD are not problems that are restricted to neighbourhoods with large concentrations of HMOs and to imply so is unreasonable.
- 6.24 It was stated by one respondent that residential amenity issues are not isolated issues and that it is not a small minority of landlords causing problems, suggesting that half of the HMOs in Badger Hill would fail the decent homes standard. Another respondent suggested that Badger Hill is an example of how uncontrolled HMO development can destroy what was a very desirable residential suburb.
- 6.25 A number of respondents suggested that in the future if the City's universities and colleges want to expand they should incorporate halls of residence of purpose build student housing into their plans to reduce the impact of HMOs in neighbourhoods. Another respondent suggested that York St. John University should invest money and time into The Groves Council Estate to tackle residential amenity issues, particularly at the start of term.
- 6.26 The University of York commented that it acknowledges that issues can arise when students live within the community and when the University are made aware of issues relating to student behaviour they are dealt with swiftly. They continued that issues are more often connected with the landlords or the council, often in relation to property maintenance or example and that the University support the Council's efforts to raise standards and wished to work with the Council to achieve this.

Accreditation Scheme/Licensing

- 6.27 It was suggested that strict monitoring of landlords should be undertaken by the Council. It was suggested by a large number of respondents that there should be compulsory registration of landlords otherwise the worst landlords would not be under any scrutiny. It was also suggested by several respondents that additional licensing for all HMOs should be introduced which would give the Council complete control of all HMOs. It was felt by a number of respondents that a voluntary accreditation scheme will be ineffective in as a way of increasing housing standards.
- 6.28 A number of respondents referred to Oxford where a compulsory licensing scheme is self financing which could be followed in York. It was suggested that the costs of a voluntary accreditation scheme would fall on the council. It was also suggested by another respondent that in areas of more than 20% concentrations of HMOs licenses should be removed in the cases of poor management by landlords. Bristol was also cited as an example whereby charging for licensing together with non compliance fines fund the policing of

HMO activity and maintains a higher standard of maintenance which is good for residents, students and the city in general.

Parking

- 6.30 Parking was raised by many respondents as a key issue. Comments were received relating to dangerous parking, incorrect parking on grass verges and the blocking of footpaths by cars which can cause access problems for those with buggies. It was suggested that some HMOs have too many cars and there is not sufficient parking space. Some were concerned about the cost of permits in areas where permit parking had been introduced. It was suggested that when garages are turned into bedrooms this limits to opportunities for off road parking. It was suggested by a number of respondents that tenants should be prohibited from having more cars than can be accommodated in designated parking spaces, or that the number of tenants permitted in an HMO should relate to the number of available parking spaces.

Permitted Development Rights

- 6.31 It was suggested by one respondent that permitted development rights should definitely be removed for HMO permissions, with regard to conversion of garages to living accommodation, loss of gardens for parking and to ensure that access to the rear of properties is maintained in order that bins can be stored behind properties. It was considered that these issues are fundamental in maintaining the quality of residential areas and street scenes.

Crime

- 6.32 It was highlighted that crime is likely to be directed at students, rather than perpetrated by them. A number of respondents raised crime as an issue, particularly during the summer months when many houses are left empty.

Property and Garden Maintenance

- 6.33 Badly maintained gardens and properties were also raised as an issue and the removal of some permitted development rights to tackle this was supported. Examples of poor residential amenity were given, including bins and boxes being left scattered at the front of properties. Another respondent suggested that bin storage at the front of properties should not be permitted. The requirement for applicants to submit and implement management plans was fully supported by a number of respondents; however there were concerns as to the subsequent resource implication to enforce this.
- 6.34 It was suggested that poor maintenance inside of properties was also a concern which had not been covered and that it is important that students do not live in unsuitable or unsafe conditions.

Community Integration/Spirit

- 6.35 It was suggested by one respondent that from their experience students only want to take from an area and have not integrated into The Groves community. Another respondent suggested that there's a danger of areas becoming de-populated in the summer recess if most HMOs are student lets and these are allowed to predominate in an area. It was suggested that ghost-town areas can lead to a rise in crime as other cities have experienced, a mixed community is therefore vital.

Local Services

- 6.36 Whilst noise, bin storage/littering are important one respondent does not consider them to be the key factors, instead it is the effects the transient population of HMOs has on schools that is key. Several respondents commented on their experiences of local services and retail provision changing as concentrations of HMOs increase and that it is important they are protected.

Size of Dwellings

- 6.37 With regard to ensuring that dwellings are large enough to accommodate an increased number of residents it was suggested that the SPD should specify a maximum level of occupancy for HMOs in standard properties linked to average occupancy of properties in the immediate area.

Accessibility

- 6.38 This was highlighted as an important issue by the University of York Student Union that has not been covered in the draft SPD which will have a direct impact on student residents of HMOs. It was suggested that it is a key aim of both the Council and the University that students should not need to own a car. It was suggested that this requires good accessibility between home, university and local services and that dispersing HMOs and the student population over a larger area will raise the prospect of serious difficulties in establishing the necessary transport infrastructure.

Other Comments

Existing high concentrations of HMOs

- 6.39 It was felt by several respondents that it is already too late in some areas to control the concentration of HMOs as the damage has already been done by the creation of large numbers of HMOs. Some provided examples where residents had been forced to move out because of the number of HMOs and problems that have been associated with them. It was queried why the draft SPD did not have guidance on addressing existing concentrations of HMOs.

The University of York

- 6.40 University of York Student Union suggested that students come to University to learn about more than their core academic subjects and that part of the University experience is learning to live as a citizen of the city alongside other residents. The University of York commented that the University is an integral part of the City and plays a vitally important role in the City's economic and cultural life. They are opposed to the Article 4 Direction and opposes many aspects of the draft SPD. It was requested that the Council note that there will be a reduction in student numbers living in the private rented sector from 2012 onwards because of additional new accommodation on Heslington East and no significant planning increase in student numbers.

HMO Planning Application Notices

- 6.41 It was suggested that whilst the guidance in the SPD will be a strong factor in determining whether permission is granted it is still important that local residents have the opportunity to comment. It was suggested that to increase awareness it should be mandatory for the Council to display notices on all properties where an HMO application has been made.

Council Tax

- 6.42 A number of respondents queried why students can make use of Council services but don't pay Council Tax and suggested that the Council should lobby the government regarding the non payment of Council Tax. It was suggested that residents in areas of high concentrations of student HMOs should have their Council Tax reduced. It was also suggested that landlords should be liable to pay council tax on behalf on their tenants.

Balanced Communities

- 6.43 It was suggested that in areas of high concentrations of HMOs there is an uneven population mix. It was queried by another respondent why the SPD was seeking balanced communities through the policy guidance when the University of York campus can not demonstrate balanced and mixed communities.

Focus on Student Housing

- 6.44 Concern was raised that the purpose of the draft SPD appeared to be to tackle student housing and that it may negatively impact on non student HMOs. It was suggested by one respondent that there seems to have been no consideration given to the impact the SPD may have on non student HMOs, which can be occupied by a range of people from single professionals to vulnerable adults in supported tenancies. It was also suggested by the University of York Student's Union that the SPD is not a balanced document, making no reference to the benefits to the City of having a large student population.

Negative Impacts of Controlling HMOs

- 6.45 It was suggested that the delay and costs to changing use to HMO introduced by the planning process will seriously limit the ability to bring properties into use for non student HMOs, such as for use by vulnerable people who need supported housing. A sector of housing it is suggested is under-supplied in York. There was concern that the property market will be distorted, with properties historical in HMO use or have already obtained planning permission attracting a premium whilst the value of family housing being depressed. It was suggested that in streets such as Siward Street where there are high concentrations of HMOs current owner occupiers will be prevented from ever selling their property for market value.
- 6.46 There were concerns expressed that if a high threshold is adopted by the Council it will push up rents, pricing families and young professionals out of the private rented sector. It was also suggested that landlords will not seek to rent a 3 bed family property to a family when they can turn it into a 5 or 6 bed HMO.

Extent of Article 4 Direction

- 6.47 Dunnington Parish Council commented that HMOs cluster around the Universities and wish their Parish to be included in the Article 4 Direction area which would allow them to comment on planning applications. If it is not possible to amend the Article 4 Direction the Parish Council request that a second round of HMO zoning is initiated immediately.

Other

- 6.48 It was queried by one respondent whether it was possible to attach planning permission to current owners only, and that if the property is sold the new owner would then be required to seek a new planning permission should they wish to retain the property as an HMO.
- 6.49 It was suggested by one respondent that 'what if' arguments about the impacts of having a policy approach to controlling the concentration of HMO, should not be allowed to de-rail the process that is both well considered and essential to the health and coherence of local communities.

7.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

- 7.1 As set out in paragraph 2.3, the three statutory bodies for the SEA process were consulted. English Heritage and Natural England responded, stating that they have no comments to make.

- 7.2 The Council identified in its SEA Screening Report (January 2012) that there would be no significant environmental effect from the draft SPD and the statutory bodies have not raised concern with the screening report. Accordingly, there is no requirement to pursue the SEA any further.