

Motion from the Independent Group

To be moved by Cllr June Player

This Council notes:

- Research indicates that within Bath 2,833 dwellings are occupied as student HMOs, thus housing around 11,300 students, many of which are suitable for occupation as family dwellings. This figure excludes purpose built accommodation & on-campus provision which contain hundreds of units of accommodation within the City. (B&NES Local Plan: Student Numbers & Accommodation Requirements 2011-2029)
- Both of these markets have expanded and are very lucrative private student lettings.
- 7% of Bath's dwellings is estimated to be occupied as student HMOs, which is significantly higher than most other towns/cities. (B&NES Local Plan: Student Numbers & Accommodation Requirements 2011-2029)
- Many family homes have been converted which have priced out other buyers and has diminished the 'normal' housing stock in the City.
- These properties currently pay –
No Council Tax or
No Business Rates
- Following changes to the Local Government Funding system, introduced in 2013/14, there will no longer be additional Government Grant funding for future increases in HMO/purpose built Student accommodation numbers. In fact this Government grant to Councils is already being reduced and will continue to be so. This is a situation that is likely to continue until Government is able to balance its books.
- The Universities housing needs are forecast to grow by 3,200 by 2021 and stabilise thereafter to 2029.
- From our two Universities in 2014/15 we have approx. 16,300 students who need accommodation within our area. (68.4% of total enrolment).
- As the number of HMOs/purpose built student accommodation expand every year, the residents and businesses of B&NES are having to subsidise these lucrative private sector 'businesses'.
- The land used for student purpose built blocks is land that could have been used for employment land/much needed houses, both of which would generate an income to the Council for services.

The time has come for this situation to be reviewed. Whether Council Tax, Business Rates or both should be applied is open to debate. But, somewhere, a contribution to the services that are received should be made by students and/or property owners.

Local Residents, Local Businesses and Local Councils are unable to continue to subsidise these HMOs or purpose built student blocks.

The Council resolves to:

- Ask our two MPs to lobby their parties in Government for changes in the current legislation.
- Write to Central Government to have the legislation changed.
- Write to all other University Cities asking them to lobby their MPs for changes in the legislation as they too are being affected in the same way as B&NES.