

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Monitoring of Student Households

1 SUMMARY

The monitoring note attached to this report updates the Committee on trends in the numbers of student household living in particular parts of the City. The information relates to October 2008

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the report and monitoring note be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

Creating and maintaining balanced communities is an important aspect of the Nottingham Local Plan, which is amplified in the Building Balanced Communities Supplementary Planning Document (reissued March 2007). An element of this is how student households are concentrated in particular areas. The main way of assessing how this is changing is the monitoring of council tax student exemptions.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None.

8 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Transforming Nottingham's Neighbourhoods: to improve the quality of housing in Nottingham, giving people a number of housing options and making communities more mixed with a variety of tenures.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS

None.

10 **VALUE FOR MONEY**

None.

11 **List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information**

None.

12 **Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

1. Nottingham Local Plan (November 2005)
2. Building Balanced Communities Supplementary Planning Document (reissued March 2007)

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Monitoring of student households in selected areas – October 2008

Introduction

There has been anecdotal evidence that the number of students in the general housing stock has started to go down over the last few years, in line with City Council policy, as new purpose-built accommodation is provided.

In order to investigate this, changes in the numbers of student council tax exemptions between October 2007 and October 2008, have been examined. When looking at changes it is important to look at data for similar months in each year, because of the cycles in an academic year.

This follows previous analysis of council tax data from November 2004, October 2006 and October 2007, which suggested there was no evidence to support the view that the number of student households in the general housing stock was reducing significantly at that time.

Summary of Findings

The number of student Council tax exemptions increased across the monitoring areas between 2007 and 2008. A contributory factor to this is that the number of full-time students rose by several hundred more than the number of new purpose-built bedspaces which were provided. This illustrates the problem that, although the City Council's policy of moving students towards purpose built accommodation can be seen as having been working well, unless the new bedspaces provided each year exceed the increase in student numbers it is unlikely to ever be entirely successful.

The areas selected

Because of problems with monitoring student council tax exemptions over time in the city as a whole, due to inclusion of purpose-built blocks, this analysis, as with the previous analyses, looks at five areas where either such blocks have not been built or their effects can be removed.

The three main student areas have been chosen: Dunkirk, Lenton and the Arboretum. Two lower demand areas, Forest Fields and the Meadows, have also been included, to see if trends there are different – i.e. areas less popular with students lose student households first.

The boundaries of these areas are shown on the attached map, together with the proportion of council tax properties that were occupied by students in October 2008. The map shows information for Census output areas, which are used in the City Council's methodology of assessing the proportion of dwellings occupied by students in particular neighbourhoods (see "Building Balanced Communities Supplementary Planning Document", reissued November 2007, <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=675&p=0>, pages 18 to 21).

Changes since October 2007

Table 1 shows changes in the total numbers of student exemptions by area in October 2006, October 2007 and October 2008.

The council tax data shows there have been increases in the numbers of student households in all five monitoring areas since 2007, taking the overall number to 2,800, an increase of nearly 9%.

- Arboretum and Lenton have seen the largest increases in numbers of student exemptions - some 70 and 105 properties equating to increases of 15% and 7% respectively.
- Dunkirk and The Meadows have also seen large percentage increases – of 11.5% and 17.4%, but the actual numbers of student exemptions in these areas have not increased by so much.
- Both the Forest Fields and the Meadows areas have seen very small increases in the number of student-exempted properties since 2007, but both areas have seen decreases since 2006.

Numbers of student households in 2008 are very similar to 2006. It may well be that some of the better student houses are occupied for two years consecutively, and subsequently, if fewer good student houses available one year, new students may opt for purpose built accommodation rather than settle for a lower quality student house. If future monitoring shows the continuation of a two-year 'cycle', this could potentially be one explanation.

Table 1. Change in student households (October 2007 to October 2008) in selected areas

Ward	Total Households minus Halls (Oct 2008)	Student Households (Oct 2008)		Student Households (Oct 2007)		Student Households (Oct 2006)		Change 2007-2008	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arboretum	3,197	530	16.6	460	14.8	485	15.0%	70	15.2%
Dunkirk	972	399	41.0	358	37.6	392	41.4%	41	11.5%
Lenton	4,100	1,619	39.5	1,514	37.1	1,584	38.7%	105	6.9%
Forest Fields	2,721	172	6.3	171	6.4	204	7.6%	1	0.6%
The Meadows	4,478	81	1.8	69	1.5	98	2.2%	12	17.4%
Total of areas	15,468	2,801	18.1	2,572	16.8	2,763	18.0%	229	8.9%

Source: Council Tax student exemptions.

Proportions of student households in October 2008

In previous years, there have been discrepancies with the way halls are recorded for the purpose of Council Tax exemptions – sometimes they have been recorded as a single property, sometimes as flats and sometimes by bedspace. As such, the figures in Table 1 that relate to the percentage of properties in an area use the number of properties minus the number of halls as the denominator.

As the monitoring areas were originally chosen as areas where halls/purpose-built blocks were absent, this only affects a couple of output areas where such blocks have been built recently.

Nearly 2 in 5 households in the Dunkirk and Lenton areas are student households, an increase on the proportions in 2007, but similar to the proportions seen in 2006.

New purpose-built accommodation and the increase in student numbers

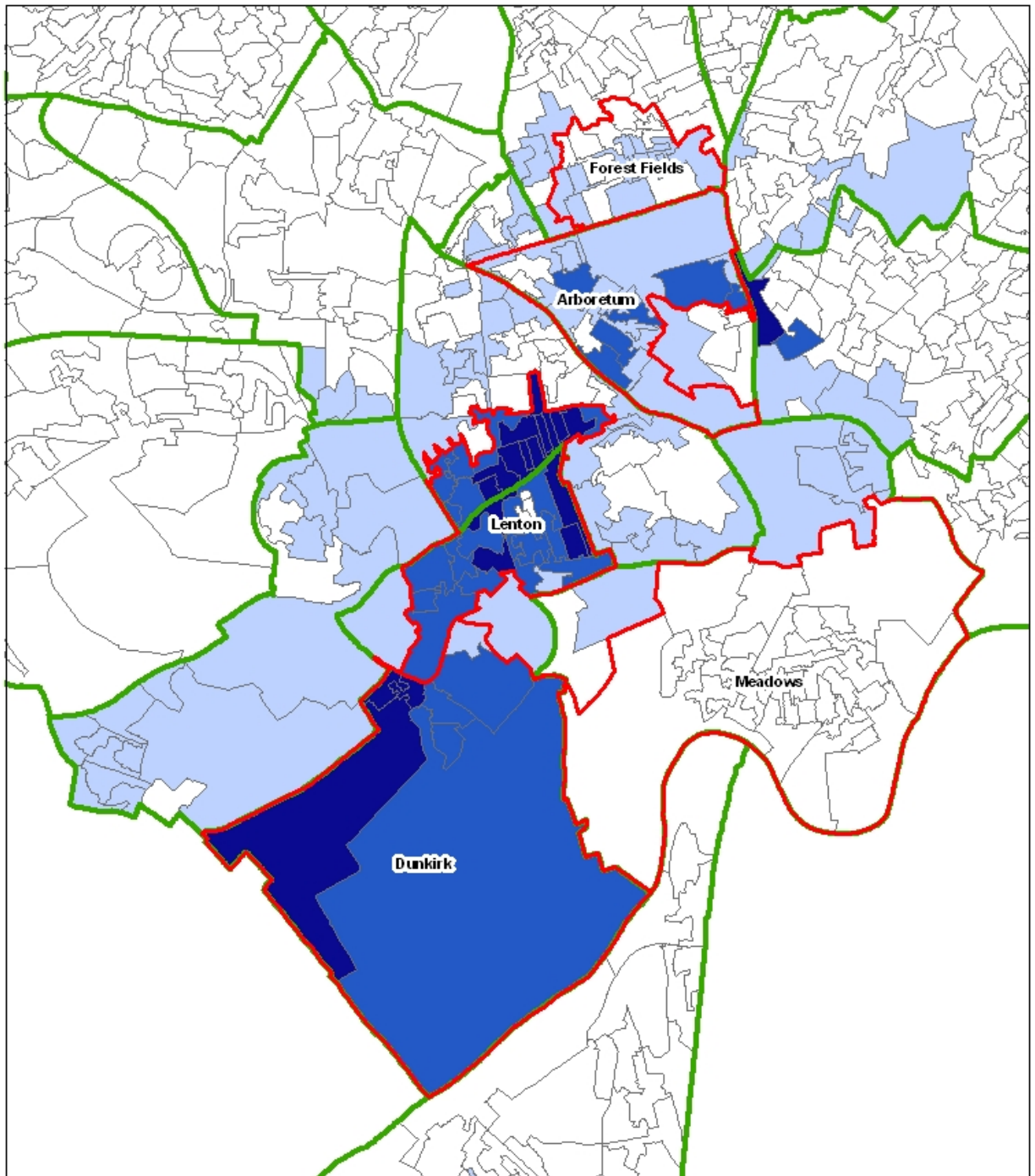
For the purposes of monitoring student accommodation, the number of full-time students is most relevant, because part-time students are less likely to have moved to Nottingham for the purposes of studying, indeed, many may not live in the area at all.

Information from Unipol suggests that there has been an increase of about 1,700 full-time students this year, about 1,100 of them at NTU. If this increase is carried through to later in the academic year, when numbers are usually monitored, this will be the largest increase for six years.

At the same time, the only new purpose-built accommodation provided this year was 650 bedspaces at Trinity Square and 18 extra bedspaces at the Cotton House, Radford Boulevard. In crude terms then it seems that the growth in full-time students exceeded the number of new bedspaces by about 1,000.

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2nd April 2009



Title: Student Households - Council Tax Data October 2008

Key Proportion of Student Households, Oct 2008 		Map produced on: 27/02/2009		
		Map produced by: Policy and Information Team		

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