

Full Name

Alex Martin

Organisation (where relevant)

University of Exeter Students' Guild

Chapter of the Exeter Plan

Chapter 6 - Homes

1. To which part of this chapter does this representation relate? (Representations must be made on a specific policy or paragraph within the section and this should be specified in the below).

H10: Purpose built student accommodation

2. Do you consider that this part of the chapter is legally compliant?

Yes

2.a. If yes, and you wish to support the legal compliance of this part of the chapter, please use this box to set out your comments.

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2.b. If no, please give details of why you consider this part of the chapter is not legally compliant. Please be as precise as possible.

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2.c. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this part of the chapter legally compliant, in respect of any legal compliance matters you have identified at 2.b above. You will need to say why each modification will make this part of the chapter

legally compliant. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording for the relevant policy or paragraph. Please be as precise as possible.

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3. Do you consider that this part of the chapter is sound?

Yes

3.a. If yes, and you wish to support the soundness of this part of the chapter, please use this box to set out your comments.

This submission is made on behalf of the University of Exeter Students Guild, the representative body for the approximately 30,000 students studying at the university.

We want to begin by echoing the University in thanking the council for including this specific section on PBSA. These accommodations play a vital role in offering a diversity of housing options for students in Exeter and limiting the price inflation that comes from under supply. Similarly, we thank the council for addressing the university's concerns on the overregulation of PBSA location and the reference to all PBSA rooms needing to be ensuite (see the university comment above).

Overall, we think this commitment to PBSA is a very positive step in meeting the needs of students and expanding the benefits that the university brings to the city of Exeter. As a result, we are happy to accept this section generally and that it meets the definition of 'sound'. In this response, however, we wish to offer some additional comments from a student perspective that may be useful in any post-consultation redrafting or in the implementation of this plan. We are very keen to expand our engagement with local government and while we have answered 'no' to being included in any hearings we are happy to be contacted at info@exeterguild.com.

Beginning on location and its impact on accessibility as outlined in 6.57, we applaud the council's commitment towards net zero and the efforts to locate PBSA in appropriate spaces. Many students choose PBSA specifically as they cater for their access needs better than HMOs and it is important they are located in areas that allow students to travel easily. As part of this it's very important to consider the impact of Exeter's hilly landscape and the position of the university at the top of the hill. This makes Exeter incredibly difficult to navigate for students with physical access needs, meaning even areas on paper close to campus can in reality be inaccessible. Mitigations to this could include actively encouraging PBSAs to provide blue badge parking rather than simply allowing it and ensuring new PBSAs align with access to

reliable public transport. In addition, it's important to note that many students with physical access needs still lack blue badges and more could be done to support them in acquiring these or offering them parking options. This could at least be the case in PBSA owned by the university as they have their own processes for assessing access needs and this doesn't reduce parking options for other city residents.

Second, it is important to touch on affordability and we appreciate the council's acknowledgement in 6.61 of the significant challenges being placed on students. While the cost-of-living crisis has impacted everyone, students have been particularly affected given their reliance on a maintenance loan has fallen significantly in real terms over the last decade. The result is many students living in very poor conditions and working long hours in addition to full time studies. As a result, 70% of Exeter students think about cost of living either daily or all the time (Survey Superheroes: Financial Health, Exeter Students Guild October 2024). This is important in the context of PBSAs as they are often significantly more expensive than other options. For example, in our December survey only around 11% of students in private PBSA reported paying £550 or less a month in rent vs 50% of students in other private housing (Survey Superheroes: Housing, Exeter Students Guild December 2024). We appreciate some of the council's efforts to address this and ensure a greater range of affordable PBSA. This includes allowing non-students to stay in PBSA outside of term time which is important to making these options financially sustainable. But beyond this it would be very valuable to see more concrete steps towards ensuring greater affordable PBSA options in Exeter. This is vital for students' quality of life and for ensuring Exeter University is accessible for all rather than just those from wealthy backgrounds.

Finally, we want to make a brief note on quality. Generally, PBSA is of better quality than other private housing options and we appreciate the council's quality assurance measures present in the planning approval stage. We do however believe more could be done to ensure this quality is maintained while PBSAs are operational. We still get many issues raised to us about mould, pests, lack of support from providers etc. even in expensive PBSAs. It would be extremely useful to collaborate more in addressing these issues and supporting students in accessing council support when PBSAs do not meet their obligations.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission. We really do want to build our relationship with local government and would love to engage more in future. Please feel free to reach out on the above email with any questions or comments, we are also happy to share our data sources.

3.b. If no, please give details of why you consider this part of the chapter is unsound. Please be as precise as possible.

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3.c. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this part of the chapter sound, in respect of any soundness matters you have identified at 3.b above. You will need to say why each modification will make this part of the chapter sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording for the relevant policy or paragraph. Please be as precise as possible.

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4. Do you consider that this part of the chapter complies with the Duty to Co-operate?

Yes

4.a. If yes, and you wish to support this part of the chapter's compliance with the duty to co-operate, please use this box to set out your comments.

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4.b. If no, please give details of why you consider this part of the chapter fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

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5. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

6. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

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