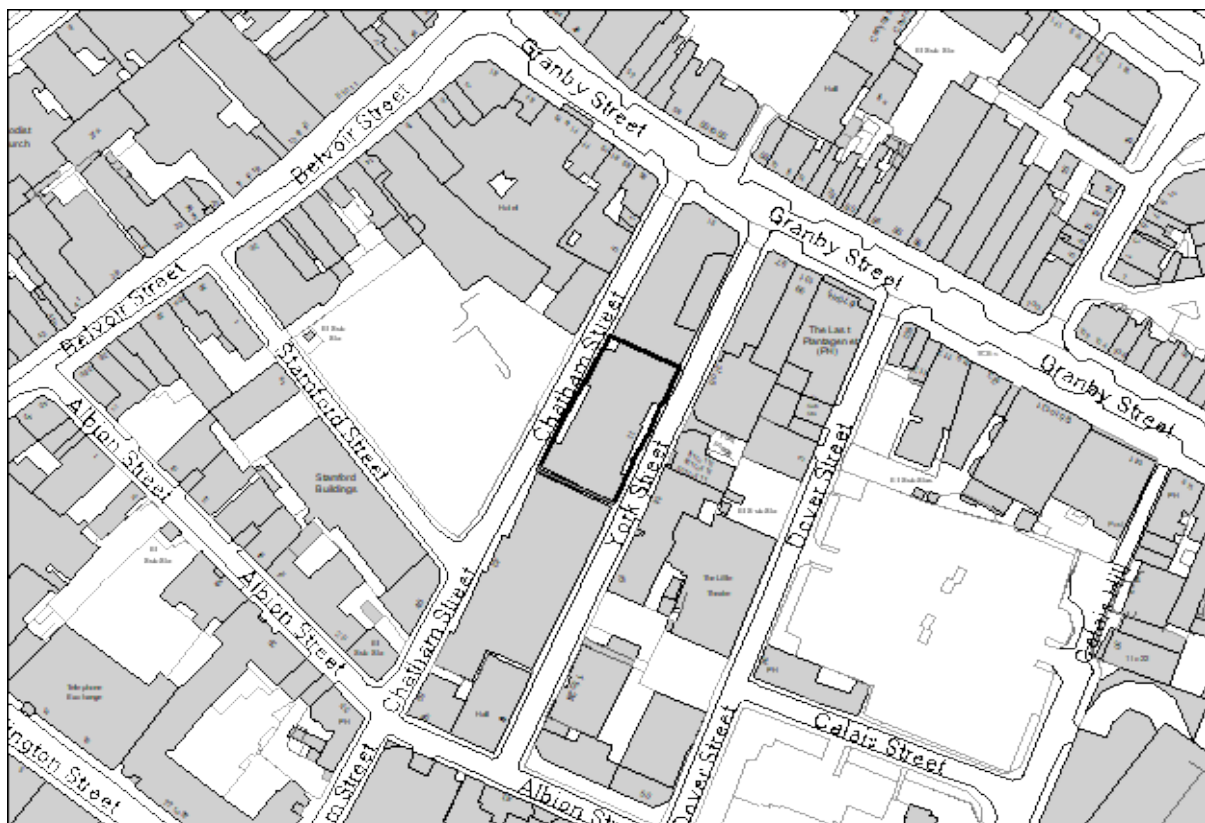


COMMITTEE REPORT

20250570	York Street, Yoho	
Proposal:	Change of use from 132 student flats and ancillary spaces (sui generis) to 132 managed short term residential accommodation units and ancillary spaces (sui generis)	
Applicant:	Mr Ben Pearce	
App type:	Operational development - full application	
Status:	Smallscale Major Development	
Expiry Date:	23 July 2025	
TEI	TEAM: PD	WARD: Castle



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Summary

- The application is before committee as more than 5 objections (21 in total) have been received from separate Leicester addresses.
- Cllr Kitterick has asked that the decision be made at committee on the grounds that:
 - it is an application in which the City Council has a direct interest;
 - concern that it breaches policy in terms of Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS);

- and, it is a high-profile development in the centre of the city.
- The main issues are the standard of accommodation, the level of support provided to residents, the social and environmental impacts of the proposal, the impacts of the proposal on local services and on the local highways network, concerns in relation to precedent that the proposal may set.
- The recommendation is for conditional approval.

The Site

The site is a seven-storey building situated on the west side of York Street. York Street runs between Granby Street and Albion Street. The site sits outside of but adjacent to the Central Shopping Core. According to saved City of Leicester Local Plan policies it sits within the Albion Hill Potential Development Area where the priority uses are residential and office uses with leisure and community uses the subordinate uses. In the emerging Local Plan Potential Development Areas will be deleted. However, the site will be the Central Development Area.

The building, though currently vacant, was completed by 2020 as purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). The vacant building is understood to have experienced anti-social behaviour, including trespassing and vandalism.

To the south and on the other side of York Street there are offices, self-contained flats and further PBSA developments. To the north, fronting onto Granby Street, is the main City Council Customer Service Centre and to the west on the other side of Chatham Street is a surface level car park.

The Planning Statement submitted with the application notes that the building is within the setting of the grade II listed 73 Granby Street and Grand Hotel, the locally listed 2-12 York Street and 14-18 York Street and adjacent to the Granby Street Conservation Area. However, it is the view of the local planning authority that the proposal does not affect the special significance or the character and appearance of these heritage assets.

Background

Conditional approval (20172089) was granted on 13.07.18 for the construction of a seven-storey building to provide student accommodation comprising 134 student flats (132 studio flats and 2 one bed flats) (no use class) subject to a unilateral undertaking. The unilateral undertaking was for payment of contributions towards Parks and Open Spaces with £28,672 to be paid prior to the commencement of the development and £28,671 to be paid prior to the first occupation. These funds have been received and spent.

Condition 2 of the approval required that the units only be occupied by enrolled students and a register be kept of occupants together with details of the further and higher education course attended.

The Proposal

Purpose:

The proposal as amended is for the change of use of the building from purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis) to managed short term residential accommodation and ancillary spaces (sui generis). There will be a total of 118 residential units as part of the accommodation.

It is proposed that the building will support eligible single people and a limited number of eligible childless couples who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who are aged 18 or above and have a “Local Connection” as defined in s199, Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (and clarified in the Homelessness Code of Guidance, and in the Local Authorities Agreement).

The application states that all referrals will be made by the Local Authority (Leicester City Council, Housing) and risk assessed by the Temporary Accommodation Services Manager, to ensure safe and appropriate matching with existing residents and overall service provision. It is expected that the premises will support eligible people, including single people and childless couples (with a proposed limit of childless couples at a maximum of 3.4% of the overall scheme occupancy) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The units will be managed as temporary accommodation to settle homeless people before finding permanent accommodation, providing better provision and support than the bed and breakfast alternative.

Based on experience, occupancy periods are expected to be generally between 3 to 12 months, with a proposed maximum occupancy limited to 18 months.

Layout:

The internal layout of the ground floor will be as follows:

Ground floor	6 residential units without kitchenette	Communal kitchen and dining room, support and counselling room, wellbeing and consultation room, all of which will be dedicated to occupants of the ground floor.
First, second, third, and fourth floors	20 self-contained residential units (per floor: 80 units total)	Each of which will have a kitchenette; + shared small residential lounge and a support and counselling room per floor.
Fifth floor	19 self-contained units	Each of which will have a kitchenette; + a resident lounge.
Sixth floor	15 self-contained units	Each of which will have a

		kitchenette; + a resident lounge.
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The Planning Statement describes how the units would enable occupants to cook and clean for themselves, as well as develop other independent living skills, or use a period of respite or recovery in a psychologically different environment and safer space, and in readiness for settled accommodation.

There will be no parking provision within the proposal. The cycle storage provision will be retained. The appearance of the building will remain unaltered, and no landscaping is proposed.

Asset Management Plan:

A revised Asset Management has been submitted which sets out how Centennial Property Ltd (t/a The Housing Network (THN) have been contracted to manage the property. The Plan sets out how it meets and exceeds the minimum standards for accommodation-related housing service in supported housing and with reviews in regular monthly meetings towards this end.

The Plan sets out contracted arrangements as below.

- Oversight and monitoring

Oversight of the Asset Management Plan will be undertaken by the Council’s Housing Contracts Officer. THN will use a Support Management system to monitor, direct and evidence all aspects of support and will use that data to inform discussions with the Council on overall service performance.

- Referrals

All referrals will be made by the Council and will be assessed for suitability linked to the accommodation and support services available. Referrals will be accepted (by the Temporary Accommodation Services Manager) Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm. Acceptance of referrals will include conducting face-to-face sign-up and orientations with each new occupant to maximise safeguarding and mitigate risks.

All referred occupants will receive a personalised support needs and risk assessment (completed by the TASM) to confirm eligibility and suitability for the scheme, enabling any risks to be identified and mitigated as far as possible prior to service entry.

- Scheme facilities

The amendments to the scheme and reduction in the overall number of units to 118, have enhanced security and provide spaces for engagement, communal activity and support. The features of the scheme as detailed in the Asset Management Plan are:

- Micro-Communities with zoned access control approach to each floor. Creating 7 distinct micro-communities to enable greater matching of personal needs and risks with existing individuals in the scheme.

- Enhanced CCTV (approx. 74 individual cameras) internally and externally to ensure 'blind spots' are eliminated.
- Dedicated Wellbeing & Consultation Rooms throughout the scheme to facilitate co-location / partnership working
- Dedicated Support & Counselling Rooms throughout the scheme to facilitate personal support and engagement. These spaces also available to wider homeless prevention pathway partners where appropriate.
- Dedicated Resident Lounges to foster a sense of community, supplemented by a main (scheme wide) Lounge & Engagement space on the ground floor, used to host various engagement events.
- Dedicated Training & Education (incl. ICT) Suite to remove barriers to engagement and support life-skill development and prepare for independent living with focus on vocational skills.
- On Site 24/7 Concierge to control access, monitor resident behaviour, complete proactive scheme patrols, mitigate any ASB or fire risks and provide immediate crisis response if necessary.

- Staffing

Staffing will include the following roles (with roles as described in the Asset Management Plan):

- Housing Contracts Manager (by LCC)
- Temporary Accommodation Services Manager/Supported Housing Manager (TASM) (by THN)

Provides locality management, working with clients, neighbours/local residents, local councillors, local businesses, local police, the local authority.

- Deputy Supported Housing Manager (DSHM) (by THN)

(role as described above by TASM)

- Housing Related Support Officers (HRSO) (by THN) (x4)

Supports Clients with developing an individualised housing-related support plan that meets their assessed support needs that enables them to settle in their accommodation and move-on into settled accommodation.

- Complex Needs Support Officers (CNSO) (by THN) (x7)

Tailored support for individuals (varied during the stay) Liaising with the partners (eg substance use specialists & wider healthcare providers) to ensure holistic support.

- Concierge Specialist (by THN) (x8 FT & 1PT)

Monitoring, access, patrols, managing ASB/Fire risks, crisis response.

- Multi-Trade Technician (by THN) (x3)

Onsite maintenance, repairs decorating and equipment, keys

- Safeguarding Administrator (by THN)

Identifying, tracking and logging safeguarding concerns

- Asset H&S Administrator (by THN)

Asset Compliance of the building

- Bookings Administrator (by THN)

Managing referrals from Council, managing Housing Benefit claims.

- Cleaning Operative (by THN) (x4)

All communal areas on a weekly basis

- Life Skills Mentor (by THN/volunteer) (x4)

Various aspects of skill development (eg CV writing, cooking, community engagement)

- Managing Agent: Property (by LCC)

Planned and reactive maintenance. The statutory compliance of the building. Security. Planning for major capital works.

In terms of on-site presence there will be 2 x Concierge Specialists 24 hours with further attendance on site by the HRSOs and CNSOs.

THN will incorporate the service into their established Business Continuity and Emergency Response processes, enabling on site staff to escalate matters as required to Senior Management Team Members at any time of day or night.

- Support and Pathways to settled accommodation:

Support will be tailored on assessed support needs. It can be varied during the stay. All occupiers will receive up to 6 hours of support per week. However, there is recognition that some may require less. Each occupier will be provided with housing related-support to meet their assessed needs and to help achieve move-on into settled accommodation. The TASM tailors the level of housing related support to the needs of the individual and will work in partnership with the Council and other services to actively support occupiers to minimise their length of stay in temporary accommodation, manage and address any core personal issues, achieve positive settled housing solutions, and ensure new referrals can be accommodated.

Both parties will ensure that all potential housing solutions are explored in moving towards permanent settled housing. Generally, this will be through the Housing Register and through Homelessness services and securing either a PRS offer of accommodation or a Council tenancy.

- External agencies

THN will ensure that key relationships and channels of ongoing communication are put in place with key local stakeholders (eg Police, Fire, Ambulance and Community Safety) prior to service opening, maintaining a regular presence in relevant meetings and ensuring escalation /complaint protocols are shared proactively.

The TASM will establish and maintain good locality management, working with clients, neighbours and local residents, local councillors, local businesses, local police, the Council and any other relevant organisations and to help deter and tackle anti-social behaviour and hate incidents in the area.

Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 61: To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

Paragraph 96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: a) promote social interaction... b) are safe and accessible... (and) c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.

Paragraph 125. Planning policies and decisions should... promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained.

Paragraph 135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments... create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Paragraph 198. Planning policies and decisions should... mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development.

Other documents/considerations:

Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)

Development plan policies relevant to this application are listed at the end of this report.

Consultations

Health and Safety Executive (Fire Safety) (Planning Gateway 1): - content with the fire safety design as set out in the original submission and project description, to the extent it affects land use planning considerations. Confirmation of HSE comments on the amended Fire Safety Statement will be reported to committee.

Representations

21 objections were received to the initial consultation, including one from Councillor Kitterick.

They relate to the following concerns:

Level of accommodation:

- Why is accommodation considered tolerable for students on a 9 month basis with holiday respite now considered for up to 18 months with no holiday respite?
- Poor internal space (does not meet NDSS) and lack of suitable amenity space.
- Building generally not fit for purpose.
- Not specified regarding number of occupants per room.
- Concern that vast majority of applicants for housing are families.

Strategic:

- Concern that this is a cheap and quick option.
- Concern regarding precedent: will other unused or superfluous blocks of PBSA will subject to similar applications?
- Concern that agencies across the country will target Leicester as a hotspot for “Human Warehousing” in poor quality accommodation.
- No guarantees against future applications seeking to vary or delete any ‘max 18 month’ condition.
- Concern that this development as a “move on accommodation” will nullify the NDSS policy in the emerging local plan.
- Concern that this space should be reserved for the EU youth mobility scheme if this were to provide sufficient demand (LCC should put pressure on government to hasten in this scheme, and to change its policy towards foreign students).
- Dilutes the intended mix of residential and commercial uses, deterring future investment, and contrary to regeneration policy objectives, deterring community and leisure uses.
- May result in loss of area as a meaningful residential area.

Impact on local services:

- Health & Social Care Capacity: Concern that local GP surgeries, nursing services, mental-health teams, and charitable organisations are already operating at capacity. Sudden addition of up to 134 residents requiring intensive, ongoing support risks overwhelming critical health and social-care services with no mitigation or funding commitments detailed in the application. Local GP practices, clinics, and outreach programs could find themselves overburdened by a sudden influx of service users concentrated at one address. No evidence in the application of coordination with health authorities or additional healthcare provision to support these residents.
- Policing and Emergency services: many residents with complex needs will inevitably generate a higher volume of calls to police, ambulance, and possibly fire services (e.g. emergency response to incidents, welfare checks, etc.). The local police force and emergency responders

are already stretched in the city centre. No indication of bolstering resources.

- A&E/Emergency Care: if residents struggle to engage with primary care, they may resort to A&E or urgent care, increasing pressure on hospitals.

Support networks/agencies:

- “up to 6 hours a week” support is inadequate for the vulnerabilities described. Not enough detail on the kinds of support available. The on-call system is insufficient.
- Isn't there a need for 24 hour support including specialist support overnight and at weekends, not a lone security officer?
- Lack of evidence of therapeutic infrastructure or long-term recovery support.
- Lack of evidence of step-down pathways, structured rehabilitation, employment assistance and job support.
- Insufficient staffing levels. Not an adequate staff to resident ratio. Only one Temporary Accommodation Services Manager and small team of support officers.
- Needs a clear and enforceable operational framework to support rehabilitation.

Antisocial behaviour and other environmental/amenity issues:

- Alcohol and substance addiction. Dealers targeting vulnerable individuals who have dependencies.
- Drug paraphernalia presenting health and safety hazards to families with small children, elderly residents and pets.
- Noise pollution (music and vehicles).
- Street violence, verbal harassment, physical intimidation.
- Misuse of public spaces.
- Increase in begging in the city centre with accommodation also in the city centre.
- Thefts and break-ins.
- No details on added police street presence or on working with the police, patrols or monitoring of behaviour.
- Without 24/7 professional oversight on site any measures will be reactive rather than proactive. Preventative supervision required.
- Current CCTV arrangements are inadequate. Need for a robust long term security plan. Visible security infrastructure will fundamentally alter the residential environment and sense of safety. Who will fund additional enhanced security measures at neighbouring buildings?
- Burden of risk falls on the elderly, young families and the disabled.
- Comparison with Dover House.
- More resources for environmental services to mitigate waste management, littering or graffiti increase.
- No S106 to support policing or healthcare.

Community cohesion:

- Abrupt demographic shift undermines community bonds, eroding trust in local governance, and could lead to increased neighbourhood friction.
- Community cohesion in relation to the NPPF.
- Creation of an institutional environment rather than helping integration.

Highways:

- Overspill parking and congestion.
- Parking for staff, healthcare professionals, outreach workers, other visitors.
- Parking provision not in line with policy for residential uses.
- Only 74 cycle spaces.
- General accessibility of the street for local residents, businesses, and emergency services due to vehicular comings and goings.

Comparison of uses and material change of use:

- A large-scale hostel for vulnerable individuals is not comparable to a student residence.

Community engagement:

- Need for more detail on community engagement to ensure any issues which may impact the safety and security of the neighbourhood, and especially neighbouring buildings, will be addressed.
- No consultation with neighbouring buildings and residents before submission of application.
- Concern a proper impact assessment has not been conducted before making this proposal.

Alternatives:

- Facilities for homeless accommodation in Leicester (and other cities) are on a more modest scale and where support services can easily access them without impacting a commercial core.
- Identify alternative on the urban fringe or within an existing social-housing estate - where the operation of a managed short-term residential facility for people in housing need can be delivered without causing significant harm to city-centre amenity, safety, infrastructure, and property values.
- Focus on liveable accommodation in areas that will serve the homeless residents' needs of stability, security and access to open and green spaces and where lives can be rebuilt

Other:

- Negative impact on property values.

A second publicity period was carried out following the receipt of amended plans reducing the number of units and submission of a revised Management Plan. A further 11 objections were raised, 7 from those who had already objected.

Many concerns repeat comments raised already. I note only new concerns below:

Concerns that the revised Asset Management Plan has no material impact on the concerns originally raised and that the reduction from 132 to 118 residents is not material to a meaningful degree, specifically:

- the provision of internal staff does not mitigate issues that happen in streets & public spaces outside the building, with local people left to manage the consequences, resulting in a slow wearing away of confidence and increased anxiety of going outside,
- the job description of the Temporary Accommodation Services Manager does not include liaison with the local community or ensuring respect for the residential area,
- there are no plans for added police presence, patrols or monitoring of behaviour

One objection evidences similar (albeit much smaller) schemes elsewhere as evidence of good practice and notes the following as particular shortcomings in the amended Asset Management Plan:

- external security patrols
- clear guest and visitor policies
- resident and business engagement and liaison mechanisms
- transparent incident-reporting routes for neighbours
- lighting and environmental design to reduce ASB near the site
- any measurable accountability to the surrounding community

One other objection raises concern that the proposal will result in a growing number of short term lets and temporary housing and another claims that as the site is in a residential area it will put people's lives at risk. A further objection asks whether the Council has a plan to drive people out of the area.

Consideration

Principle of the Development:

Core Strategy policy CS01 (Location of Development) states that 54% of residential development will be in the Strategic Regeneration Area with Core Strategy policy CS06 (Housing Strategy) emphasising that, in negotiations with developers the City Council will seek to meet the needs of specific groups through the provision of supported housing to meet other identified needs.

Core Strategy policy CS12 (City Centre) supports residential development in the city centre, whether by conversion of redundant buildings or new build, where an acceptable living environment can be maintained or created.

Leicester's Homelessness Strategy 2023-2028 helps to define homelessness both as those with nowhere to stay and are sleeping on the streets (rough sleeping) and those considered homeless where they have a roof over their head (the hidden homeless). It explains that homelessness can include people who are rough sleeping, sofa surfing, staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed & breakfast accommodation, squatting, homeless because of violence or abuse in their home, living in poor conditions which affect their health and living apart from their family because they do not have a place to live together.

The 2021 update of Leicester's Local Housing Needs Assessment gives figures for households currently in temporary accommodation in communal establishments (bed and breakfast or hostels) (425) and for households currently in temporary accommodation in market housing (private sector leased or private landlord) (65). This is a significant proportion of the 7,069 "households unable to afford" and who have a need for Affordable Housing. Housing Officers report that since 2021 the situation has significantly changed with over 800 households in temporary accommodation. The Homelessness Strategy reports that generally, the number of households approaching the council for assistance has increased year on year with 4,756 households seeking help from the council in 2018-19 and over 5,000 seeking help in 2021-22. It reports an alarming rise in family homelessness since July 2022, an increase reflected nationally and expected to continue with the cost-of-living crisis and other pressures facing households.

The injustice of rough sleeping is self-evident and needs no emphasis. The Strategy adds that bed and breakfast arrangements, or accommodation without access to cooking facilities and other living space, is not suitable for anyone to live in and can affect people's mental health and wellbeing. The Council's aim is not to use this type of accommodation or when it is used, only for a very short time.

The elimination of the use of bed and breakfast paid nightly accommodation, ensuring that temporary accommodation and support, including appropriate support provided to move on to settled accommodation and exploring all funding opportunities to develop specialist accommodation are all "key objectives" of the Council stated in this Strategy.

The proposal will contribute towards meeting the needs of a specific group through the provision of supported housing in the Strategic Regeneration Area consistent with the objectives of Core Strategy policies CS01 and CS06 and involves the conversion of a redundant City Centre building in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS12 subject to an acceptable living environment being maintained or created.

The proposal also supports the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives of bringing forward, without delay, housing provision that meets the needs of groups with specific housing requirements (Paragraph 61), achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places in response to identified well-being needs (Paragraphs 96 and 135) and supporting the development of under-utilised buildings to help address identify housing needs (Paragraph 125).

Therefore I believe there are very significant benefits to be secured should this development be delivered in terms of improved accommodation for a significant number of people in urgent housing need.

Standard of accommodation:

Each of the residential units provides a good level of outlook appropriate to its City Centre location, adequate natural light and sufficient privacy for each occupant.

The sizes of the proposed residential units are below the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) ranging between 21.7m² and 28.6m² and with an average of 23.7m². The minimum NDSS space standard for single person dwelling is 37-39m² and for two persons/couple 50m².

The NDSS are not required under current Council local planning policy and in any event are not applicable to sui generis accommodation such as PBSA, hostels, bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation provision such as the current proposal.

However, they are part of the emerging Local Plan and the NDSS policy within the emerging Local Plan, subject to a proposed modification that this policy only applies three months after the adoption of the new Local Plan (with Local Plan adoption currently likely to be in Autumn 2025).

However, the relevant emerging Local Plan policy (ref. Ho07) specifically refers to Class C3 dwellings, and NDSS therefore cannot be required for shorter-term accommodation such as Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and that subject of this application.

PBSA and the proposal are limited-term accommodation, commonly with ancillary shared spaces (as in the case of the proposal). The proposed accommodation provides a comparable gross internal area to the existing lawful limited-term accommodation, albeit with some additional shared space and I consider the proposal to be acceptable in this respect.

I consider that the provision of studios of this size with full kitchen and en-suite facilities is a significant improvement on the unsuitable current living conditions experienced by many if not all of the proposed occupiers. In addition the support provided will enable them to feel valued and to move more effectively towards independence.

I do not consider a technical NDSS shortfall (which could not be required through policy) to be a material consideration which outweighs the benefits of the provision of specialist temporary accommodation, the need for which is identified in the Council's Homelessness Strategy and supported by the Local Housing Needs Assessment; or to outweigh the objectives of Core Strategy CS06 of responding to the needs of specific groups through the provision of supported housing.

As referenced above the managed temporary accommodation model anticipates occupancy of 3 to 12 months with occupancies of up to 18 months being an exception. Given the suitability of the accommodation only for temporary and limited-term occupancy and not for permanent occupancy I consider it appropriate to attach a condition restricting the occupancy of each unit to no more than 18 months and for appropriate monitoring of periods of occupancy to be continued with records available on request from the local planning authority. I consider the maximum occupancy period of up to 18 months to be reasonable to ensure this temporary limited-term use without compromising the objectives of the scheme. In addition, given the size of the units, I consider it appropriate to restrict the number of rooms available to childless couples. This need has been estimated at 3.4% which when translated into available rooms equals 5 rooms (rounded up).

Support for service users:

As detailed above and as included in the Asset Management Plan the proposal and the management model confirmed by THN creates 7 distinct micro-communities to enable greater matching of personal needs and risks with existing occupiers.

This is supplemented by all referred residents receive a detailed support needs / risk assessment at the point of referral and, as confirmed by THN, an Initial Support Plan completed within 72 hours of move-in, and a detailed Support Plan completed within 7 days. The support plans are to be reviewed and updated every month to ensure accuracy and maintain positive progress. THN confirm that all Complex Needs Specialists are experienced and qualified to QCF Level 2 in Health & Social Care, (or working towards it).

THN also confirm that all support is delivered in a Trauma Informed / Strength Based way, helping occupiers self-assess their current abilities, with a view to co-producing strategies and interventions to further develop skills and address barriers to progression. Ongoing contract monitoring will ensure that the Council remain sighted on service performance.

This micro-community approach is enabled by the provision on each floor (from ground floor to fifth) of dedicated Wellbeing, Consultation, Support and Counselling Rooms, supplemented by a Training and Education suite on the ground floor. The Lounge and Engagement Space on the ground floor is used to host various engagement events but also, together with the smaller lounge rooms on each floor help to foster a sense of community and develop positive and appropriate relationships. Enhanced CCTV as shown on the supplementary amended plans will ensure 'blind spots' are eliminated contributing towards a greater sense of security and safety for occupiers. THN have also confirmed that they are committed to creating a Psychologically Informed Environment, including colourways and furniture designed to avoid an institutional feel.

I consider that the proposal as shown in the internal layout of the amended plans creates a space that facilitates the levels of support offered by the proposed accommodation model and that as such the proposal meets Core Strategy policy CS03's objective of ensuring buildings are fit for purpose.

The proposal is also consistent in this respect with the objectives of Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework of aiming to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.

Impact on amenity of neighbouring area and local services:

Given the number of ways in which individuals can find themselves homeless, the range contained within the definitions of homelessness and the provision of safe spaces for vulnerable individuals that the scheme provides, I do not consider that the proposal will have a significant impact on the amenity of the neighbouring area or on the capacity of local services. This is supported by Housing Officers who further emphasise the managed and careful nature of the Council's referral system, the safeguarding processes included at the point of referral and the zoned communities model with occupiers moving through towards independence as factors that further reduce risk to the amenity of the neighbouring area.

THN have explained that it is highly likely that future occupiers of the site are already within the City Centre and currently without the benefit of personalised support and assertive outreach meaning that any future occupiers who may have a history that involves substance use or other behaviours are likely to be already present. Where occupants have identified substance use needs these will be captured in the Support Plan process, allowing experienced Complex Needs Specialists to work directly with them to address those needs. Furthermore, the provision of accommodation will place them in more secure and less vulnerable living accommodation. The Assertive Outreach element of the provision allows Complex Needs Specialists to engage outside the scheme (including the City Centre) which can further support joined-up working with Police and Community Safety Officers. This element of the programme recognises the need to provide support outside of the building.

The general 'Supported Housing' principle of the scheme will allow for the provision of personal and meaningful support beyond that received in any inappropriate accommodation (for example hostels and bed and breakfast), ultimately improving appreciation of community interaction and responsibility, with support being specifically tailored to address such issues helping occupants understand the impact of such behaviours.

The scheme allows for proactive engagement with Blue Light services and Community Safety Leads allowing for a more joined-up solution, reducing the need for crisis intervention and detention or admission into custody. THN state that they operate on a basis of a positive relationship with Police and Ambulance Services allowing a single point of contact in case of incident (for example a known address to seek further information, support or accommodation).

In relation to health services, the scheme is designed for and commissioned by the Council for existing Council clients and as such does not create any 'additional' demand in the system. The operational model is designed to support partnership working with all relevant Homeless Pathway Partners and wider healthcare partners, actively deploying harm reduction interventions, which ultimately reduce demand on such services. The scheme provides greater supervision and support than which is available in inappropriate accommodation, significantly reducing the risk of and need for Crisis Response Interventions.

Given the stated partnership working model, I do not consider that the proposal will result in a demonstrable rise in demand on health, community safety and emergency services and that once these established partnerships are in place within the context of the new development the proposal has the potential to have a positive impact in this respect.

THN have confirmed that they will proactively engage with all relevant stakeholders (eg Police, Ambulance, Neighbours, Local Community Groups) prior to service opening, ensuring points of contact are in place and that escalation and complaint protocols are proactively shared. In accordance with the objectives of Paragraphs 96 and 135 of the NPPF of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users I consider it appropriate to attach a condition that Terms of Reference for such proactive engagement are submitted, agreed and published prior to the first occupation of the development. This will provide a liaison mechanism with the local community.

In addition, though there is no intention to fund third party CCTV systems (noting that the Council have existing street CCTV in place) significantly enhanced CCTV coverage on site will provide a further deterrent effect against substance use and dealing and antisocial behaviour. There is no intention to fund additional street lighting. Furthermore, on site cleaners and maintenance staff enable the immediate area to be regularly checked and monitored and kept clear of any disposed risks or litter.

Highways and parking impacts:

Albeit a residential use, future occupants are unlikely to have cars or vehicles, presenting a minimal risk of added congestion. The site is well located in the City Centre, close to the train station and within walking distance of the city's two principal bus stations. The site is in a highly sustainable location and supports easy access for occupiers and for staff and partners. Where parking is required, there are several accessible Public Car Parks close by. The level of cycle parking is equivalent to the existing lawful use and I consider it to be reasonable for the intended use.

I do not consider that the proposal will have a harmful impact on parking capacity, highway safety or the proper use of the highway network.

Other considerations:

- precedent and concern that agencies across the country will target Leicester as a hotspot for "Human Warehousing" in poor quality accommodation.

An open market tender was undertaken by the Council to commission a provider of accommodation-based housing related support for this building. All referrals to this scheme will be made by the Council for homeless households (single people and childless couples). All individuals referred will be eligible for support and have a local connection. Nor is the scheme intended to be 'Move On', with occupants maintaining their Priority Banding to support an actual move on to settled, permanent housing.

In this context "local connection" means that you have links to the council area because you i) live or have lived in the area recently, ii) work in the area, iii) have close family living there, iv) get care leavers support in the area or v) lived in asylum support housing in the area.

The specification for this service required providers to ensure the supplier will meet the minimum standards for accommodation-related housing service in supported housing. Accommodation provided should be safe and secure for Clients using the service.

I consider that these entry level requirements act as a safeguard against such a precedent being set as other operations would not be viable without the mechanisms contracted here.

- Other concerns

There cannot be a guarantee against the submission of future applications seeking to vary or remove the recommended condition restricting occupancy to a maximum of 18 months. However, this condition has been considered necessary for the development (as well considered to meet the other planning tests for conditions). Any such application would need to be considered against the planning recommendation above that for the model proposed and due to the nature of this proposal such a condition is indeed considered necessary at this site.

In relation to concerns that the space should be reserved for any demand created by the EU Youth Mobility Scheme, and to concerns that alternative sites should be considered, the planning recommendation above is and only can be on the basis of the scheme submitted.

The impact of the scheme on property values is not a material planning consideration relevant to this application.

Conclusion

I therefore **recommend** that the application is approved subject to the following conditions, subject to confirmation from the HSE that their original comments remain applicable in respect of the amended plans.

CONDITIONS

1. The development shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission. (To comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.)
2. The development hereby approved shall only be used as the managed short term residential accommodation and ancillary spaces permitted and none of the units shall be occupied longer than 18 consecutive months by any referred service user. A register of occupancy shall be maintained on site by the service provider and made available to the local planning authority for inspection at any time (in the interests of the amenity of future occupiers and in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS03 and saved City of Leicester Local Plan Policy PS10 and the objectives of Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework).
3. The development hereby approved shall have no more than 4 units occupied by childless couples at any one time. A register of occupancy shall be maintained on site by the service provider and made available to the local planning authority for

inspection at any time (in the interests of the amenity of future occupiers and in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS03 and saved City of Leicester Local Plan Policy PS10 and the objectives of Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

4. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the amended Asset Management Plan dated 20.06.25 and received by the City Council as local planning authority on 20.06.25. The Asset Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the lifetime of the development unless a future or updated and viable management plan is submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority and published online on the Planning Application database. Where a future or updated and viable management plan is agreed, the use shall be continued in accordance with that agreed future or updated management plan (in the interests of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote health and well-being, and in the interests of the amenity of occupiers and neighbouring properties and in accordance with the objectives Paragraphs 135 and 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

5. Prior to the occupation of the development Terms of Reference (from the Operator) for proactive engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to ensuring points of contact are in place and that escalation and complaint protocols are proactively shared, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. These Terms of Reference shall be published on the Planning Applications database. The development shall be operated in accordance with these Terms of Reference throughout the lifetime of the development. In the event of a change of operator, the new operator shall submit a revised Terms of Reference within six weeks of commencement of their contract to the local planning authority and these shall be agreed in writing. The development shall be operated in accordance with these revised Terms of Reference within timescales agreed in writing with the local planning authority (in the interests of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote health and well-being, and in the interests of the amenity of occupiers and neighbouring properties and in accordance with the objectives Paragraphs 135 and 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

6. APPROVED PLANS CONDITION

NOTES FOR APPLICANT

1. BNG EXEMPT - DE MINIMIS

2. The City Council, as local planning authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant during the process (and pre-application).

The decision to grant planning permission with appropriate conditions taking account of those material considerations in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF 2024 is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

Policies relating to this recommendation

- 2006_AM01 Planning permission will only be granted where the needs of pedestrians and people with disabilities are incorporated into the design and routes are as direct as possible to key destinations.
- 2006_AM02 Planning permission will only be granted where the needs of cyclists have been incorporated into the design and new or improved cycling routes should link directly and safely to key destinations.
- 2006_AM12 Levels of car parking for residential development will be determined in accordance with the standards in Appendix 01.
- 2006_PS10 Criteria will be used to assess planning applications which concern the amenity of existing or proposed residents.
- 2014_CS03 The Council will require high quality, well designed developments that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the local natural and built environment. The policy sets out design objectives for urban form, connections and access, public spaces, the historic environment, and 'Building for Life'.
- 2014_CS06 The policy sets out measures to ensure that the overall housing requirements for the City can be met; and to ensure that new housing meets the needs of City residents.
- 2014_CS08 Neighbourhoods should be sustainable places that people choose to live and work in and where everyday facilities are available to local people. The policy sets out requirements for various neighbourhood areas in the City.
- 2014_CS12 In recognition of the City Centre's role in the City's economy and wider regeneration, the policy sets out strategies and measures to promote its growth as a sub-regional shopping, leisure, historic and cultural destination, and the most accessible and sustainable location for main town centre uses.