

Printed in Bath Chronicle 23rd Dec 15 under headline “**Clock is Ticking ahead of Housing Explosion**”:

Dear Editor,

Student Housing

We have a student accommodation time-bomb ticking in Bath and yet the Council's Placemaking Plan, forecasting 32,000 students by 2020 (a 40% increase since 2011) and published last week for consultation, proposes absolutely nothing to address this. It accepts that Bath already “over-performs as a host to Higher Education” with the proportion of housing already converted to HMOs greater than in Oxford but concludes that “the Council cannot direct the Universities not to aspire to grow”.

The majority of Bath's students need to find accommodation in the city as the demand for University-managed beds is driven mainly by first year and international students. The Plan predicts a demand for about 5,000 more private-sector beds within 5 years, equivalent to over 1,200 more HMOs, 11 more city centre-type Green Park House developments, or some combination of the two. This will lead to yet another squeeze on housing for Bath's would-be residents and further pressure on the Green Belt. FoBRA has demanded a Student Housing Policy for years, as exists in other University towns such as Leeds, Loughborough and Leicester, but the Council's Plan rejects that. Why?

Robin Kerr