

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Draft Sheffield Local Plan - Reg. 19 Consultation - Reps OBO Unite Group Plc
Date: 20 February 2023 16:47:02
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - PART A.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy CO2 Annex B.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy NC2.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy NC5.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy NC6.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy NC8.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy NC9.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy SA1 CA3 CA4 CA5.pdf](#)
[Sheffield - Reg. 19 - Cosultation Form - Original - Policy VC3.pdf](#)
[230220 - Draft Sheffield Plan - Reg. 19 Reps OBO Unite - FINAL.pdf](#)

Dear Sheffield,

Please find attached representations to the Draft Sheffield Local Plan Reg. 19 Consultation, made on behalf of Unite Group Plc. This includes:

- Completed Part A Form;
- Completed Part B Forms:
 - Part 1, Policy SA1, CO3, CO4, CO5
 - Policy NC2 – Development in the Residential Zones;
 - Policy NC5 – Creating Mixed Communities;
 - Policy NC6 – Purpose-Built Student Accommodation;
 - Policy NC8 – Housing Space Standards;
 - Policy NC9 – Housing Density;
 - Policy VC3 – Development in the Central Area Flexible Use Zones; and
 - Policy CO2 and Annex B – Cycle Parking.
- Representation Letter prepared by ROK Planning dated 20.02.2023.

Please could you confirm safe receipt of these representations?

Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact myself or Matthew (cc'd).

Kind regards,

Dan



Daniel Botten

Associate Director

T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

www.rokplanning.co.uk

16 Upper Woburn Place | London WC1H 0AF



The information in this email, and attachments, is private and confidential and may be legally privileged. The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from any computer. Every effort has been made to ensure a virus free email. ROK Planning Ltd is not responsible for any virus contained in this email.

Sheffield Plan Consultation Representation Form January – February 2023

Please use this form to provide representations on the Sheffield Local Plan. Sheffield City Council must receive representations by **5pm on 20th February 2023**. Only those representations received by that time have the statutory right to be considered by the inspector at the subsequent examination.

Responses can be submitted via

- the electronic version of the comment form which can be found on the Council's web site at: <https://haveyoursaysheffield.uk.engagementhq.com/draft-local-plan>
- an e-mail attachment: sheffieldplan@sheffield.gov.uk
- post to: **Strategic Planning Team, Planning Service, 4th Floor, Howden House, Sheffield S1 2SH**

Please note:

- Representations must only be made on the basis of the legal compliance, compliance with the Duty to Co-operate and/or soundness of the Plan.

Please read the guidance note, attached or available on the Council's webpage##, before you make your representations. The Local Plan and the proposed submission documents, and the evidence base are also available to view and download from the Council's Local Plan webpage:

Data Protection Notice:

Under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) Sheffield City Council is a Data Controller for the information it holds about you. The lawful basis under which the Council uses personal data for this purpose is consent.

All representations are required to be made public and will be published on the Council's website following this consultation. Your representations and name/name of your organisation will be published, but other personal information will remain confidential. Your data and comments will be shared with other relevant agencies involved in the preparation of the local plan, including the Planning Inspectorate. Anonymous responses will not be considered. Your personal data will be held and processed in accordance with the Council's Privacy Notice which can be viewed at: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/utilities/footer-links/privacy-notice>

Due to the Data Protection Act 2018, Sheffield City Council now needs your consent to hold your personal data for use as part of the Sheffield Plan process. If you would like the Council to keep you informed about the Sheffield Plan, we need to hold your data on file. Please tick the box below to confirm if you would like to 'opt in' to receive information about the Sheffield Plan. Note that choosing to 'opt in' will mean that the Council will hold your information for 2 years from the 'opt in' date. At this time we will contact you to review if you wish to 'opt in' again. You can opt-out at any time by emailing sheffieldplan@sheffield.gov.uk or by calling 0114 2735897.

Please tick/ delete as appropriate:

Please confirm you have read and understood the terms and conditions relating to GDPR.

Yes

No

Please tick as appropriate to confirm your consent for Sheffield City Council to publish and share your name/ organisation and comments regarding the Sheffield Plan.

I confirm my consent for Sheffield City Council to share my name/ organisation and comments regarding the Sheffield Plan including with the Planning Inspectorate.

Yes

No

Please tick as appropriate below if you wish to 'opt in' and receive updates and information about the Sheffield Plan.

I would like to opt in to receive information about the Sheffield Plan.

Yes

No

Printed Name: Matthew Roe

Signature:



Date: 20.02.2023

This form has two parts:

Part A - Personal details – need only to complete once.



Part B - Your representation(s) - Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A- Personal Details

1. Personal Details

Name:
Organisation (if applicable): Unite Group Plc
Address:
Postcode:
Tel:
Fax:
Email:

2. Agent Details (if applicable)

Agent: Matthew Roe
Organisation (if applicable): ROK Planning
Address: ROK Planning, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London
Postcode: WC1H 0AF
Tel: 
Fax:
Email: 

Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: CO2, Annex B

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

4.(1) **Legally Compliant** Yes

No

4.(2) **Sound** Yes

No

4.(3) **Complies with the Duty to Cooperate** Yes

No

5. **Please give details of why you consider the Sheffield Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.** If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Sheffield Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

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Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: NC2

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

4.(1) **Legally Compliant** Yes

No

4.(2) **Sound** Yes

No

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: NC5

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

4.(1) **Legally Compliant** Yes

No

4.(2) **Sound** Yes

No

4.(3) **Complies with the Duty to Cooperate** Yes

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Yes

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: NC6

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

4.(1) **Legally Compliant** Yes

No

4.(2) **Sound** Yes

No

4.(3) **Complies with the Duty to Cooperate** Yes

No

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Yes

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No

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: NC8

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

4.(1) **Legally Compliant** Yes

No

4.(2) **Sound** Yes

No

4.(3) **Complies with the Duty to Cooperate** Yes

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: NC9

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

4.(1) **Legally Compliant** Yes

No

4.(2) **Sound** Yes

No

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: SA1, CA3, CA4, CA5.

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

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No

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Part B - Your representation

Please use a separate sheet for each representation and return along with a single completed Part A.

Name or Organisation: ROK Planning

3. To which part of the Sheffield Plan does your representation relate?

Policy Number: VC3

Paragraph Number:

Policies Map:

4. Do you consider the Sheffield Plan is:

Tick all that apply, please refer to the guidance note for an explanation of these terms.

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No

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SENT BY EMAIL ONLY: sheffieldplan@sheffield.gov.uk

OUR REF: R00813/DB/MR

Strategic Planning Team
Planning Service
4th Floor
Howden House
Sheffield
S1 2SH

20 February 2023

Dear Sir / Madam,

DRAFT SHEFFIELD LOCAL PLAN: PUBLICATION VERSION (REG. 19) CONSULTATION REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF UNITE GROUP PLC

I write on behalf of our client, Unite Group Plc (Unite), to submit representations to the Draft Sheffield Local Plan Publication Version (Reg. 19) consultation. Unite are one of the UK's leading manager and developer of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), providing homes for around 70,000 students in more than 157 purpose-built properties across 23 of the UK's strongest university towns and cities.

The Draft Sheffield Local Plan Reg. 19 consultation closes at 5pm on Monday 20 February 2023. The plan is referred to as the 'Sheffield Plan' and 'will guide the future of the city by setting out how and where development will take place up to 2039'. It is understood that submission of the draft Sheffield Plan to the Planning Inspectorate is scheduled for April 2023.

This letter sets out Unite's representations to the following parts of the draft plan:

- Part 1: Vision, Spatial Strategy, Sub-Area Policies and Site Allocations:
 - Policy SA1, CA3, CA4, CA5;
- Part 2: Development Management Policies and Implementation:
 - Policy NC2 – Development in the Residential Zones;
 - Policy NC5 – Creating Mixed Communities;
 - Policy NC6 – Purpose-Built Student Accommodation;
 - Policy NC8 – Housing Space Standards;
 - Policy NC9 – Housing Density;
 - Policy VC3 – Development in the Central Area Flexible Use Zones; and
 - Policy CO2 and Annex B – Cycle Parking.

PART 1: VISION, SPATIAL STRATEGY, SUB-AREA POLICIES AND SITE ALLOCATIONS

Policy SA1, CA3, CA4, CA5

Part 1 of the plan seeks to direct purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) to 'identified parts' of three character areas; St Vincent's, Cathedral, St George's, University of Sheffield (CA3); City Arrival, Cultural Industries Quarter, Sheaf Valley (CA4); Heart of the City, Division Street, Springfield, Milton Street, the Moor, and Hanover Street (CA5).

The relevant parts of policies CA3, CA4 and CA5 state:

“Allow for new Purpose-Built Student Accommodation in identified parts of the area but only where evidence demonstrates the demand for further supply in these locations (see Policy NC5 and Policy NC6).”

Whilst Unite note the findings of the PBSA Market Study prepared by Cushman and Wakefield for Sheffield City Council as part of the Draft Sheffield Plan Evidence Base, which finds that there is potential over-supply of PBSA bedspaces in the City, Unite raise objection to a ‘zoned’ or locational approach.

It is recognised within national planning guidance that PBSA contributes to the delivery of overall housing targets (NPPG Para 034) and the Housing Delivery Test Rulebook explains that this contribution is on a 2.5 bedspace to dwelling ratio. Furthermore, Unite note that the Draft Sheffield Plan appears to accept this, with the glossary defining ‘residential development’ as follows:

- housing developments (Use Class C3 or C4, including student ‘cluster’ flats);
- residential institutions (Use Class C2);
- purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis);
- hostels providing 25 or more bed spaces (for residents and/ or staff);
- Travellers’ sites.

Thus, in order to be consistent with national policy and justified (and therefore sound), Unite argue that PBSA should be seen as a form of housing in accordance with national policy and not explicitly restricted to certain areas or zones in the same way that conventional residential accommodation is generally encouraged across wider areas.

Recommendation: On this basis Unite recommend the wording of the policy is revised to read as follows: *“Allow for new Purpose-Built Student Accommodation ~~in identified parts of the area but only~~ where evidence demonstrates the demand for further supply in these locations (see Policy NC5 and Policy NC6).”*

PART 2: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Policy NC2 – Development in the Residential Zones

Policy NC2 sets out ‘Preferred’, ‘Acceptable’ and ‘Unacceptable’ uses within residential zones. PBSA is not listed within either of these categories. For the same reasons as given above in respect of PBSA’s contribution towards housing supply, and indeed noting that PBSA falls within the definition of ‘residential development’ set out in the glossary to the draft Sheffield Plan itself, Unite argue that, for soundness, PBSA should also be classed as an ‘Acceptable’ use within these zones.

Recommendation: PBSA should be listed as an ‘Acceptable’ use within ‘residential zones’.

Policy NC5 – Creating Mixed Communities

Policy NC5 states the following:

“Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), hostels and shared housing, will be not be permitted where the combined concentration of these uses, when compared with the number of all residential properties within 200m of the site (as the crow flies), exceeds 20%.”

Unite note that neither the supporting text to this policy nor the wording itself refers to PBSA accommodation. Similarly, PBSA is defined separately from ‘shared housing’ and HMO’s within the glossary. On this basis Unite understand that this policy restriction does not apply to PBSA.

However, Unite note that the supporting text (para 4.25) to policy NC6 (PBSA) states:

“However, an over-concentration of PBSA (along with other types of shared housing) can have a detrimental effect in areas where there are established residential communities, or where residential communities are developing.”

Therefore, Unite argue that policy NC5 should be revised to make clear that it does not apply to PBSA for the following reasons:

- There is no evidence to suggest that concentrations of PBSA causes harm to mixed communities. There are examples of appeal decisions from across the UK which find varying levels of concentrations (in some cases circa 60%) acceptable;
- PBSA is markedly different from uncontrolled HMO’s given they are subject to Student Management Plans and on-site staff; and
- Students naturally wish to live closer to their places of study and thus, by its nature, PBSA accommodation is likely to be located in certain areas (generally those with good accessibility). Implementing concentration thresholds would ‘push’ such development further afield to less desirable locations. Indeed, this is compounded by the ‘zoned’ approach the Draft Sheffield Plan currently proposes in respect of PBSA through Part 1 of the plan, meaning there is likely to be a higher concentration of PBSA in these areas.

Recommendation: Policy NC5 should make explicitly clear, for example through the use of a footnote, that this policy does not apply to PBSA.

Policy NC6 – Purpose-Built Student Accommodation

In addition to their objection to supporting paragraph 4.25 in respect of over-concentration for the reasons given above, Unite also suggest that policy NC6 is revised to support PBSA in a more broad fashion. It currently reflects the position of Part 1 of the plan, supporting PBSA only in identified areas. For the reasons given in respect of these Part 1 policies earlier in this letter and the fact that PBSA is a form of housing, in order to be consistent with national policy and justified, Unite suggest that such a zoned approach is removed. Instead, noting the findings of the PBSA Market Study prepared by Cushman and Wakefield, Unite accept a requirement to demonstrate the ‘need’ for such development as part of planning applications.

However, Unite also suggest an alternative approach further to the above comments. The intensification of existing PBSA developments should be supported in planning policy, regardless of whether they fall

within the identified areas and without a requirement to demonstrate need. The intensification of existing PBSA sites can contribute towards meeting housing demand whilst allowing other sites in other areas to come forward for alternative forms of development, thus constituting a highly efficient use of land. In the event that the current zoned approach is adopted, it would also provide scope to provide additional student beds where market demand increased during the plan period whilst PBSA development remained restricted. Finally, it would allow those existing sites where demand for spaces is strong, i.e. in the most appropriate locations, to intensify their bedspace provision which in turn (should the market demand identified in the PBSA Market Study remain at similar levels or decrease) could allow other PBSA accommodation to be utilised for alternative uses such as conventional housing.

Recommendation: Unite suggest the 'zoned' approach is removed and, instead, accept that a need for such development must be demonstrated. As an alternative, Unite recommend that the intensification of existing student sites is supported in planning policy (regardless of whether they are located within the identified areas of whether need can be demonstrated).

Policy NC8 – Housing Space Standards

Parts a. and b. of Policy NC8 state that:

“New housing developments should:

- a) comply with the Government’s nationally described space standard and any subsequent updates; and*
- b) demonstrate adequate living space is provided for any residential accommodation not within the dwellinghouses (C3) Use Class, including Purpose Built Student Accommodation;”*

Unite note that national space standards do not apply to PBSA given its unique layout and the fact that PBSA bedrooms do not constitute 'dwellings'. It appears that this point is accepted within the Draft Sheffield Plan by way of the inclusion of part b. in the first instance. However, Unite consider that the policy should read 'or' as opposed to 'and'. In other words, for soundness, PBSA accommodation should have to meet part b. of the policy only.

Recommendation: Part a. and b. of policy NC8 should read 'or'. PBSA development should only be required to meet part b. of policy NC8.

Policy NC9 – Housing Density

Policy NC9 seeks to make effective and efficient use of land. However, it then adopts a density threshold approach with 'housing development' required to be 'within' certain ranges subject to location. Unite do not object to the identification of 'minimum' densities but do raise objection to density thresholds. Unite contend that development proposals should be considered on a site-by-site basis subject to the site specific characteristics in order to allow higher density development to come forward in appropriate locations.

In addition, Unite question whether, and how, this policy is proposed to relate to PBSA and other forms of housing development given the policy refers to 'dwellings' per hectare only. Unite note that PBSA development is capable of being delivered at far higher densities given its layout.

Recommendation: Unite recommend that policy NC9 is revised so as to not set density thresholds, with this to be considered on a site-by-site basis. Unite suggest that policy NC9 does not apply to PBSA given the policy's reference to 'dwellings' per hectare and the fact that PBSA can be delivered at far higher densities than conventional residential accommodation.

Policy VC3 – Development in the Central Area Flexible Use Zones

Policy VC3, in similar fashion to policy NC2, sets out 'Acceptable' and 'Unacceptable' uses within the Flexible Use Zone. Unite note that PBSA is not listed as 'Acceptable' whilst hotels, dwellinghouses and HMO's are. Given that PBSA is a recognised form of housing as detailed earlier in this letter, Unite recommend that 'PBSA' is added as an 'Acceptable' use within this portion of the Central Area in order to be consistent with national policy and the remainder of the draft plan itself.

Recommendation: Unite recommend that PBSA is listed as an 'Acceptable' use within this area alongside hotels, dwellinghouses and HMO accommodation.

Policy CO2 and Annex B – Cycle Parking

Policy CO2 states that *"new development (including extensions) should comply with the Parking Guidelines set out in Annex B"*.

Annex B refers to PBSA development as Use Class 'C2'. Unite object to this classification. PBSA should be referred to as a 'sui-generis' use. Indeed, Unite note that PBSA is indeed referred to as a 'sui generis' use throughout the Draft Sheffield Plan including within policy text and within the glossary. Annex B should be updated to correspond accordingly for soundness.

Unite support the development of car-free PBSA set out within Annex B. Annex B continues to set a cycle parking standard of 1 space per 2 dwellings. In this respect Unite note the following:

- PBSA is generally located in close proximity to places of study, allowing the majority of journeys to be undertaken on foot. Furthermore, they are often located in areas with a high transport accessibility;
- From Unite's experience, this has resulted in severe underuse of cycle parking provided a policy compliant levels. A survey undertaken by Unite in February 2018 found that the maximum average demand for cycle parking storage is 5% of bed spaces. This was found across 26 of Unite's sites and equates to a demand of one cycle space per 20 students; and
- Over-provision of unnecessary cycle space can lead to loss of valuable floorspace in which more bedrooms can be provided, thus reducing the efficiency of the use of the land.

On this basis Unite are un-supportive of such standards for PBSA development. Unite note that Annex B allows for "innovative alternatives that meet the objectives of these standards" such as on-street cycle hangars in respect of 'residential dwellings'. Unite support the inclusion of such wording but request that this is made applicable to other forms of residential development, not only dwellings.

Recommendation: The use of innovative alternatives that meet the objectives of these standards is made applicable to PBSA, as well as dwellings.

I trust the above representations are in order and look forward to confirmation of safe receipt. Given the extent of these representations and their inter-relation to a number of different policies and overall strategic approach, I reserve the position to participate in the Examination in Public as necessary.

Yours faithfully,



Matthew Roe
Director
ROK Planning

T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]