

Supplementary Guidance: Serviced Apartments

1. Status of Supplementary Guidance

This Supplementary Guidance (SG) forms part of the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The SG expands upon the following Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies:

- Policy NC2 – City Centre Retail Core and Union Street

2. Introduction to Topic

Serviced apartments provide short term accommodation to business and leisure visitors. The development of serviced apartments must not be to the detriment of other uses in the locality.

Serviced apartments are residential flats used as quasi hotel accommodation by business and leisure visitors to the city, where periods of occupation are generally but not necessarily less than 90 days by any individual, family or group. Services such as cleaning and laundry are provided, either on a daily basis or between periods of occupation. All apartments within a development must be in single ownership and operated as a single business. They should not be a form of permanent housing.

Serviced apartments are considered by the Council to be *Sui generis* (of its own kind) and therefore not within any specific use class. All proposals to create serviced apartments within existing properties will therefore require the submission of a planning application for a change of use. Planning permission would also be necessary for changes of use from a serviced apartment to any other use. If a development is to be considered as serviced apartments according to this Supplementary Guidance, then the description of the development for the application will have to specifically refer to the intended use as serviced apartments.

3. General Guidance

3.1 Serviced Apartments in the City Centre and the Existing Built Up Area

The Council encourages serviced apartments in the city centre (as defined on the Proposals Map) in principle, subject to satisfying all other policies contained within the Local Development Plan, such as siting, design, and other amenity considerations. Serviced apartments outwith the city centre, but within the existing built up areas, will be assessed on their own merits. All planning applications for serviced apartments will take into consideration the potential issues discussed below.

3.2 Serviced Apartments in the Green Belt

There is a presumption against the location of serviced apartments in Green Belt areas across the City. For guidance on development within the green belt please refer to Policy NE2: Green Belt.

3.3 Amenity

Residential amenity should not be adversely affected by the introduction of serviced apartments and the applicant should demonstrate this in the planning application. Whilst the Council encourages the provision of such accommodation in appropriate locations, amenity problems can arise where

serviced apartments are established in close proximity to residential uses.

Serviced apartments should fit into their surroundings and should not adversely affect residential amenity by reason of noise, disturbance, traffic generation or exacerbation of parking problems. This can be an issue particularly in H1: Residential Areas and H2: Mixed Use Areas (refer Proposals Map) throughout the city.

For new purpose built serviced apartments we will take into account other policy considerations, such as density, impact on loss of light, loss of privacy, etc.

As a result of all such amenity considerations, serviced apartments are more preferable in the city centre and locations with good access to public transport.

3.4 Servicing

The servicing of serviced apartments can also create concerns relating to residential amenity and road safety, such as disturbance and parking obstructions. All planning applications for serviced apartments must include a Servicing Strategy for the development.

The Servicing Strategy must detail how the development will be serviced including parking for any vehicles attributed to the servicing of the development, details of storage facilities for waste, means of collection of waste, laundry services and other associated servicing such as delivery of mail. Details on the type, number and frequency of vehicles used for servicing and hours of servicing will require to be submitted. Each application for serviced apartments will be assessed on its own merits depending on the location and existing refuse facilities available. Conditions may be attached to control any aspect of the proposed Servicing Strategy if there are road safety or amenity considerations that require them.

Applicants are encouraged to speak to Development Management at pre-planning stage, and may also wish to discuss proposals with the Environmental Health Team and the Roads Projects Team within the Council, regarding waste and access respectively, before submitting a planning application.

3.5 Sustainable Travel and Parking

In line with Policy T3: Sustainable and Active Travel, serviced apartments should minimise travel by private car, improve access to services and promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging active travel. Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility provides further information on transportation issues.

In order to minimise travel by private car and encourage sustainable modes of transport, the Council may Condition applications for serviced apartments in the following ways:

- no on-site parking spaces;
- cycle spaces made available on site;
- the availability of a bike hire scheme; and
- membership of a Car Club.

In instances where no parking is supplied with the serviced apartments and the development is within the city centre and the existing built up area (when a bus stop is no more than 800 metres from the apartment) then serviced apartments shall be regarded as 'car free' and contributions as per the Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance will apply.

When car parking is provided for a serviced apartment development, a car parking standard for the city centre and existing built up area should be applied, i.e. a maximum of 0.75 car parking spaces per apartment.

The Council encourages the production and promotion of a Residential Travel Pack, particularly for low or no car developments. This should promote walking, cycling, public transport, car club and other helpful site-specific transport information tailored to the development and made available on the businesses website and in the apartments. This may be Conditioned in a planning consent.

4. Planning Obligations

Serviced apartments can have an impact on a number of services and facilities. Contributions may be sought, on a floor space basis, and calculated on gross internal floor area including additional car parking and hardstanding, for the development of serviced apartments. Examples of contributions that may be sought for the development of serviced apartments are environmental and core path improvements. Please be aware that further considerations such as contributions will be required for future applications for a change of use of serviced apartments to residential or any other use. Please see the [Planning Obligations Supplementary Guidance](#) for further details.

5. Legal Agreements

Aberdeen City Council will seek to enter into a legal agreement with the applicant(s) to ensure that blocks of serviced apartments remain in single ownership. The legal agreement will also ensure that any serviced apartments do not become permanent residential properties. With this in mind the agreement will specify a maximum length of continuous occupancy of any apartment(s) within a block of serviced apartments by any occupant(s). This will normally be a period of 90 days duration unless a strong case has been made by the applicant for a variation supported by evidence of controls that ensure the apartments will not be occupied on a permanent basis, and that prevents both tenancy duration and continuous periods of occupation of a single unit extending beyond a specified period. In all circumstances this specified period will be less than 9 months.