

STUDENT NEED

Summary Proof of Evidence

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Introduction

1. My evidence will show that full-time student numbers in London, commutable institutions and within Wandsworth (and its surrounding boroughs) are growing and that the demand pool for accommodation bed spaces is rising. I will present evidence of a need for additional PBSA bed spaces across the city to meet demand.
2. As is standard in the student accommodation sector, my analysis will focus on the full-time student population.

The Site

3. The Site benefits from strong transport connections and proximity to a wide range of higher education institutions.
4. London students are generally willing to commute around 45 minutes to a place of study. The following institutions are now within a 45-minute public transport commute.

Public Transport Commuting Times to London Institutions

	Travel Time via Public Transport (mins)
University of Westminster	18
University College London	22
Birkbeck University of London	24
SOAS University of London	25
Royal Veterinary College	30
London South Bank University	31
Imperial College London	32
London Metropolitan University	33
Royal College of Art	36
Royal Academy of Music	37
City University London	38
Queen Mary University of London	39
King's College	41
University of Roehampton	42
London School of Economics and Political Science	45

Source: Cushman & Wakefield

Policy & Planning Considerations

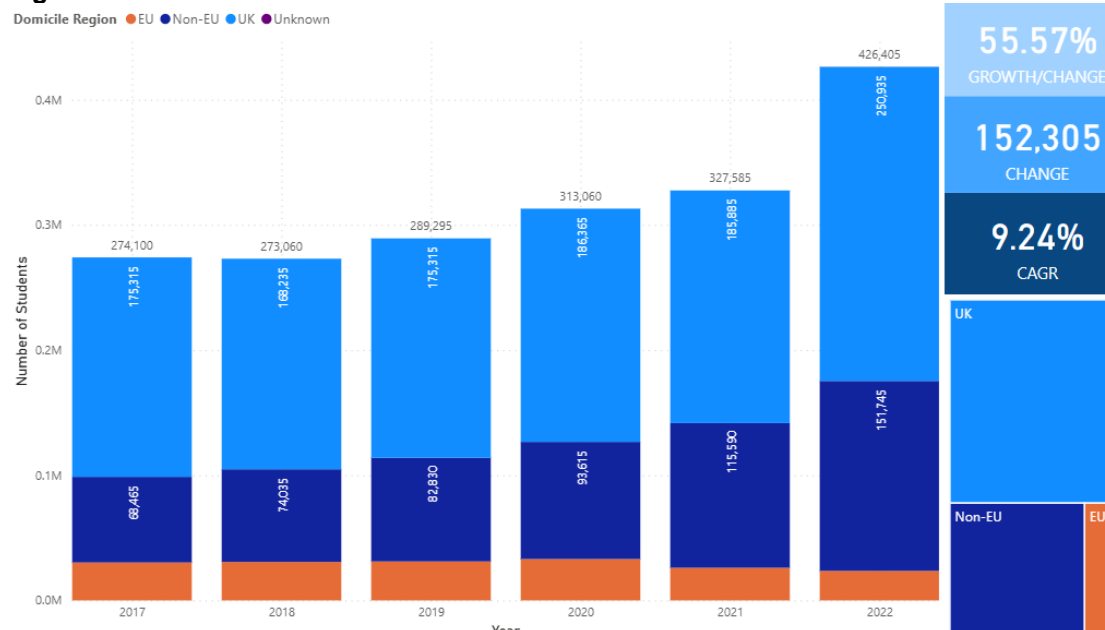
5. The London Plan (CDB.02) sets out a strategic requirement for PBSA to deliver 3,500 beds annually. This ambition is not being met and has not been met since 2017/18.
6. Wandsworth's Local Plan (Policy LP28) (CDC.01) further supports PBSA, provided it meets key conditions. The Borough's 2024 Housing Needs Assessment (CDC.03) acknowledges that London-wide student housing demand exceeds supply, contributing to rising rents and increased competition for accommodation.
7. The Appeal Scheme aligns with Wandsworth's policy objectives by offering well-located, high-quality PBSA to meet growing student demand.

The London Higher Education Market

8. London is home to a wide array of prestigious institutions, including five of the UK's Russell Group universities. Four universities feature in the global top 50, all of these are located within an acceptable commuting time of the Site.
9. The London student market accounts for around one in five of all full-time students studying in the UK.

- Growth in the London market has stood at 55.57% since 2017/18, which is over double the rate of 24.94% seen nationally over the same period.

Figure 1: London Full-Time Student Number Growth 2017/18 to 2022/23



Source: HESA 2017/18 to 2022/23, adapted by Cushman & Wakefield. Note 2022/23 allows identification of alternative providers (i.e., those not in receipt of Office for Students recurrent funding) for the first time

- There are 152,305 more students studying in the Capital than was the case in 2017/18. 115,420 of this growth was from outside the Greater London region, resulting in hugely increased demand for accommodation.
- In terms of the commutable institutions previously identified, growth amongst this group has also been strong, with an extra 77,600 students studying at these institutions than in 2017/18 (+51.82%).
- 54,690 of this growth in students was from those ordinarily domiciled outside Greater London, resulting in hugely increased demand for accommodation bed spaces.**
- Whilst the overall number of students from outside Greater London has increased by 115,420 students since 2017/18, the number of PBSA beds (net) has only increased by 8,307, resulting in a rapidly rising student to bed ratio and increased pressures on the private rented sector.

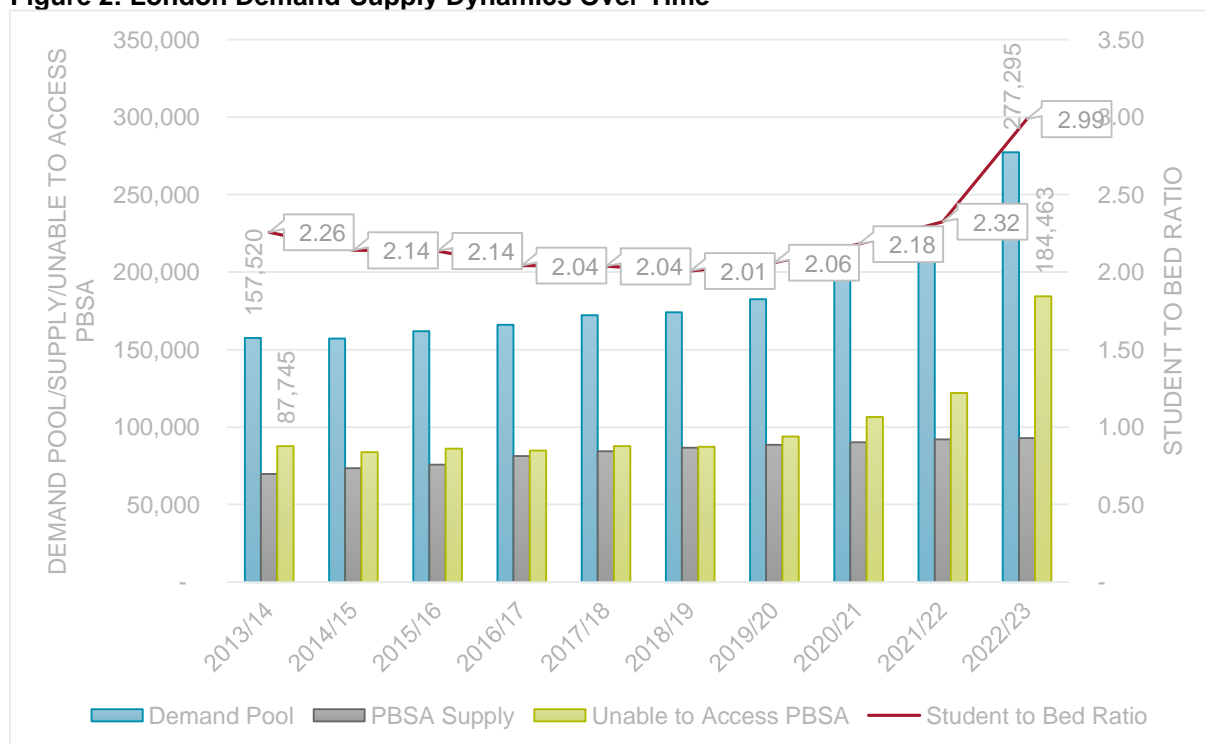
Table 1: London Plan Ambition vs Actual Bed Delivery Over Time

London Plan Adoption	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Overall
New Beds (net)	84,525	86,776	88,613	90,300	92,144	92,832	93,961	95,374	14,102
Plan Ambition	3,253	2,251	1,837	1,687	1,844	688	1,129	1,413	14,102
Shortfall	- 247	- 1,249	- 1,663	- 1,813	- 1,656	- 2,812	- 2,371	- 2,087	- 13,898

Source: Cushman & Wakefield Student Accommodation Tracker

- The London Plan has consistently fallen short in delivering an adequate number of beds to meet growing demand for accommodation and a historic structural undersupply of beds.
- A major impact of this lack of supply is escalating rental increases in London. This has the potential to damage the attractiveness of London as a place to study.
- Cushman & Wakefield has developed a proprietary tool for analysis of which students require a bed space during their course of study, the “demand pool”. The demand pool measured against the supply of PBSA beds gives the student to bed ratio – i.e., the number of students with a requirement for a bed vs the number of PBSA beds available. The London-wide position is outlined below.

Figure 2: London Demand-Supply Dynamics Over Time



Source: HESA 2017/18 to 2022/23/Cushman & Wakefield. Note 2022/23 allows identification of alternative providers for the first time.

- 18. Across London, the student to bed ratio stands at 2.99:1, with over 184,000 students with a requirement for a bed unable to access one in PBSA.
- 19. It is clear that London is significantly structurally undersupplied with accommodation, and the Proposed Development can play a role in helping to address this imbalance, helping to reduce additional housing market pressures.

Commutable Institution Demand-Supply Dynamics

- 20. The demand pool for accommodation across these providers within a 45-minute door-to-door commute is significant, standing at 148,170 students in 2022/23, over half of the total demand pool for accommodation in London.
- 21. Despite the large demand pool for accommodation across these commutable institutions, the universities are very reliant on private PBSA providers (and the wider private housing market) to house students with a requirement for a bed, offering just 29,343 beds to students in 2022/23. This means that over 118,827 students with a requirement for a bed at these institutions are unable to access one through their university.

Table 2: Commutable Institutions Demand-Supply Dynamics Over Time

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
All Year Demand Pool	99,595	102,265	107,695	111,325	114,790	112,895	115,055	124,670	130,040	148,170
First Year Demand Pool	49,730	52,310	54,420	55,915	58,885	58,405	60,425	67,220	69,590	78,815
PBSA Supply	27,332	28,010	28,928	30,404	29,815	30,986	30,451	29,683	29,290	29,343
Student to Bed Ratio	3.64	3.65	3.72	3.66	3.85	3.64	3.78	4.20	4.44	5.05
1st Year Student to Bed Ratio	1.82	1.87	1.88	1.84	1.98	1.88	1.98	2.26	2.38	2.69
Unable to Access PBSA	72,263	74,255	78,767	80,921	84,975	81,909	84,604	94,987	100,750	118,827
1st Year Unable to Access PBSA	22,398	24,300	25,492	25,511	29,070	27,419	29,974	37,537	40,300	49,472

Source: HESA/Cushman & Wakefield

- 22. These institutions are also struggling to adequately house their first-year populations. These are students often studying away from home for the first time with important pastoral care needs. As

can be seen, based on latest available data, nearly 50,000 first-year students across these institutions are unable to access a PBSA bed.

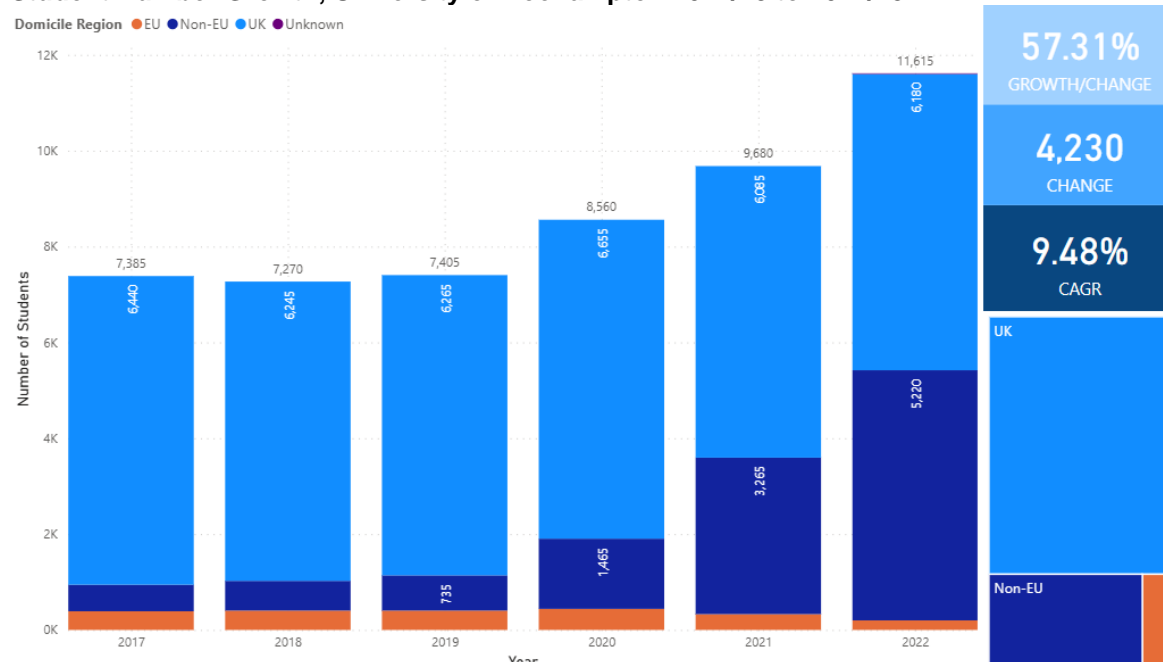
Wandsworth PBSA

- 23. In the current academic year (2024/25) Wandsworth offers a total of 4,008 PBSA beds to students, 4% of the total available across London.
- 24. Development of new PBSA in Wandsworth has been relatively limited, with 208 new beds delivered in 2015/16 (Chadwick Hall) and then 358 beds in 2016/17 (Elm Grove Hall). There was then no new development until the current 2024/25 academic year with the opening of Urbanest Battersea (851 beds).
- 25. Currently, the development pipeline in the Borough is also limited at 1,213 beds, 2% of the total current PBSA development pipeline across London. One of these is the Proposed Development, with the other a proposed 434 bed development at 2 Armory Way.

Wandsworth Higher Education Demand

- 26. Growth in student numbers in Wandsworth has been significant since 2017/18.
- 27. The chart below highlights student number growth at Roehampton University since 2017/18. Levels of growth over this period have been above those seen nationally and across London, with a particularly pronounced increase in the number of international students, with the non-EU international population growing by 4,665 students (839.21%). International students are most likely to demand PBSA for reasons of safety and convenience.

Student Number Growth, University of Roehampton 2017/18 to 2022/23



Source: HESA 2017/18 to 2022/23

- 28. In line with its strategic ambitions, growth at St George’s, University of London, has been muted, with full-time student numbers growing by 3.45% over the same period. However, St George’s has plans for significant expansion, with the institution’s Vision & Strategy 2030 (CDM.17) setting out an ambition to increase “student numbers (FTE) by at least 20% (from 2022).
- 29. Located on the edge of the Borough is a significant campus of Kingston University, Roehampton Vale, which was home to 1,005 students – all of whom were studying Engineering. 31% of these students were non-EU internationals.

30. The demand pool for accommodation across these institutions measured against the number of beds available over time can be seen below. I have also shown the potential growth in demand to the current 2024/25 academic year.

Table 3: Demand-Supply Dynamics Over Time, Wandsworth-based Institutions

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
All year	3,440	3,200	3,330	3,400	3,335	3,310	5,025	5,655	7,110	9,240	10,109	11,061
First year	1,410	1,430	1,435	1,605	1,445	1,345	1,910	2,700	3,780	4,475	5,000	5,587
Roehampton	1,904	1,904	2,113	2,183	2,184	2,183	2,183	2,083	1,873	1,680	1,680	1,679
St George's, UoL	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486
Kingston (Roehampton Vale)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	2,390	2,390	2,599	2,669	2,670	2,669	2,669	2,569	2,359	2,166	2,166	2,165
Student to Bed Ratio	1.44	1.34	1.28	1.27	1.25	1.24	1.88	2.20	3.01	4.27	4.67	5.11
First Year Student to Bed Ratio	0.59	0.60	0.55	0.60	0.54	0.50	0.72	1.05	1.60	2.07	2.31	2.58
Unable to access PBSA	1,050	810	731	731	665	641	2,356	3,086	4,751	7,074	7,943	8,896
First Year Unable to Access PBSA	980	960	1,164	1,064	1,225	1,324	759	131	1,421	2,309	2,834	3,422

Source: HESA/Cushman & Wakefield.2023/24 and 024/25 pools are my extrapolation based on the CAGR from 2013/14 to 2022/23

31. Since 2013/14, Wandsworth's institutions have been unable to house all students with a requirement for a bed in PBSA, with this shortfall growing to stand at 7,074 students in 2022/23. 2,309 first year students with a requirement for a bed are unable to be housed. Based on previous growth trajectories, these figures have the potential to stand at 8,896 and 3,422 in 2024/25 respectively. To meet their housing needs, a large number of students at Wandsworth-based institutions are living in other London boroughs.

Wandsworth Demand & Surrounding Boroughs

32. I have also considered Wandsworth demand alongside that in neighbouring Lambeth and Southwark, as well as the bed spaces already provided by the two. These neighbouring boroughs are home to London South Bank University and King's College London's Guy's and Waterloo campuses.
33. As can be seen from the table below, King's College supply in the area is higher than all other institutions combined.

Table 4: Demand-Supply Dynamics Over Time, Wandsworth-based Institutions + Demand in Lambeth and Southwark

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Wandsworth	3,440	3,200	3,330	3,400	3,335	3,310	5,025	5,655	7,110	9,240	10,109	11,061
King's College Guy's & Waterloo	2,560	2,535	2,510	2,285	2,320	4,890	4,855	4,990	5,375	5,575	6,078	6,792
London South Bank University	4,185	4,195	4,280	4,255	3,860	4,116	4,434	5,150	5,280	5,440	5,601	5,767
TOTAL POOL	11,200	11,015	11,175	11,135	10,585	13,296	15,734	17,440	19,355	21,825	23,421	25,316
Roehampton	1,904	1,904	2,113	2,183	2,184	2,183	2,183	2,083	1,873	1,680	1,680	1,679
St George's, UoL	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486	486
Kingston (Roehampton Vale)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
King's College Guy's & Waterloo	3,840	3,771	3,890	3,930	3,937	4,605	4,345	3,631	3,631	3,568	3,595	4,147
London South Bank University	1,398	1,398	1,398	1,398	1,398	1,398	1,406	1,406	1,406	1,325	1,325	1,338
TOTAL	7,628	7,559	7,887	7,997	8,005	8,672	8,420	7,606	7,396	7,059	7,086	7,650
Student to Bed Ratio	1.47	1.46	1.42	1.39	1.32	1.53	1.87	2.29	2.62	3.09	3.31	3.31
Unable to access PBSA	3,572	3,456	3,288	3,135	2,560	4,824	7,314	9,834	11,159	14,766	16,335	17,686

Source: HESA/Cushman & Wakefield. Note, King's College numbers are a breakdown of medical courses as per HESA. Detailed data for London South Bank University is unavailable for 2018/19 to 2021/22 so I have taken full-time student numbers for these years and applied an average of the percentage demand pool across other years (i.e., 41%). 2023/24 and 024/25 pools are my extrapolation based on the CAGR from 2013/14 to 2022/23

University Partnerships & Nomination Agreements

34. Universities in London increasingly rely on private sector PBSA to meet student accommodation needs. Nomination agreements are a key part of this strategy. However, institutions typically finalise these agreements only after planning permission has been secured.
35. The Appellant has engaged with LSE, which has expressed strong interest in the scheme. LSE has acknowledged the need for additional student housing and supports the development due to its affordability provisions and high standards of accommodation. A draft nomination

agreement with LSE is in progress, and further engagement with other higher education providers is expected.

Summary Conclusions

London: A High-Demand, Undersupplied Student Accommodation Market

36. London stands as the world's most prestigious higher education hub, home to five Russell Group institutions and attracting a rapidly growing student population. Since 2012/13, London has seen an increase of **152,305 students**, with **115,420** of this growth coming from outside Greater London. However, this growth has not been matched by an equivalent increase in PBSA, leading to a structural undersupply.
37. The student-to-bed ratio in London has now reached **2.99:1**, the highest of any major UK market, leaving over **184,000 students unable to secure PBSA beds**. This shortfall places significant pressure on the private rental market, exacerbating affordability challenges.

The London Plan: Ambitious Targets, Persistent Shortfalls

38. The **London Plan's** target to deliver **3,500 PBSA beds annually** has not been met in any year since **2017/18**. Over this period, the student population has grown by **115,420**, while the net increase in PBSA beds has been just **8,307**. The Plan explicitly acknowledges that PBSA plays a critical role in housing students, and the ongoing shortfall is contributing directly to increased demand and rising rents in the private rental sector.

Strategic Location and Commutable Institutions

39. The Site benefits from excellent transport links, making it accessible to a significant proportion of London's students requiring accommodation. Within a **45-minute commute**, the site serves **15 major higher education institutions**, including globally renowned universities.
40. Since **2012/13**, full-time student numbers across these institutions have grown by **77,600**, with **54,690** of these students coming from outside Greater London. However, PBSA provision remains critically insufficient, with a **student-to-bed ratio of 5.05:1**—meaning there are **over five students competing for each available PBSA bed**. This has resulted in **118,827 students being unable to secure PBSA accommodation**, including **49,472 first-year students**. Given that the **London Plan does not impose Borough-level targets**, the Proposed Development has the potential to play a significant role in alleviating unmet demand.

Wandsworth: A Growing Market with Limited PBSA Development

41. Despite its growing student population, Wandsworth has delivered only **5% of new London PBSA supply** since **2016/17**, leading to increasing reliance on the private rental market. The **student-to-bed ratio in Wandsworth stands at 5.11:1**, with **8,896 students unable to access PBSA**, including **3,422 first-year students**. The Proposed Development presents a strategic opportunity to address this shortfall and support the borough's growing student accommodation needs.

