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A Farewell to Halls

SROC 2014

Ian Jones
Head of Accommodation Services, University of Sheffield

Introduction

- The world of student accommodation has developed enormously over the last twenty years
- Demands and expectations of students have changed alongside this and driven the development
- This presentation outlines how the University of Sheffield have responded to the market and the challenges of an out-dated system and set of buildings
- However – everybody does it differently!

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Where We've Come From

- Mix of traditional "Halls of Residence" (HOR) and self-catered flats with shared bathrooms
- HOR are fully catered and offer shared facilities, dining room, bar, social space and pastoral care
- Self-catered flats offer shared facilities
- Circa 5400 student beds located across approx. 200 different addresses
- HOR configured for the 1970's student - not today's more discerning customer
- Serious backlog maintenance challenges

Other Accommodation

- 130 street properties distributed around suburbs
  - Inefficient to operate and manage
  - Hard for students to feel integrated
  - No pastoral support
  - Poor condition in many cases
  - Deeply unpopular with first year and international students

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Our Place in the Wider Community

- Majority of accommodation in affluent western suburbs – some neighbour issues
- Many streets had a majority of student houses
- Issues of studentification – impact on Schools and businesses, term-time only communities, change of retail to student focus

- Dr. Darren Smith, University of Brighton

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Why We Needed the Student Villages

- Poor quality accommodation
- Only 9% en suite rooms
- Lack of choice for students
- DDA and fire safety upgrades required
- Inefficient to operate and manage
- Serious maintenance backlog
- Negative impact on University image
- Competitors investing heavily in accommodation
  - Other universities
  - Private developments within the City

A New Strategy

- Starting in 2003 and presented to University Council and accepted in 2004
- Considered internal data, external benchmarking, views of academic departments, academic and professional services staff, Students' Union officers, current and future students
- Supporting Sheffield
- Significant planning challenges including conservation area status

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Objectives

- Significant investment (£160M) to improve quality of accommodation for students whilst maintaining a range of choices
- Establish a flexible supply of accommodation to enable us to meet our accommodation guarantees
- No impact on ability to borrow in the future
- Integrated lifecycle maintenance
- Main contact with student
- Financial sustainability
- Social facilities
- No financial contribution – put in £16M

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Components

- Apple: Disposal of street properties and selected development sites
- Blade: Development of Endcliffe and Ranmoor Student Village in long-term partnership with Catalyst
- CFC: “Contracts for Capacity” in the City Centre providing partnership accommodation for students
- Delta: Retained University owned properties

Student Village – The site before development

Student Village – before development

- Some buildings did not fit into Conservation Area status….

Student Village….before development

- …whilst others needed to be preserved

Western Villas

Crewe and Stables

Stephenson Hall of Residence

Former Stables

Stephenson Hall

Eastern Villas

Halifax Hall

Crewe Courtyard

The Paddock

What we got…

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4 Locations

- The Endcliffe Village
  - First phase opened in 2007 - fully opened 2008 with 3,500 bed spaces in new and University owned
- The Ranmoor Village
  - Opened in 2009 with 1,000 single en-suite rooms and studios, all new build
- City and Central
  - Made up of University owned and Opal2 Partnership properties (898 beds for 20 years with break clauses)
- Family
  - Over 200 units in new build and University owned

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Summary for 2013-14

- Number of places in University-owned and partnership accommodation: 5,879
  - Catered: 595
  - Self-catering: 5,284
- Percentage catered: 10%
- Percentage en-suite: 76%
- Percentage of first year students: 91% in 2012-13
- Turnover £26M
- Occupancy 99.8%
- Overall Satisfaction rating – 84%

WINNER
ULIVING
CUBO
AWARDS
2012

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Meanwhile…

- Private providers are continuing to build in the city
- Over 12,500 purpose built beds by 2012
- Similar style and standard to our new build
- Especially attractive to International students
- Investment and planning permission still available – sector has bucked the trend of the global financial crisis

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Impacts

- Genuine student choice not only of type but also provider
- Loss of natural communities in HOR
- Increased sense of isolation
- Harder to communicate with residents
- Dissociation of accommodation from University
- Long term University/partner investment effectively sells future revenues to secure capital. No return of profit to University

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Other Changes

- Increasing support needs – students more able to get to University
- Increase in binge drinking culture, especially in female groups
- Reduced respect for perceived authority

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Response

- Introduction of Residence Life
- Three functional areas – Support, Learning, Engagement
- Support - 9 permanent staff, 60 peer volunteers dealing with welfare/discipline
- Learning – personal, social and academic development, in partnership with University academic and professional services
- Engagement – Activities, events, sport, volunteering to build community and enhance experience, in partnership with SU and Sport Sheffield

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Response

- Benchmarking and increased emphasis on feedback and surveys
- Improved Customer Services – Customer First accreditation

putting the Customer First®

- Move to online services – application, allocation and contract, induction and inventory, maintenance reporting
- Study of US and Australian models

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New Students

- Millennials or Generation Y
- Greater expectations and more demanding
- Paying fees
- Better connected – to each other and home
- Protected and with a sense of entitlement
- Strong sense of community, locally and globally

- Neil Howe interesting for generational work

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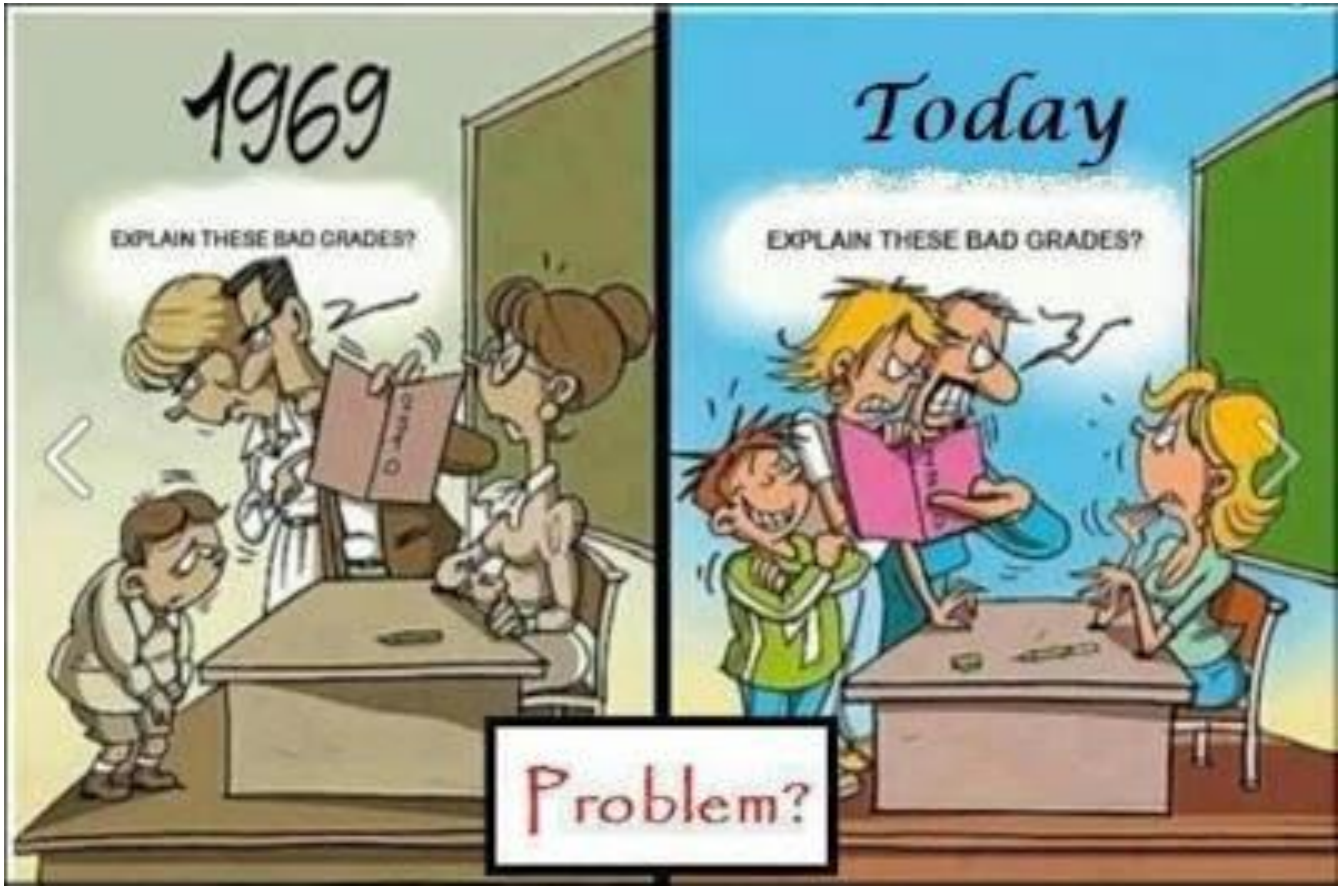
New Parents

- Helicopter Parents
- Greater involvement
- More likely to complain
- Less likely to either allow or encourage children to take responsibility

New Parents


1969
EXPLAIN THESE BAD GRADES?
Today
EXPLAIN THESE BAD GRADES?
Problem?

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Change in Demand

- Less catered and more self-catered
- Less shared and more en suite
- Increasingly polarised to deluxe/studios and budget
- Higher proportions of international students – whose choices are location led
- Desire for communal space for socialising and study
- Reducing demand for centralised services – IT, food, bars
- Increasing emphasis on student experience and value for money

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Questions?