

Student Housing and Houses in Multiple Occupation Concentration Assessment

December 2011



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Introduction

Sussex University and the University of Brighton and their students make an important contribution to the economy of the city estimated at £800m annually. There are approximately 37,000 students at Brighton and Sussex Universities, which includes 5,200 international students from 150 countries.

The recruitment of new full time students is expected to increase gradually over the coming years and as a result there is expected to be a continuing significant shortfall of bed spaces in purpose built student accommodation even allowing for recent developments, and those being considered, in the city.

The supply of purpose-built student accommodation by universities has not matched the expansion of the student population. There are currently 5813 purpose-built bed spaces in university halls. The private sector has responded to the increasing demand for student housing and there has been conversion of family housing to student HMOs in many neighbourhoods. During 2006/07 9,726 students resided in private rented housing within Brighton and Hove.

The city has the highest number of HMOs in the UK (15,000 in 2007). In some areas of Brighton & Hove high concentrations of HMO's have led to neighbourhoods dominated by the student population. This process has been called 'studentification'. The city council's Student Housing Strategy 2006-2014 aim to address the problems of over-concentration of student lets in established residential area and identifies five wards as areas of high concentration (see below).

The Strategy set out the following priorities:

- Support and enhance the quality and management of housing and residential environments within HMO dominated 'studentified' neighbourhoods.
- Continue to support private sector landlords to supply high quality student accommodation.
- Promote and enable the appropriate development of purpose built student accommodation at suitable locations within the city.
- Ensure that new developments of student housing are well managed and do not impact on existing residential communities in negative ways.
- To continue to monitor the changing geographic patterns of student housing in the city.

Purpose of the Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to look at the levels of student housing and Houses in Multiple Occupation¹ (HMOs) on a street by street basis in five wards. These wards have been identified in the Student Housing Strategy 2010 as having the highest concentration of student housing in Brighton & Hove.

¹A house in multiple occupation is defined for planning purposes as dwellings containing two or more household spaces where basic amenities such as kitchen, bathrooms and WCs are shared, such as bedsit accommodation.

The five wards assessed in the study are:

1. Hanover and Elm Grove
2. Hollingdean and Stanmer
3. Moulsecoomb & Bevendean
4. Queens Park
5. St Peters and North Laine

It will provide background evidence for a proposed student housing policy in the new City Wide Plan and evidence to underpin an Article 4 Direction² to control the change of use of small houses (C3 Use Class) to small HMOs (C4 Use Class). This work is identified as a priority in the adopted Student Housing Strategy in order to address the problem of over-concentration of students in established residential areas and therefore to ensure balanced residential areas, a reduced impact on amenities and to enable better provision of infrastructure and services.

The map below is an example of the current mapping available in the city's student housing strategy. The mapping indicates specific hotspots within the city; however there is insufficient detail for the purposes of justifying a policy to enable an Article 4 direction and set a threshold and to assess planning applications resulting from this action. This study provides more detailed mapping of concentration on a street by street basis.

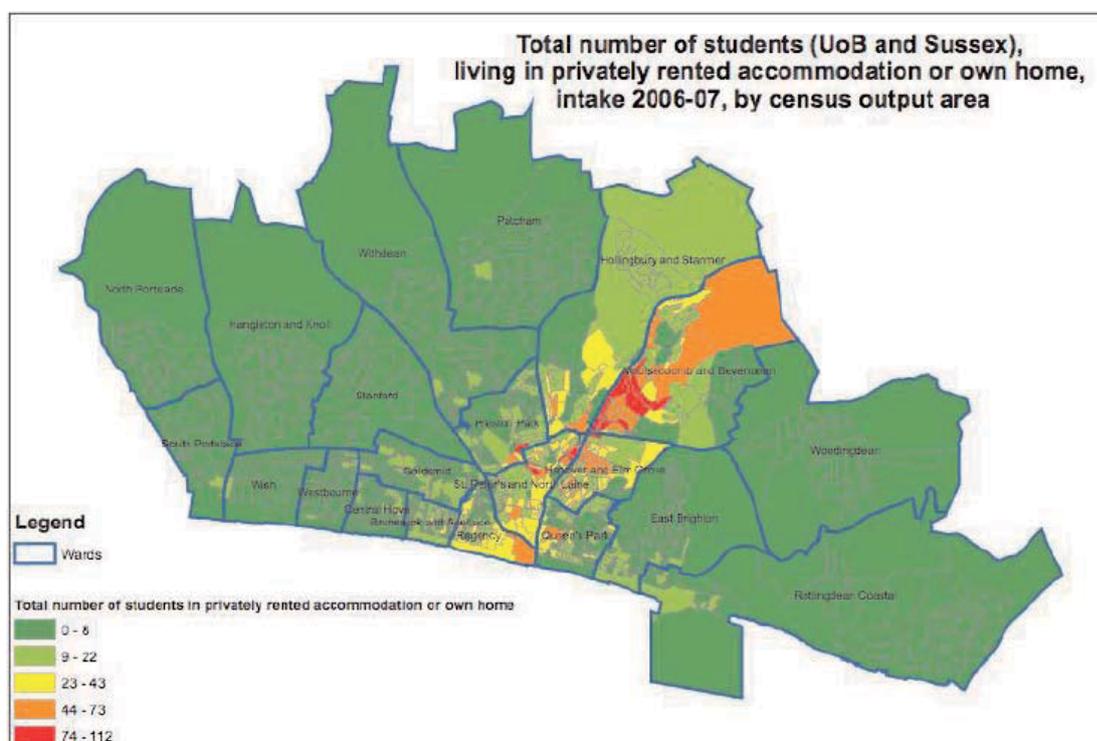


Figure 1; Example of the mapping from the 2010 Student Housing Strategy

²Article 4 Direction - Article 4 Directions are issued by the Council in circumstances where specific control over development is required, primarily where the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened.

Methodology

Key data sources forming the basis for this assessment are:

- **The Council's council tax exemption records for students** - The exemption data records all properties with a 'Disregard' discount or a 'Class N exemption'. It therefore provides a comprehensive list of all non-university owned student properties in the city.
- **Private Sector Housing HMO Registration data**. The housing data was used to identify the remaining HMO properties that are required to be registered by Housing Legislation. The threshold for registering an HMO is currently limited to three or more storey buildings and 5 or more unrelated residents. This threshold is currently being reviewed to reflect the quantity of two storey buildings in Brighton & Hove that are currently used as HMOs that do not benefit from registration.

All data was then collated to show the number of HMO properties per street. An extra field was then added using the Council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer which recorded the total number of residential units in every street which had an HMO property.

A density figure was then calculated for each street by dividing the total number of units per street by the number of student units. A density scale was created ranging from A (20%+) to C (0.1 - 9.9%-) and each street was subsequently attributed with a letter corresponding to its density.

Plotting properties

All student units were plotted in the five study wards. The final maps provide an immediate overview of the concentration of HMO's in each ward. The council tax department still use the 2002 ward boundaries and therefore their data is labelled according to these ward boundaries, however the maps have been presented using the up-to-date ward boundaries layered on top of the maps.

Summary of Findings

The main finding of the mapping exercise is that students and student housing tends to cluster, which is unsurprising given the dynamic and social nature of the student housing market. The result is that there are several pockets of high densities of student dwellings within the city.

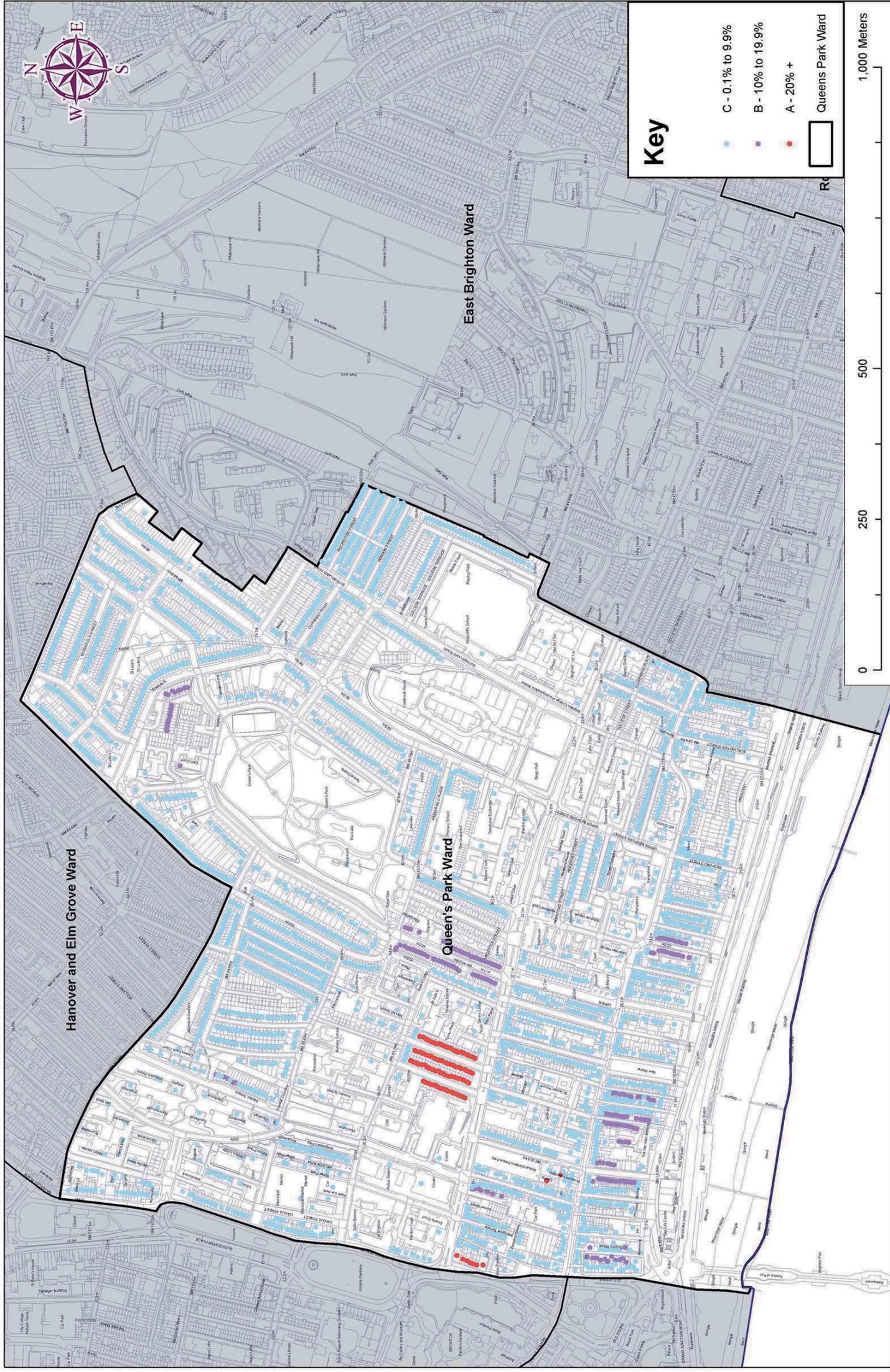
- There are two areas where clustering and concentrations are higher; the first is to the east of the Lewes Road between Bear Road and Moulsecoomb Way (Moulsecoomb and Bevendean), and south of the Vogue Gyratory between the Lewes Road and Upper Lewes Road (St Peter's and North Laine).
- Student and HMO concentrations were consistently high across the Hanover Ward, with several clusters of streets where concentrations exceeded 10%.
- In the St Peters and North Laine ward apart from the significant concentration to the north of Union Road, between Lewes Road and Upper Lewes Road and along Viaduct Road, there are lower levels of concentration.

- Concentrations in the Hollingdean and Stanmer ward were generally low, apart from a cluster of streets near Ditchling Road where concentrations were between 10-19.9%.
- The concentrations were lowest in the Queens' Park ward; there were only two streets- Blaker Street and White Street- where concentrations exceeded 20%.

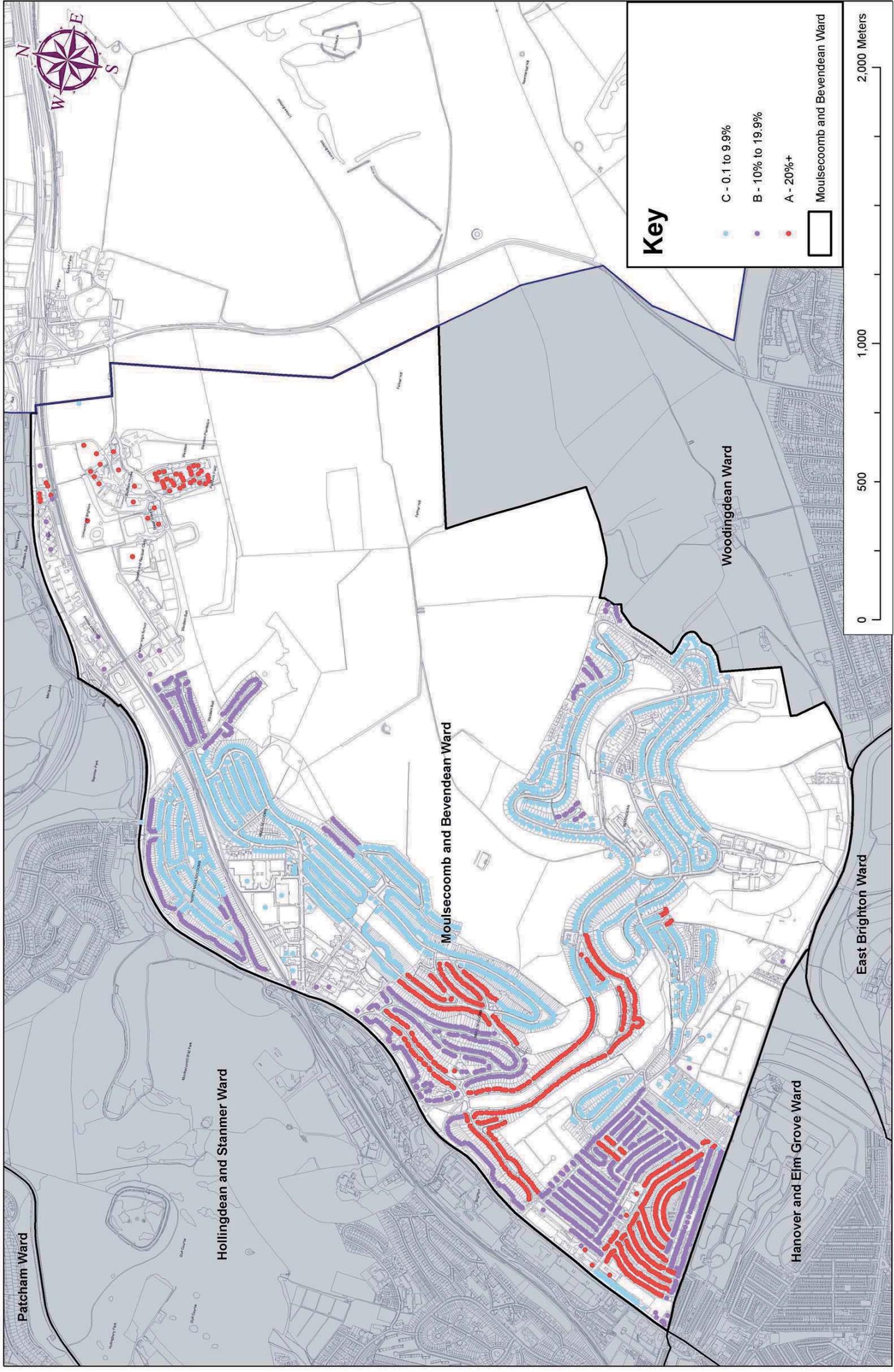
Recommendation

It is recommended that all data is updated on an annual basis. This will enable monitoring of long-term changes in the distribution of student housing in the city and also help supplement any policy related decisions.

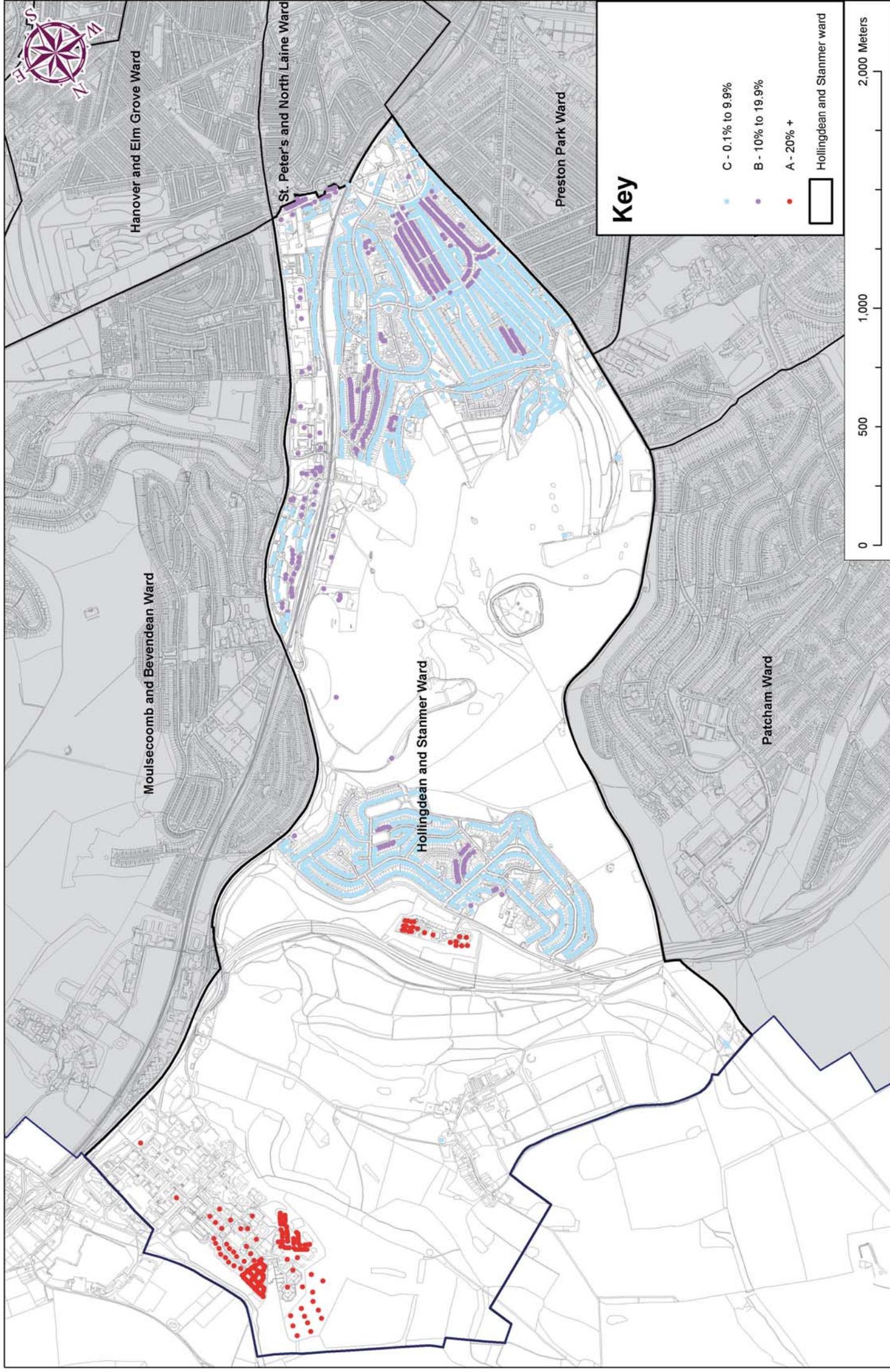
Student Housing and HMO Concentration Assessment: Queen's Park Ward



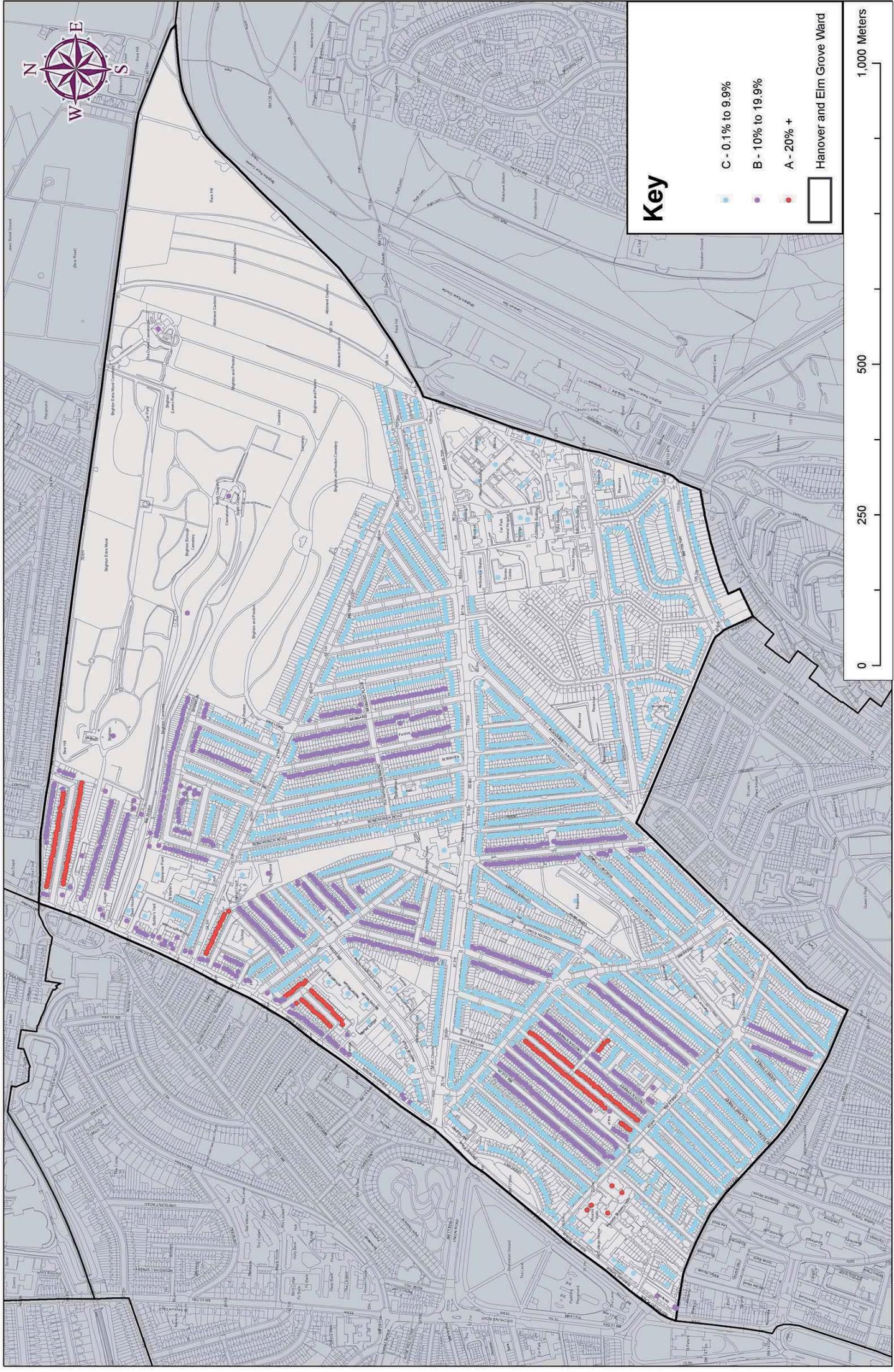
Student Housing and HMO Concentration Assessment: Moulsecomb and Bevendean Ward



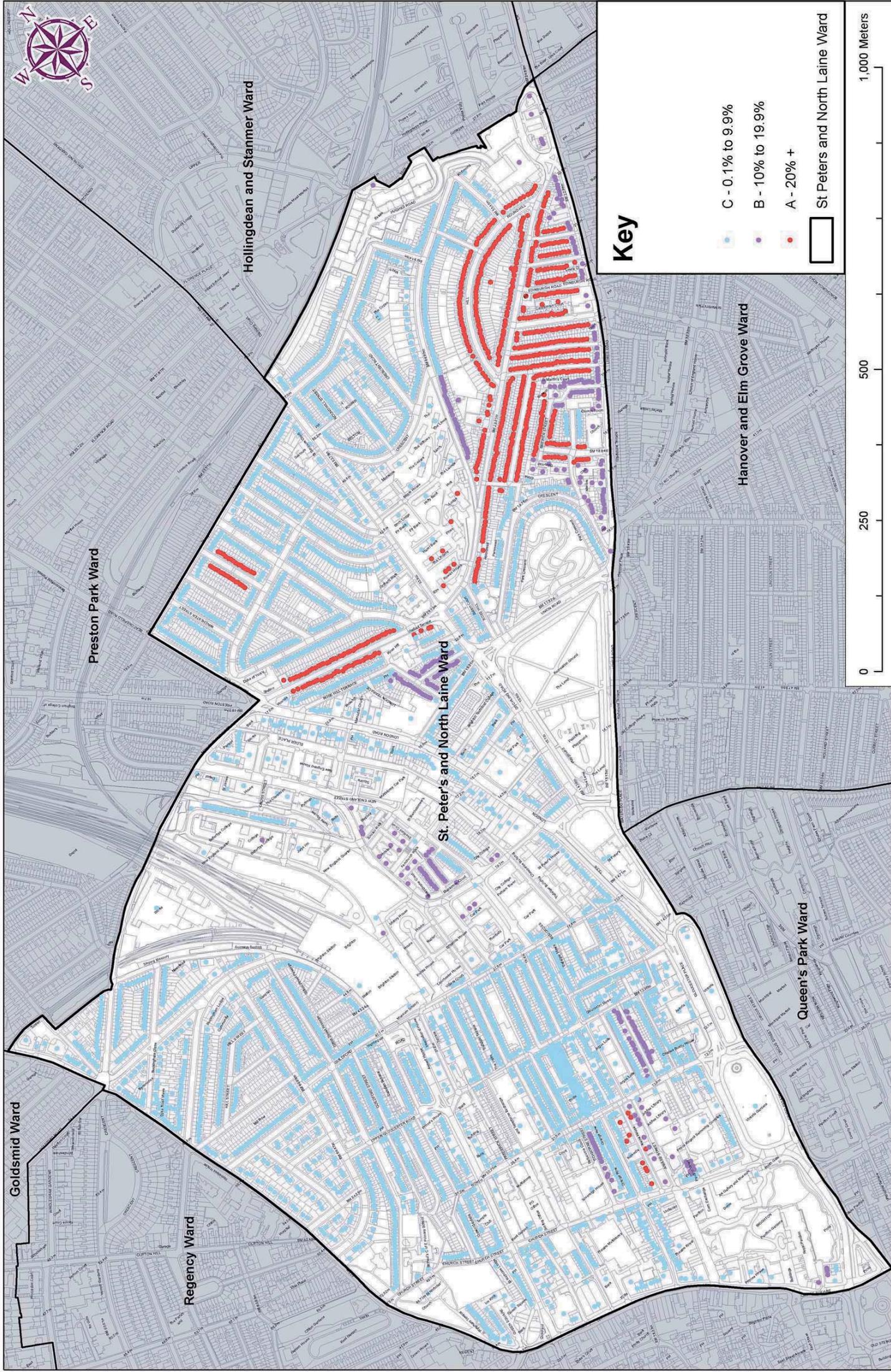
Student Housing and HMO Concentration Assessment: Hollingdean & Stanmer Ward



Student Housing and HMO Concentration Assessment: Hanover and Elm Grove Ward



Student Housing and HMO Concentration Assessment: St. Peter's and North Laine Ward





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