

02Planning Application Comments

Planning Application Number: 22/03064/OUT

Site Name: Land Opposite Hanwell Fields Recreation Adj To, Dukes Meadow Drive, Banbury

Planning Officer: Linda Griffiths

Date of Comments: 10/01/2023

Comments by: Ewan Stewart

Proposal supported subject to revisions to the proposed affordable housing mix

Proposal and policy requirements

Outline planning application is sought for up to 176 dwellings and associated open space with all matters reserved other than access. The site is within the town of Banbury, therefore 30% affordable housing is required in order to comply with Local Plan Policy BSC3: Affordable Housing. On this scheme this equates to 53 dwellings. The required tenure split is 70% rented and 30% Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO).

National policy requires that 10% of the overall scheme is provided as Low Cost Home Ownership, and that 25% of the affordable element is provided as First Homes.

A policy compliant affordable housing mix would therefore be:

- 18 LCHO dwellings, of which 13 would be First Homes and 5 shared ownership
- 35 rented dwellings, ideally social rented

The proposed tenure mix set out in the Planning Statement complies with this and this has been verified by the Planning Policy team.

The mix appears to suggest affordable rent, however also refers to “A supply of 4-bed properties for social rent to help meet an acute local need”. As stated in previous comments, the need in Cherwell is predominantly for social rent as this is the most affordable tenure for the majority of households. We require the applicant to clarify whether they intend to provide social rent or affordable rent, or a mix of both and the rationale for this.

Comments on other aspects of the proposal are as follows and a suggested revised mix is set out at the conclusion:

Size and type

The mix contains 12 x flats, of which 3 are 2-bed rented. There are also 6 x 2-bed maisonettes proposed. The Planning Statement however, refers to the provision of “Affordable 2-bed 4-person houses with private outdoor space rather than 2-bed flats” in response to previous advice from Strategic Housing,

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however there are only 3 x 2-bed houses proposed. This requires to be increased significantly. 2-bed flats and maisonettes are not considered suitable for families with children and this property type attracts significantly less bids than other types.

We generally also prefer maisonettes rather than flats as there is greater privacy. However, I appreciate that this scheme will be delivering market flats as well as affordable, so as long as the affordable block is of the same external appearance as the market then this is acceptable for the 1-beds. I would still request that the 2-bed flats and maisonettes are removed from the affordable mix.

We welcome the inclusion of 3 x 4-bed properties, however would request that this is increased to 4. I have recently been advised by the Allocations Manager that 10–15% of 4-beds are required on new schemes in order to meet identified needs and reduce the long waiting times for this dwelling size due to a lack of supply.

I note and welcome the fact that the proposed sizes comply with NDSS requirements for sizes which will maximise occupancy ie 1bed 2 person, 2-bed 4 person, 3-bed 5 person. I have suggested below that the 4-beds are 4b7p so if possible the sizes of these would be 115 sqm.

Accessible & adaptable properties

The Developer Contributions SPD requires that 50% of the rented dwellings meet M4(2) requirements and 1% meet M4(3) requirements. Whilst 1% is less than one dwelling, it would contribute significantly to meeting pressing needs if one dwelling could be delivered to full wheelchair standard.

There are households currently on CDC's housing register who specifically require a 3-bed wheelchair adapted property in the Banbury area and they are having to wait indefinitely to be adequately housed due to the lack of supply. I have therefore included this in the suggested revised mix below and welcome discussions with the applicant regarding this.

We would request that all ground level properties have level thresholds and a Level Access Shower installed from the outset as they are likely to be allocated to people with limited mobility.

Layout and appearance

The Developer Contributions SPD requires the affordable units to be indistinguishable from the market units in terms of the materials used, parking arrangements and anything which may cause the affordable dwellings to stand out. It is expected that where appropriate, affordable housing should not be clustered in any more than 10 units of one tenure and 15 units of multiple affordable tenures with no contiguous boundary of the clusters

Parking requirements

Sufficient allocated parking should be provided for each property type and this should reflect the provision made for market housing. Secure cycle storage should be provided in line with the requirements of registered providers.

Energy Efficiency/Climate Change

All affordable housing units will need to deliver high standards/rates of energy efficiency to ensure household fuel (and water) bills are also affordable for the tenants. This supports the delivery of sustainable development and contributes to the government objective to reach Net Zero carbon. Registered Providers (RPs) are currently developing their specifications for energy efficient affordable housing units and the applicant is encouraged to have early discussions with RPs to ensure these specifications can be accommodated and are accounted for in any build tendering process.

Registered Provider

The Council expects to be notified at the earliest opportunity of the RP who will be purchasing the affordable units.

Conclusion

Based on the above details, I would suggest the following revised affordable housing mix:

Social rent (35)

- 3 x 1b2p flat
- 1 x FOG
- 6 x 1b2p maisonettes
- 1 x 3b5p bungalow M4 Category 3: Wheelchair user dwelling
- 10 x 2b4p houses
- 10 x 3b5p houses
- 4 x 4b7p houses

Intermediate (18)

- 2 x 1-bed flats
- 3 x 2-bed flats
- 6 x 2-bed houses
- 7 x 3-bed houses

CDC Strategy & Development team welcome discussions with the applicant regarding the above details.