

**Housing Strategy and Development Team
Housing Services
Planning Application Comments**

Planning Application Number: 21/02893/REM

Site Name: Os Parcel 4300 North Of Shortlands And South Of High Rock,
Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris

Planning Officer: Nathanael Stock

Date of Comments: 06/12/2021

Comments by: Ewan Stewart

Objection: Issues with the proposed layout

This application for the Approval of Reserved Matters provides details of the Affordable Housing Scheme (AHS) required by the Section 106 agreement signed on 23rd September 2019. The application is for 25 dwellings of which 35% will be provided as affordable housing (9 dwellings).

The S106 sets out seven points which must be covered in the AHS and the AHS aims to show how the requirements in each point will be met. These points are set out below with comments.

i) Details of the numbers, locations and external appearance of the Affordable Housing Dwellings; including the timing of construction of the Affordable Housing Dwellings.

The AHS confirms that 9 affordable dwellings will be provided, with 6 as affordable rented and 3 as shared ownership. This complies with Local Plan Policy BSC 3: Affordable Housing and with S106 requirements.

ii) Details of the types and size of the Affordable Housing Dwellings, provided that the Affordable Housing Dwellings shall be in a range of unit types and sizes having regard to the mix of the Market Dwellings

The AHS confirms that the affordable dwellings will meet Nationally Described Space Standards, the dimensions stated comply with those stated in the NDSS document.

The AHS states that plots 1 and 2 are 1-bed houses, however the plans show that they are actually flats above garages. The S106 specifies 2 no 1-bed 2-person houses, therefore the proposed dwellings do not meet S106 requirements. Details of further issues with this are set out in point (iv) below.

iii) Confirmation of tenures of the Affordable Housing Dwellings to which the scheme relates which shall reflect the Affordable Housing Tenure Mix unless otherwise agreed in writing with the District Council

The proposed tenure split of 6 rented and 3 shared ownership dwellings is acceptable and complies with the policy requirement of 70% rented and 30% intermediate.

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iv) Confirmation of the Affordable Housing Standards arrangements for the Affordable Housing Dwellings to which the scheme relates

The AHS states that the 2-bed and 3-bed affordable dwellings will meet M4(2): Category 2 – Accessibility and adaptability standards, however the plans do not indicate how these standards will be achieved. We therefore require plans showing the dimensions and features which constitute compliance with these standards. We also request that in addition to being set out in the S106 agreement, that planning conditions are placed on these plots in respect of meeting these standards.

As mentioned in point (i), the property dimensions stated on the plans comply with those set out in the NDSS document.

It is stated in the AHS at paragraph 2.2.4 that “The affordable dwellings will be designed in such a way as to make them externally visually indistinguishable from the open market dwellings, as so far is possible.” The proposed design and layout, however, creates a clear disparity between the affordable and market dwellings and is likely to create disadvantages for the occupants of some of the affordable dwellings.

The proposed layout deviates from the outline application layout which Planning Officers requested that the applicant adheres to. The affordable dwellings in the outline layout are at right angles to each other and although the gardens are smaller, this layout is preferable to the proposed layout.

Our concerns in relation to the design and location of the affordable dwellings are as follows:

1. As mentioned in point (ii), plots 1 and 2 are flats above garages rather than 1-bed 2-person houses as required in the S106. The building is therefore elongated and takes up the whole length of plots 3,4, 5 and 6. This means that this 2-storey, elongated building will dominate the rear of these family-sized dwellings and will obscure their view of the amenity space in the centre of the development. Even if they were designed as 1-bed houses in compliance with the S106 they would still obscure the view from some of the above-mentioned plots. Whilst there are rear gardens for children to play in, the prospective tenants will not have the same opportunity as other residents to watch their children play safely in the designated area in the centre. We appreciate that it is necessary to provide adequate parking spaces, however it is not acceptable for these to be provided in this way as it will make this section of the development extremely cramped.
2. The building containing plots 1 and 2 is situated in very close proximity to plots 3, 4, 5 and 6, creating a very cramped arrangement. It is not clear from the plans whether the space in between the buildings is intended to be a highway, if so then it is doubtful as to whether emergency vehicles would be able to get through.
3. The affordable housing stands out from the market housing because of the proposed external materials ie white rendering on all of them. Whilst some of the market dwellings also have white rendering, they

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are clearly identifiable as market dwellings due to their location and design ie either large detached properties and/or located next to properties constructed with stone.

4. The size of the market plots in comparison to the affordable plots and the fact that many of the market dwellings are gated also clearly distinguishes them from the affordable dwellings

v) Occupancy criteria for determining the identity of occupiers of the Affordable Housing Dwellings and the means by which such occupancy shall be enforced

The AHS states that affordable housing will be let on Affordable Rent tenancies or sold on a Shared Ownership lease as per the agreed mix and that in accordance with Clause 4 of the Second Schedule of the S106 Agreement, the Affordable Rent dwellings will be allocated to Qualifying Persons in line with the Council's Allocation Scheme and Nominations Agreement. Shared Ownership dwellings will be marketed through the local Help to Buy Agent (or successor body) and sold to eligible purchasers.

This is acceptable and complies with policy and S106 requirements.

vi) Proposals to secure transfer of the Affordable Housing Dwellings to a Registered Provider at a price agreed between the Owner and the Registered Provider. The transfer shall contain a declaration that the Affordable Housing Dwellings are transferred subject to and with the benefit of this Deed

The AHS states that affordable housing will be transferred to a Registered Provider at a price which enables them to comply with the occupancy criteria contained within the Section 106 Agreement and detailed within the AHS. It further states that the affordable housing dwellings will be transferred in line with the delivery triggers detailed in point (i) and the contract for sale and transfer between the applicant and the purchasing Registered Provider will contain an obligation to comply in full with the all relevant matters contained within the Section 106 Agreement.

This is acceptable and complies with policy and S106 requirements.

vii) the identity of any prospective Registered Provider (if known)

It is stated in the AHS that a Registered Provider has not yet been identified, we request that this information is provided at the earliest opportunity. The Strategic and Development team need to be aware as soon as possible of properties which are in the pipeline, proposed completion dates and the RP involved.

Summary

We are unable to support the proposal in its current form, and require the following points to be addressed for the reasons given above:

1. A review of the design and layout of the site to ensure that the affordable dwellings blend in with the market dwellings, have adequate external space and that the occupants will have equal

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access to outdoor amenities. Discussions with Cherwell DC Planning and/or Strategic Officers may be beneficial.

2. Following on from point 1, a review of the parking provision for plots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Discussions with Cherwell DC Planning and/or Strategic Officers may be beneficial.
3. The provision of plans showing details of how M4(2) requirements will be met
4. Planning conditions placed on plots 1,2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in respect of point 3.