**Planning Application Number:** 21/03426/OUT

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

**Planning Officer:** Rebekah Morgan

**Date of Comments:** 17/12/2021

**Comments by:** Ewan Stewart

**No objection in principle**

The proposal is for up to 78 dwellings, 24 of which will be affordable housing. This complies with policy BSC 3 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011 -2031. The proposed tenure split of 17 rented and 7 shared ownership also complies with this policy which requires 70% rented and 30% intermediate tenure(s). However, the NPPF requires that on major developments 10% of the overall scheme is delivered as low-cost home ownership. 8 dwellings of intermediate tenure(s) would therefore be required on a scheme of 78 dwellings. Further details of required tenures are set out below.

**Affordable Housing Contribution**

The Planning Statement includes an illustrative housing mix of all tenures based on previous advice from the Housing Strategy & Development team. The points below provide additional detail, comments and requirements regarding the affordable housing contribution.

We expect these details to be secured in a Section 106 Agreement along with the requirement for the applicant to submit a detailed Affordable Housing Scheme to the Local Authority for approval in advance of, or as part of, any future Reserved Matters application. We would request that the applicant suggests Heads of Terms for the S106 agreement.

**Type and size**

The illustrative mix consists of:

Rent

* 6 no 1-bed 2-person maisonettes
* 2 no 2-bed 4-person bungalows
* 4 no 2-bed 4-person houses
* 4 no 3-bed 5-person houses
* 1 no 4-bed 6-person house

Shared ownership

* 4 no 2-bed 4-person houses
* 3 no 3-bed 5-person houses

In accordance with the advice provided by the strategic housing team in August 2021, many of the proposed dwellings will accommodate larger household sizes and provide more internal space. These larger dwellings will meet current needs more effectively than the existing stock in Banbury, particularly in view of the increasing need for people to have enough space to work from home.

However there is only 1 no 4-bedroom house in the mix, as opposed to 2 requested in previous advice. The need for 4-bed dwellings is small but extremely pressing, particularly in Banbury as it is one of Cherwell’s larger settlements. Also, the dimensions indicate a 4-bed 6-person house as opposed to 4-bed 7-person houses requested in previous advice. These dwellings must be a minimum of 115 Sqm to meet NDSS standards or 121 Sqm if 3 storey. We expect these points to be rectified in a Reserved Matters application.

Apart from the bungalows and maisonettes, the dimensions stated in the illustrative mix fall short of Nationally Described Space Standards when converted from square footage to meterage as set out in the NDSS document.

We require these dimensions to be altered to ensure that they fully comply with minimum NDSS requirements and request that the GIA dimensions are clearly shown on detailed plans which may be submitted with a Reserved Matters application.

**Tenure**

Cherwell is a high value area where market rents are high. Affordable rent at 80% of market rent would be unaffordable for the majority of households on the Council’s housing register. The most affordable housing option that would meet their needs is social rent and we are now seeking this tenure on all new developments. If the scheme is not viable with social rent dwellings, then the applicant will need to provide evidence of this so that further consideration can be given.

In line with new Government requirements, 25% of affordable housing is required to be delivered as First Homes. This will mean that of the 30% intermediate tenure required under CDC policy, 25% will be First Homes and 5% shared ownership or another intermediate tenure. The Council will apply national policy with regard to First Homes. On this proposal for 78 dwellings, 6 would be required as First Homes dwellings, and 2 would be provided as shared ownership. Naturally this would alter if the overall number of dwellings changed.

**Accessibility**

As set out in the Council’s Developer Contributions SPD it is expected that 50% of rented dwellings will be built to Building Regulations Requirements M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings. We also request that level access showers are provided on all ground level dwellings. Plans should clearly demonstrate how these requirements will be met.

It would also be extremely helpful in meeting identified needs if one of the bungalows could be built to M4 (3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings.

**Parking requirements**

We expect the provision of 1 space for 1 bedroom units and 2 spaces for each unit of 2 or more bedrooms. Any additional parking requirements relating to M4 2 or 3 requirements should also be met.

Detailed comments were provided by the Strategic Housing team in August 2021 regarding the necessity for the parking arrangements to be same for the affordable dwellings as it is for the market dwellings so as not to make the affordable housing stand out. We expect this to be addressed and clearly demonstrated in a Reserved Matters application.

**Layout and appearance**

We expect the affordable units to be indistinguishable from the market units in terms of the materials used and as mentioned above, in terms of parking arrangements.

As stated in the Developer Contributions SPD, 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. This is expected in the first instance and schemes should be developed with this in mind.

**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.