

**Cherwell DC Strategic Housing Officer comments on planning application  
21/03522/OUT**

The above application has been considered in line with the adopted policies, guidance and evidence of housing need.

**Meeting Oxford's unmet housing need. Cherwell DC LPPR - Policy PR9 – Land west of Yarnton**

**Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review (LPPR)**

Page 71 (para 5.29) of the above document sets out that the provision of both affordable and market housing will be expected to include specific provision for key workers. The City Council's definition of 'key worker' is set out on page 72.

Paragraph 5.30 on page 72 in the LPPR states that in the interest of meeting Oxford's identified, unmet housing need and the specific purpose of the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan, only individual self-contained dwellings (use class C3) will be permitted.

Additionally, in the interest of responding to local housing need and the desire to both increase the variety of housing stock and to increase local employment and training opportunities, scope for community self-build and/or self-finish housing will be expected to be made. (page 72 para 5.31).

**LPPR Policy PR2: Housing Mix, Tenure and Size**

This policy sets out that the strategic developments under Policies PR6 to PR10 will be expected to meet the following requirements to help meet Oxford's housing needs:

1. All housing to be self-contained dwellings (use class C3)
2. 80% of the affordable housing to be social rent/affordable rent and 20% to be intermediate housing.
3. The affordable dwelling mix should include, unless otherwise agreed with Cherwell DC in consultation with Oxford City Council, the following:
  - 25%-30% 1-bedroom dwellings
  - 30%-35% 2-bedroom dwellings
  - 30%-35% 3-bedroom dwellings
  - 5%-10% 4+ bedroom dwellings
4. Delivery of a mix of sizes of market homes to meet current and future needs and to create socially mixed and inclusive communities. The mix of housing is to be agreed with CDC in consultation with Oxford City Council having regard to the most up to date evidence in Oxford's housing need and available evidence on local market conditions.
5. Provision for key workers as part of both the affordable and market housing mix. The provision shall be made in accordance with Oxford City Council's definition of key workers unless otherwise agreed by CDC in consultation with Oxford City Council.
6. Provision of an opportunity for community self-build or self-finish housing to be agreed with Cherwell DC in consultation with Oxford City Council.

In relation to point 4 above, para 5.27 on page 71, sets out that the market dwelling mix requirements set out in the SHMA 2014, for the Housing Market Area was:

5% 1 bedroom  
25% 2-bedroom  
45% 3-bedroom  
25% 4-bedroom.

## **Cherwell DC LPPR - Policy PR9 Land West of Yarnton**

This policy sets out delivery requirements for construction of 540 homes (net) on the residential area of land, of which, 50% will be affordable housing. There is no mention if this particular site must include self-build or self-finish units, but this could be explored as part of the wider site as required.

The application should include an Employment, Skills and Training Plan to be agreed with the Council – consideration should be given to how this might support key workers if specific key worker market or affordable housing is to be provided.

## **Oxford City Council's Local Plan Policy**

The affordable housing requirement in terms of mix and tenure is as per the Oxford City Local Plan Policy. In summary the policy requirements are:

- 50% affordable housing split 80:20 social rent: intermediate housing.
- Affordable Housing Mix is given as a range to allow individual sites to be developed to produce a mixed and balanced community:

1 bedroom	20-30%
2 bedroom	30-40%
3 bedroom	20-40%
4+ bedroom	8-15%
- Accessible and adaptable homes – **all** affordable units should be constructed to Category 2 (M4) standard and 5% of all dwellings to be Category M4 (3) (wheelchair user) standards.
- All affordable housing to be developed to nationally described space standards (NDSS)
- Dwellings must have direct and convenient access to an area of private open space (in addition to bin or bike storage space), to meet the following specifications:
  - a) 1 or 2-bedroom flats and maisonettes should provide either a private balcony or terrace of usable level space, or direct access to a private or shared garden;
  - b) flats and maisonettes of 3 or more bedrooms must provide either a private balcony or terrace of useable level space with a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres depth by 3 metres length, or, in the case of ground floor flats, direct access to a private garden or shared garden with some private space. These private outdoor areas should allow space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with reasonable circulation, which will require a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres depth by 3 metres length;
  - c) houses of 1 or more bedrooms should provide a private garden, of adequate size and proportions for the size of house proposed, which will be considered to be at least equivalent in size to the original building footprint. Where a directly accessible private outside area is provided, the remaining requirement for outdoor amenity space could be met by provision of shared private amenity space. The private outdoor areas should allow space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with reasonable circulation, which will require a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres deep by 3 metres long.
  - d) the following factors will be material in assessing whether adequate space has been provided:
    - i. the location and context of the development, in relation to the layout of existing residential plots, and proximity to public open space; and
    - ii. the orientation of the outdoor area in relation to the path of the sun;
    - iii. the degree to which enclosure and overlooking impact on the proposed new dwellings and any neighbouring dwellings; and

- iv. the overall shape, access to and usability of the whole space to be provided; and
- v. clear delineation between public and private space; and
- vi. for communal spaces that there is a variety of space, including provision of space to sit and to play, and that space is adaptable to the changing needs of residents, being easy to maintain with resilient materials, but with opportunities for communal gardening or food growing.

### **First Homes policy**

Cherwell DC has adopted a First Homes Interim Guidance Note which sets out the local requirement for First Homes in Cherwell. However, the site PR9 is being brought forward to meet an Oxford unmet housing need. In the circumstances, it is important to consider Oxford City Council's First Homes Policy Statement (Technical Advice Note) March 2022. This sets out that all sites above 10 dwellings must provide 50% affordable housing. The affordable housing should then be split as follows: 25% First Homes; 70% **social** rented; and 5% intermediate housing (usually Shared ownership tenure). An Oxford City local connection will apply to all First Homes for the first three months of marketing.

### **Table 1: Suggested Housing Dwelling Mix for PR9 set out in the planning application**

The Design and Access Statement (page 38) in the planning application documents suggest an overall indicative dwelling mix of:

<b>Bedrooms</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of 540 dwellings</b>
1-bed	81	15%
2-bed	141	26.1%
3-bed	211	39.1%
4-bed	94	17.4%
5-bed	13	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Officer comments**

To meet an Oxford unmet housing need, the suggested mix below of market and affordable housing, takes into account the policy requirements and the type of housing that has already been provided:

### **Table 2: 50% Market mix (approx. 270 dwellings)**

<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Based on 270 market dwellings)</b>
1-bedroom (2-person) bungalow min. <b>50 SqM</b> (bigger if it is to meet wheelchair user or accessible standards*).	5%	14 units
2-bedroom (3-person) bungalow min. <b>61 SqM</b> (bigger if it is to meet wheelchair user or accessible standards*)	5%	14 units
2-bedroom (4 person) house	20%	54 units
3-bedroom (5 person) bungalow or house *	45%	121 units
4-bedroom (7 person) house	22%	59 units
5-bedroom (8 person) house.	3%	8 units
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>270 units</b>

**NB\* 5% of all dwellings to be Category M4 (3) (wheelchair user) standards.**

**Table 3: 50% Affordable housing mix (approx. 270 dwellings) of which 25% should be First Homes; 70% social rent and 20% should be intermediate tenure.**

<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Unit size</b> Min. Sqm GIA (1-storey or 2-storey*).	<b>First Homes</b> (Total 25% of the AH requirement)	Approx. no of <b>First Homes</b> based on 270 units	<b>Social Rent</b> units (Total 70% of the AH requirement)	Approx. No. of <b>Social Rent</b> based on 270 units	<b>Intermediate Tenure</b> (Total 5% of the AH requirement)	Approx. no. <b>Intermediate.</b> tenure based on 270 units
<b>1-bedroom</b> (2-person) <b>Maisonette</b>	<b>50 SqM</b>	4%	10	15%	40	0	0
<b>1-bedroom</b> (2-person) <b>bungalow</b>	<b>50 SqM</b> (bigger if it is to meet wheelchair or accessible standards).	0	0	5%	14	0	0
<b>2-bedroom</b> (3-person) <b>bungalow</b>	<b>61 SqM</b> (bigger if it is to meet wheelchair or accessible standards).	0	0	5%	14	0	0
<b>2-bedroom</b> (4 person) <b>house</b>	<b>79 SqM</b>	10%	28	20%	54	0	0
<b>3-bedroom</b> (5 person) <b>house / bungalow</b>	<b>93 SqM</b>	11%	30	20%	54	3.5%	10
<b>4-bedroom</b> (7 person) <b>house</b>	<b>115 SqM</b>	0	0	4%	10	1.5%	4
<b>5-bedroom</b> (8 person) <b>house.</b>	<b>128 SqM</b>	0	0	1%	2	0	0

\* GIA will increase if built over 3 storeys. The % of property types above largely fall within the parameters of Oxford and Cherwell policy

The overall suggested mix of market and affordable housing to meet local needs would provide the following:

**Table 4**

Bedrooms	Suggested Number	% of 540 dwellings	Compared to Developer's proposal	% of 540 dwellings
1-bed	78	14.4%	81	15%
2-bed	164	30.4%	141	26.1%
3-bed	215	39.8%	211	39.1%
4-bed	73	13.5%	94	17.4%
5-bed	10	1.9%	13	2.4%
Total	540	100%	540	100%

**Accessible and adaptable homes** – all affordable units should be constructed to Category 2 (M4) standard and 5% of all dwellings to be Category M4 (3) (wheelchair user) standards. All wheelchair accessible homes must have suitable dedicated parking space aligned with the relevant property in accordance with the requirements of Part M4 (3). They should also be located nearest to pick up points for accessible public transport and on level ground wherever possible. 2 or 3-bedroom bungalows could be provided as dormer bungalows with a ground floor bedroom and wet room along with bedrooms in the roof space with 2<sup>nd</sup> bath/shower room. All bungalows should be fitted with a level access shower from the outset as this will reduce the need to adapt the property soon after completion if fitted with a bath.

All affordable housing to be developed to nationally described space standards (**NDSS minimum GIA sizes** have been outlined in **Table 3** above)

Dwellings must have **direct and convenient access to an area of private open space** (in addition to bin or bike storage space).

**Parking:** 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.

**Service charges** should be kept to a minimum to ensure the cost of social rent plus service charge is not cost prohibitive to the tenant/resident. If a viability assessment requires Affordable Rent rather than social rent, then the Affordable Rent will need to be capped at Local Housing Allowance levels for the Broad Rental Market Area. There is a concern about the affordable homes being included in the service charge costs for the management and maintenance of open spaces and community woodland on this development. This may be cost-prohibitive to the affordable housing occupiers. In addition, the developer is strongly encouraged to engage with Registered Providers from the outset to establish what a RP will and will not accept as obligations for their tenants.

**Flats or maisonettes** – maisonettes are preferred as they can provide dedicated private outdoor space, opportunities for reduced service charges due to reduced communal hallways and areas, and they can provide independent direct access for accessible ground floor accommodation. This aligns with Oxford City's Local Plan policy requirements on property standards and private space.

**5-bedroom house** – the provision of two 5-bedroom rented homes will contribute to a small but acute need for genuinely affordable larger family homes.

**Affordable Housing clusters** – (see Developer Contributions SPD) affordable housing should be clustered in groups of no more than 10 dwellings of single tenure or 15 dwellings

of mixed tenure. Alternative cluster arrangements will need to be agreed with CDC Housing Team.

**Registered Providers** – it is expected that affordable housing will be transferred to a Registered Provider of Social Housing to be agreed by Cherwell District Council Housing Services in consultation with Oxford City Council Housing Services. This is due to the allocation, letting and management arrangements for the affordable dwellings once they are completed.

### **Elderly/Extra Care accommodation proposals**

Policy BSC4 in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1 Adopted July 2015) sets out that *‘housing sites of at least 400 dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 45 self-contained extra care dwellings as part of the overall mix. Should it be agreed with the Council that extra care housing would not be desirable in a particular location, an equivalent amount of alternative specialist housing (use class C3) for older people will be required. Elsewhere, opportunities for the provision of extra care, specialist housing for older people/or disabled people and those with mental health needs and other supported housing for those with specific living needs will be encouraged in suitable locations close to services and facilities. All proposals will be expected to provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy BSC3: Affordable Housing’*

The Planning statement provided with the application, states:

*“The proposed Care Home will be located on the eastern part of the Site and comprise up to 9,000sqm of Extra Care/Elderly Care Provision floorspace (Class C2), which will meet an identified need for the surrounding area, particularly as there are no current care home proposals either within this part of Cherwell or within north Oxford close to this site. The proposed Care Home will provide assisted living and dementia care for residents of Cherwell and Oxford.” “This would not prohibit the 540 dwellings being delivered, rather it would sit alongside the PR9 requirement for the 540 dwellings.”* Paragraph 5.18 of the planning statement refers to the *“growing number of elderly people in Cherwell, which is expected to grow further over the next twenty to thirty years as the Proposed Development establishes itself”*.

To pick up the points in the planning statement, the application proposes to provide 9000 square metres of residential floor space for C2 use rather than an actual building, extra care or care home for occupation. There is no requirement for C2 uses to provide for affordable housing. There are schemes in and around Yarnton that currently provide nursing, residential care and dementia care. There is also a range of affordable and private extra care, sheltered, nursing and care home provision in Oxford. Whilst we have a growing number of older people in Cherwell, the PR9 site has been identified to meet the needs of Oxford. If the proposed elderly/extra care residential scheme does not include affordable housing, there will be no mechanism for nominating or allocating the private dwellings (if built on PR9) to people with an Oxford connection.

Paragraph 5.30 on page 72 in the LPPR states that in the interest of meeting Oxford's identified, unmet housing need and the specific purpose of the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan, only individual self-contained dwellings (use class C3) will be permitted. The developer appears to suggest that the 9000 sqm floor space for elderly/extra care sits outside, or is in addition to, the requirements of policy PR9. Therefore, it is not clear how this proposal for C2 use floor space will meet with the planning policy requirements.

Currently Oxford City has a range of sheltered housing for older people (in some areas of the city there is an over-supply of sheltered accommodation) and has a sufficient provision of Extra Care housing to meet the identified needs. The suggested dwelling and tenure mix shown in Table 2 and Table 3, of accessible maisonettes, bungalows, smaller and larger houses will provide accommodation options for older people to live independently and for people of all ages who may have limiting health conditions but who can live independently with some support needs. Early discussions about the design of some individual units that could provide supported living options would be helpful, and Commissioners at Oxfordshire County Council should be involved with those discussions from the outset. All these options could also contribute towards meeting the requirements of policy BSC4 i.e. 'housing for older people, specialist or supported accommodation'. Provision or ready access to health care, GPs and local services and amenities will be important to ensure sustainable development.

If the identified land for C2 use is not used for a care home, it's location may be better suited to provide a small cluster of bungalows. Alternatively, 900 sqm of floor space could be used to provide scope for community self-build and/or self-finish housing as set out in the LPPR policy. Whilst Key workers in need of social housing would be given consideration under social housing allocations policies, to safeguard accommodation specifically for key workers, perhaps 900 sqm of floor space could be used to provide additional C3 use affordable rented, Rent to Buy or discounted sale accommodation specifically for health and social care workforce and other key workers as defined on page 72 of the Cherwell LPPR.

### **Energy efficiency**

It will be very important for the planning applicant to engage with a Registered Provider (RP) at a very early stage prior to submitting a reserved matters application. This is to ensure that the design of the affordable housing will meet RP policies in relation to sustainable, energy efficient measures being installed in the properties. It should be noted that in addition to the Council's sustainable development policies, RPs are currently working on their own internal policies to address climate change.

### **Summary**

The Outline application is supported in principle subject to clarity of the issues raised above and a revised housing mix. Whilst this is an Outline planning application, the Draft Heads of Terms will need to be more detailed in terms of how the affordable housing scheme will be provided. There is no mention of First Homes, split of tenure to meet policy compliance, details of affordable housing standards, clustering, phasing, accessibility etc. If the planning application is approved, these details and more will need to be included in the S.106.

The planning applicant should consider the suggested affordable housing dwelling and tenure mix included in this consultation response. Specific consideration should be given to the provision bungalows, accessible homes, and opportunities to provide specialist housing, self-build or self-finish housing.

It is not clear how the proposed 9000 sqm of floor space for 'elderly/extra care' should be treated for the purposes of calculating the affordable housing contribution or how C2 use will meet planning policy requirements for the PR9 site.

In terms of the officer comments set out in this document, the suggested mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures is based on the proposed 540, C3 use dwellings only.

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9 March 2022.