

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

**Planning Application Number:** 21/03558/OUT

**Site Name:** Land on the North East side of Gavray Drive, Bicester

**Planning Officer:** Caroline Ford/Robin Forrester

**Date of Comments:** 11/04/2021

**Comments by:** Frances Evans

**No objection subject to S.106 securing all the affordable housing requirements.**

This outline planning proposal is for up to 250 dwellings. The planning application document states that 75 affordable housing units will be provided. ES Chapter 2 para 2.3.38 sets out that 'up to' 30% affordable housing will be provided in compliance with Local Plan Policy BSC3 but the 'amount, type and tenure is subject to negotiation'. The Design and Access Statement sets out that the development will include a mix of one to four-bedroom properties.

**Evidence of need**

Within the growing community of Bicester, there is a need for a range of property types and sizes. The Housing Register identifies a need for 1, 2, 3, 4-bedroom homes but also a small but acute need for 5 and 6-bedroom homes in this area. There is also a need for wheelchair adapted dwellings and for accessible accommodation. Ground floor maisonettes with accessible parking and private outdoor space as well as accessible and adaptable bungalows and houses would be more appropriate. Whilst there is a demand for 1-bed and 2-bedroomed general needs accommodation, this need is not always met by the provision of flats in blocks. There are a number of new developments already permitted in Bicester that will provide 1 and 2-bedroom flats as affordable housing, therefore it is increasingly important to ensure future delivery of smaller houses, bungalows and family housing to meet growing demand.

As the rented affordable housing will be allocated to households on our housing register in accordance with the adopted Allocation Scheme and any Nominations Agreement in place with a Registered Provider, it is important to recognise that a mix of houses, maisonettes, flats and bungalows will need to be provided and developed to standards that are acceptable to Cherwell DC and to the Registered Providers who will take transfer of the units on practical completion.

Affordability is an issue in Cherwell as explained in the Council's adopted Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement. The predominant need is for social rent tenure as this is the most affordable housing option for the majority of households on the Council's Housing Register. Unless the scheme is unviable or the combined cost of social rent plus service charges

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becomes cost-prohibitive to tenants, we would expect this to be the default rent for the rented affordable housing on site.

**Affordable Housing Tenure Mix**

Policy BSC3 requires ‘at least’ 30% affordable housing provision on site. Of which, 70% should be social or affordable rented and 30% intermediate tenure. However, in 2022 Cherwell DC adopted a First Homes Interim Guidance Note which sets out the local requirement for First Homes in Cherwell. With these policies in mind, the 30% affordable housing should be split as follows:

25% First Homes

5% Intermediate tenure (usually a form of affordable home ownership such a shared ownership)

70% Social Rent tenure.

It is important that the NPPF requirements are also met i.e., that at least 10% of all homes are a form of affordable home ownership unless the exceptions set out in para 65 NPPF are met. Given this, the proportions may need to change.

**Example:** Based on 250 dwellings, the affordable housing contribution would be 75 dwellings and at least 25 of these (10% of whole site) would need to be affordable home ownership. Therefore, the tenure split would be 67% rented and 33% affordable home ownership, as follows:

25% First Homes = 19 dwellings

8% Shared Ownership = 6 dwellings

67% Social Rented = 50 dwellings

Translating this into an affordable housing dwelling and tenure mix, we would expect an affordable housing scheme to include the following:

<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Unit size</b> Min. Sqm GIA (1-storey or 2-storey*).	<b>First Homes</b> (Total 25% based on 75 AH units)	<b>Social Rent</b> units (Total 67% rounded up based on 75 AH units)	<b>Intermediate Tenure</b> (Total 8% based on 75 AH units)
<b>1-bedroom</b> (2-person) <b>Flat</b>	<b>50 SqM</b>	0	16 (approx. 21%)	
<b>1-bedroom</b> (2-person) <b>Maisonette or House</b>	<b>50 SqM</b> (larger if it is to meet wheelchair or accessible standards.)	4 units (5%)	12 units (approx. 16%)	0

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<b>2-bedroom (3-person) bungalow</b>	<b>61 SqM</b> (larger if it is to meet wheelchair or accessible standards.)	0	2 units (approx.3%)	0
<b>2-bedroom (4 person) house</b>	<b>79 SqM</b>	8 units (11%)	10 units (approx. 13%)	4 units (5%)
<b>3-bedroom (5 person) house / bungalow</b>	<b>93 SqM</b>	7 units (9%)	5 units (approx. 7%)	2 units (3%)
<b>4-bedroom (7 person) house</b>	<b>115 SqM</b>	0	4 units (approx. 5%)	0
<b>5-bedroom (8 person) house.</b>	<b>128 SqM</b>	0	1 unit (approx. 1%)	0

**Other requirements for affordable housing**

1. As set out in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD it is expected that 50% of rented dwellings will be built to Building Regulations Approved Document Part M4(2) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings. We also request that level access showers (not baths) are provided on all ground level dwellings from the outset. This is to avoid having to adapt a new-build property that is still under Building Guarantee. Plans should clearly demonstrate how these requirements will be met.
2. 1% of homes should be provided to wheelchair adapted standard and have dedicated accessible parking i.e., Building Regulations Approved Document Part M4 (3)(2)(b). Property floor plans and site plans should clearly demonstrate how these requirements will be met.
3. It is also expected that all affordable housing will be built to the Nationally Described Space Standards for the number of persons as set out in the table above.
4. Sufficient allocated parking should be provided for each of the affordable homes. This should reflect the same parking provision for market dwellings.
5. Affordable housing should be distributed evenly across the site, with clusters of no more than 15 dwellings of mixed tenure, or no more than 10 rented dwellings.
6. We would expect the developer to provide between 25% and 35% affordable housing in each phase (with the total affordable housing being not less than 30% across the whole site). We expect the developer to enter into agreements with a RP prior to occupation of 50% of market dwellings

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within any phase (excluding First Homes) and to transfer the completed affordable homes (rented and shared ownership) to an RP prior to occupation of 75% of market dwellings within each phase. The developer should ensure that First Homes are actively marketed within the district and all sold to qualifying purchasers prior to occupation of 95% of market homes on the phase. Qualifying Purchasers for First Homes will need to be approved by the District Council on first and subsequent sales (LA monitoring costs to be confirmed). Shared Ownership property purchasers will need to meet the Help to Buy (shared ownership) national criteria and be approved by the RP. Shared ownership purchasers will be able to staircase to 100% ownership over time.

7. The rented affordable housing will need to be allocated by the RP in accordance with the Allocations Scheme and Nominations Agreement.
  
8. 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 plans or build tendering process.