

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

Planning Application Number: 21/04275/OUT

Site Name: Part OS Parcel 8149 Adj Lords Lane And SE Of Hawkwell Farm, Lords Lane, Bicester

Planning Officer: Caroline Ford

Date of Comments: 25/03/2022

Comments by: Ewan Stewart

Proposal supported in principle

This proposal is for a mixed-use development of up to 3,100 dwellings (including extra care), residential and care accommodation (C2) and a range of educational, employment and leisure facilities and infrastructure.

Affordable housing contribution

Policy BSC 3 of the Local Plan requires 30% of the total number of dwellings in Bicester to be affordable with a tenure split of 70% rented and 30% intermediate (including First Homes provision). On this proposal this equates to 930 affordable dwellings.

The points below set out details of the Council's expectations for the general needs affordable housing, including accessible, adaptable and wheelchair provision. Given the large scale of this development and the fact that it is in one of Cherwell's largest settlements this is an opportunity to achieve the provision of some 4-bed and a small number of 5 and 6-bed houses to meet identified needs as well as smaller dwellings.

Extra Care

Whilst policy BSC4 requires Extra Care provision, it is unclear what the current need for this is. Officers from Oxfordshire County Council are currently researching the need for Extra Care and Supported Living and when the data from their research is available we will be in a position to clarify the requirements. CDC will welcome discussions with the applicant regarding this aspect of provision at a later date as part of wider discussions regarding the masterplan.

Tenure

The Council expects the rented dwellings to be delivered as social rented. Cherwell is a high value area where market rents are high and 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.

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In line with new Government requirements, 25% of affordable housing is required to be delivered as First Homes. On this proposal 232 dwellings would be required as First Homes. It is expected that First Homes (and the mechanism securing the discount in perpetuity) will be secured through section 106 planning obligations.

Paragraph 65 of the NPPF requires that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership. This equates to 310 on this proposal so in addition to the First Homes provision there would be a further 78 dwellings which would be delivered as shared ownership.

In summary, the tenure mix would be:

Social rent - 620
First Homes - 232
Shared ownership - 78

Type and size

The Planning Statement refers to the mix set out in the SHMA, ie 25-30% 1-bed units, 30-35% 2-bed units, 30-35% 3-bed units and 5-10% 4-bed units. Current figures from CDC's housing register show that a higher proportion of 1-bed dwellings is required and a lower proportion of 3-bed dwellings. The figures also show that approximately 1.5% of applicants require 5 and 6-bed dwellings and we would be looking for some of this need to be met on this development.

The indicative mix in the summary section below sets out details of the property sizes required, taking into account the figures from the register, what is being provided on other developments and the likely turnover as households move between different dwelling sizes. The indicative mix is subject to negotiation and may change closer to the time of a reserved matters application.

All affordable dwellings must meet Nationally Described Space Standards and we request that plans submitted with the Reserved Matters application show GIA dimensions to demonstrate that they meet NDSS.

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. In addition, 1% of the affordable housing should be built to Building Regulation Requirement M4(3) Category 3(2b): Wheelchair User Dwellings. Plans should clearly demonstrate how these requirements will be met.

We request that level access showers and level access thresholds are provided on **all** ground level dwellings. The majority of customers who will

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occupy these dwellings will have limited mobility and will require both of these facilities to be in place.

Within the 1% of M4(3) Category 3 (2b) dwellings we would be seeking to meet the needs of a small number of families on CDC's housing register who have at least one wheelchair user and who require a 3-bed property which meets M4(3) Category 3 (2b) requirements. This could be achieved by providing dormer bungalows with the wheelchair user facilities on the ground floor and bedrooms for able-bodied household members on the upper floor. This may be a more cost-effective option for the applicant rather than providing houses with through-floor lifts.

There is also an identified need for 1-bed 2-person, 2-bed 4-person or 3-bed 5-person bungalows which meet Category 3 (2b) requirements.

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.

Summary and conclusion

Taking the above details into account, the following is suggested as an indicative mix for this proposal:

Rented (620)

- 70 no. 1-bed 2-person houses
- 60 no. 1-bed 2-person maisonettes
- 60 no. 2-bed 4-person maisonettes

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- 180 no. 2-bed 4-person houses
- 180 no. 3-bed 5 or 6-person houses
- 30 no. 4-bed 7 or 8-person houses
- 5 no. 5-bed 7 or 8-person houses
- 5 no. 6-bed 7 or 8-person houses
- 10 no. 1-bed 2-person bungalows (3 built to wheelchair standard)
- 10 no. 2-bed 4-person bungalows (3 built to wheelchair standard)
- 10 no. 3-bed 5-person bungalows (3 built to wheelchair standard, possibly dormer bungalows)

Intermediate (310)

- 60 no. 2-bed 4-person maisonettes
- 120 no. 2-bed 4-person houses
- 120 no. 3-bed 5 or 6-person houses
- 5 no. 1-bed 2-person bungalows (at least 1 as M4(2) standard)
- 5 no. 2-bed 4-person bungalows (at least 1 as M4(2) standard)

NB We require the applicant to provide a masterplan showing the location of the affordable properties in each phase. This will enable us to plan for meeting identified needs, particularly for wheelchair users' needs and those of larger households.