

Planning Application Comments

Planning Application Number: 23/00173/OUT

Site Name: Land South of Green Lane, Chesterton

Planning Officer: Andrew Thompson

Date of Comments: 28/04/2023

Comments by: Ewan Stewart

Proposal supported subject to revisions to the proposed affordable housing mix

Proposal and policy requirements

This outline planning application is for the development of up to 147 homes, with all matters reserved except for means of access. The site is within the rural settlement of Chesterton, therefore at least 35% affordable housing is required in accordance with CDC Local Plan Policy BSC 3: Affordable Housing. The tenure split required by this policy is 70% rented and 30% Low-Cost Home Ownership. On this scheme this equates to 52 dwellings (rounded up) with 37 as rented and 15 as Low-Cost Home Ownership.

National policy requires that 10% of the overall scheme is provided as Low-Cost Home Ownership, and that 25% of the affordable element is provided as First Homes.

The following are Strategic Housing comments on aspects of the proposal relating to meeting housing need:

Numbers & tenure split

The proposed number of affordable properties is 51, rounded down from 51.45. However, the policy states that **at least** 35% is required as affordable housing, so we expect this to be rounded up to 52.

The tenure mix, based on the above policy requirements, would be:

- 37no rented dwellings (rounded up)
- 13no First Homes (25% of affordable)
- 2no shared ownership dwellings

This would also comply with the national policy requirement for 10% of the total number of dwellings to be Low-Cost Home Ownership.

The provision of 2no shared ownership dwellings is subject to discussion as it may not be practicable for a Registered Provider to purchase such a small number. CDC does not have a policy position regarding this, however we are open to discussions around changing the tenure on a small number of dwellings and to explore options.

Size and type

The Planning Statement indicates that the affordable housing mix is a reserved matter, however proposes the following broad percentages:

- 1 bed 24%
- 2 bed 35%
- 3 bed 30%
- 4 bed 11%

This is based on data from the SHMA 2014, however in recent years, data from CDC housing register has shown that a higher proportion of 1 and 4-bed properties are needed. Households who are eligible for 4+bedrooms have by far the longest waiting times due to the current under-supply across the District. The Housing Allocations Manager advised me last year that 10-15% 4+bed properties are required on new schemes in order to address the shortfall and reduce the waiting times.

More recent data and steer from the Housing Allocations Manager indicates that this is still the case for the 4+ bed properties and also that as of April 2023 there is an increased need for 3-bedroom houses.

We would therefore wish to adjust the proposed percentages to approximately:

- 1 bed 15% (maisonettes or houses)
- 2 bed 30%
- 3 bed 40%
- 4+ bed 15%

I note and welcome the confirmation in the Planning Statement that the affordable dwelling sizes will comply with NDSS dimensions. We require sizes which will maximise occupancy ie 1-bed 2-person, 2-bed 4-person, 3-bed 5 person, ideally 4-bed 7 or 8-person and request that future plans show the dimensions for each property size to demonstrate that they meet NDSS requirements.

Accessible & adaptable properties

The Developer Contributions SPD requires that 50% of the rented dwellings meet M4(2) requirements and 1% meet M4(3) requirements. It would contribute significantly to meeting identified pressing needs if one dwelling – ideally a large bungalow) is delivered to full wheelchair standard. Housing Services (ie Strategy, Allocations, Standards) teams welcome discussions with the applicant regarding the specifications for this dwelling.

We would request that all ground level properties have level thresholds and a Level Access Shower installed from the outset as they are likely to be allocated to people with limited mobility.

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

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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.

The Planning Statement for this application confirms that the dwellings will be “tenure blind” in appropriately sized clusters and this is welcome.

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.