

Planning Application Number: 15/01357/F

Site Name: Land East Of Larsen Road Upper Heyford

Planning Officer: Andrew Lewis

Date of Comments: 24 November 2021

Comments by: Frances Evans (Strategy & Development Team Leader)

No objection in principle – subject to some issues being addressed by the applicant as explained below.

Affordable Housing Contribution: The Design and Access Statement (DAS) Addendum dated September 2021 proposes to provide 27 (30.3%) affordable homes on this site of 89 dwellings. This contribution is acceptable as it meets with Policy Villages 5 in the Local Plan Policy which requires at least 30% of dwellings to be affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Tenure Mix

The revised planning application in November 2021 suggests that all 27 affordable homes will be rented however the DAS Addendum suggests that the tenure will be negotiated with the Local Authority. The previous Strategic Housing Officer comments on this application have indicated a tenure split of 70% Affordable Rent and 30% Shared Ownership tenure in line with Local Plan Policy BSC3. Whilst National Planning Policy Guidance has introduced a requirement from June 2021 for all qualifying sites to deliver 25% First Homes, this does not need to apply to planning applications that have significantly progressed prior to the national policy being introduced (as in the case of this application), therefore a policy compliant tenure split on this site would include 70% social or affordable rented homes and 30% intermediate tenure (e.g., shared ownership) homes. NPPF requires 10% of dwellings (i.e., 9 out of 89 homes) to be affordable home ownership.

The majority of rented affordable housing across the wider former RAF Upper Heyford site has been provided as Affordable Rent. Whilst our preference would be to provide social rent tenure, to ensure that Affordable Rent tenure is as affordable as possible to meet identified housing need, we would expect that the Affordable Rent is no more than 80% of local market rent or capped at Local Housing Allowance levels whichever is the lower figure. This would be secured through the S.106 Agreement.

Affordable Housing Dwelling and Tenure mix.

The DAS Addendum of September 2021 sets out a proposed dwelling mix. The dwelling mix is acceptable as it meets a range of housing need by providing 1, 2, 3 and 4-bedroom accommodation that meets Nationally Described Space Standards for 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7-person accommodation.

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Considering the need to provide a policy compliant tenure split, I suggest the following:

Affordable Rent – Total 18 dwellings

6 x 1-bedroom 2-person flats (NB* ground floor flats should have a level access shower installed from the outset to avoid the need for adaptations in future to meet the needs of people with limited mobility).

2 x 1-bedroom 2-person houses

4 x 2-bedroom 4-person houses

2 x 2-bedroom 4-person bungalows (NB* to be developed to Building Regulations Part M4 Category 3: Wheelchair User dwellings and built with a wet room installation (not bath) from the outset.

3 x 3-bedroom 5-person houses

1 x 4-bedroom 7 or 8-person house

Shared Ownership - Total 9 dwellings

3 x 2-bedroom 3-person houses

6 x 3-bedroom 5-person houses

Parking

Parking availability for the affordable units is still short of what we would usually seek in some of the clusters. We usually require 2 allocated parking spaces per 2+ bedroom property. However, there are several unallocated visitor parking spaces which may compensate for the shortfall.

Wheelchair User Bungalows – location and parking

It is not clear from the floor plan layout drawings what the dimensions are for the proposed wheelchair accessible bungalows. Subject to the wheelchair user dwellings conforming with all Building Regulations Part M4 Category 3 accessibility requirements, they are acceptable.

However, the location of the bungalows at the back (north) of the site, furthest from the bus stop on the main road and from local shops and services, is not ideal. It would be preferable to have these units located closer to Camp Road and the parking arrangements better suited to enable wheelchair users to exit their car under a covered space directly accessible to their front door.

Currently, the parking arrangements for plots 43 and 44 do not support this arrangement. Perhaps the plots could be swapped with, for example, plots 72-74? In addition, the bin store area for the accessible bungalows (plots 43 & 44) needs to be suitable for bin operatives to retrieve the bins on collection day without the need for the tenant to wheel the bins to the end of the road etc. These are practical but important considerations to enable wheelchair users or people with limited mobility to access all services and facilities easily.

Accessible Housing and Size Standards

The DAS Addendum September 2021 sets out that all the affordable housing units will meet Building Regulations Part M4 (2) Category 2: Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings. Additionally, 100% of the affordable housing units are to be built the government's Nationally Described Space Standard (Technical

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Housing Standards). This is also acceptable and meets with the Developer Contribution SPD.

Energy Efficiency/Climate Change

All affordable housing units will need to ensure they 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 so the planning applicant/developer is encouraged to have early discussions and engage with RPs to ensure these specifications can be accommodated and are accounted for in any build tendering process.

The selection of the RP who will take on the affordable units should be agreed with the Council.

General observation

Whilst open space, a LEAP and LAP are proposed as part of the wider scheme, some private space rear gardens to dwellings on this site, including market housing, appear to be very small and may not support the needs of resident households.

Conclusion

The planning applicant will need to confirm the following in relation to the proposed affordable housing scheme:

- 1) Agreement with the affordable housing dwelling and tenure split as set out in these comments.
- 2) The provision of level access showers to ground floor flats and wet rooms to wheelchair user bungalows as set out in these comments.
- 3) Clarification as to whether the location of the accessible bungalows can be changed to improve access to local transport links, local services and facilities etc.