



5. Providing new homes

Long Hanborough

Our housing related objectives include:

- CO4 Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet housing needs and reduce the need to travel.
 - CO5 Plan for the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
 - CO6 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.
- 5.1 The provision of new housing is a critically important issue for West Oxfordshire and has been a key, recurring theme throughout consultation on the Local Plan to date. New housing is vital to economic growth and as an attractive and well-located place, people want to live in West Oxfordshire. However, growth needs to be effectively managed in order to prevent significant change to the intrinsic character of the District.
 - 5.2 There are some key considerations to be addressed through the Local Plan including how much housing is needed, where it should be provided, what type and size of housing is required and how the needs of different groups can best be met including for example older people, younger people, families, black and minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, travelling communities and those wishing to self-build their own home.
 - 5.3 A particularly important issue for West Oxfordshire, due to relatively high house prices, is the need to deliver more affordable housing to assist those who are unable to buy or rent suitable accommodation on the open market.
 - 5.4 These key issues are addressed next.

Amount of housing

- 5.5 An important consideration is the amount of new housing to be provided over the plan period. The Local Plan has a key role to play in identifying an appropriate housing target and setting out the strategy and sites to deliver it. Identifying a housing target is not however an exact science. There is no single, right answer rather it is a case of pulling together a range of relevant factors and forming a balanced view on the most appropriate level of provision.
- 5.6 Previously, Local Plan targets were set by regional and county structure plans. The previous regional plan for example suggested that in the 20-year period 2006 – 2026, West Oxfordshire should aim to provide 7,300 new homes (365 per year). However, regional and structure plans no longer exist and are of little direct relevance to this Local Plan.
- 5.7 The most up to date assessment of housing need in Oxfordshire is set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was published in April 2014. In relation to West Oxfordshire, the SHMA identifies the need for between 635 – 685 homes per year in the period 2011 – 2031. The mid-point figure is 660 homes per year and this is defined as the ‘objectively assessed need’ or OAN.
- 5.8 National policy¹¹ states that in order to significantly boost the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the framework. In this regard, the Council is committed to meeting its objectively assessed need (OAN) in full through this Local Plan.

¹¹ Paragraph 47 National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.9 The proposed housing requirement for West Oxfordshire in the period 2011 – 2031 is therefore 660 homes per year which equates to 13,200 homes in total. This will require a significant increase in the future rate of delivery of new housing in the District in comparison with historic long term delivery rates particularly when ‘under-supply’ since 2011 is factored in.
- 5.10 In addition to meeting West Oxfordshire’s identified housing needs we are committed to assisting our neighbours Oxford City. Evidence demonstrates that Oxford City cannot meet their housing need in full within their own administrative boundary. A working assumption of 15,000 homes has been agreed by the Oxfordshire authorities as representing the quantum of Oxford’s ‘unmet’ housing need which must be accommodated elsewhere within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA).
- 5.11 Joint working has been taking place between the Oxfordshire local authorities and co-ordinated via the Oxfordshire Growth Board (OGB). As part of this process it has been agreed that West Oxfordshire will accommodate 2,750 homes in the period between 2021 and 2031 to assist Oxford City with its unmet housing need. In order to meet this apportionment, and deliver the District’s own housing needs, 935 dwellings per year will need to be delivered between 2021 and 2031 (excluding past backlog). This rate of delivery is nearly double the historic long term housing delivery rate in the District and will be extremely challenging for the house building industry to deliver.
- 5.12 The total level of housing provision in West Oxfordshire in the period up to 2031 will therefore be at least 15,950 homes. This comprises 13,200 homes in the period 2011 – 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire’s own identified housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 – 2031 to assist with the unmet housing needs of Oxford City.

Distribution of housing

- 5.13 In accordance with the overall strategy (Policy OS2) a significant proportion of new housing will be provided at the District’s three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. This strategy has been tested extensively through consultation and sustainability appraisal (SA) and is considered to represent the most appropriate and sustainable strategy for West Oxfordshire.
- 5.14 Existing commitments at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton will be complemented by a number of site allocations to ensure a continual supply of deliverable housing sites over the plan period.
- 5.15 Eynsham has a particularly important role to play because of its proximity and connections to Oxford City. A strategic urban extension of around 1,000 homes will be delivered to the west of Eynsham contributing in part to West Oxfordshire’s own housing needs (450 homes) as well as the unmet housing needs of Oxford City (550 homes).
- 5.16 Further housing provision will be made near Eynsham on land to the north of the A40 which is identified as a ‘Strategic Location for Growth’ (SLG). Here a new settlement based on ‘garden village’ principles will be brought forward and form a new rural service centre for the District. The Council has secured Government backing for the scheme and there is a working assumption that it will provide around 2,200 new homes by 2031 with a strong emphasis on accelerated delivery. The detailed planning of the new village will be taken forward through a separate Area Action Plan (AAP). The Area Action Plan (AAP) will provide a more definitive figure for the number of dwellings the Garden Village is likely to deliver.

- 5.17 Woodstock has a relatively good range of services and facilities, and relatively good accessibility to Oxford. It can accommodate a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace. Three medium scale allocations are proposed on different sides of the town in order to complement the structure and form of the town.
- 5.18 The rural service centres of Bampton and Long Hanborough will be required to make provision for new housing with existing commitments being complemented by two site allocations at Long Hanborough.
- 5.19 The proposed distribution of housing is summarised in Policy H1. It should be noted that the housing figures for each sub-area are based on past completions and anticipated future supply as of 1 April 2017. They are therefore indicative and should not be taken as absolute requirements or targets. It should also be noted that housing land supply will be calculated on a district-wide basis rather than individually for each sub-area.
- 5.20 With the exception of the Burford – Charlbury sub-area, an allowance has been made for future ‘windfall’ sites yet to come forward, excluding ‘garden land’ development in line with the NPPF. Within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area, to take account of the more restrictive approach to development that applies to the Cotswolds AONB, no reliance is placed on future windfall development and the amount and distribution of housing identified in Policy H1 is based on past completions and commitments only (as of 1 April 2017) – 774 homes.
- 5.21 This does not mean that new housing cannot come forward in the Burford – Charlbury sub-area. Indeed, the 774 homes figure should not be treated as a ‘cap’ or ‘ceiling’ to development and planning permission may be granted for additional housing within the sub-area where the proposed development is shown to accord with national and local policy including Policies H1, H2, OS2 and EH1 (where relevant) of this Local Plan. Further explanation is set out in Section 9 – Strategy at the Local Level.

POLICY H1:

Amount and distribution of housing

Provision will be made for at least 15,950 homes in the period 2011 – 2031.

This will comprise 13,200 homes in the period 2011 - 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire’s identified housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 - 2031 to meet Oxford City’s identified housing needs.

In accordance with the overall strategy set out in Policy OS2, the distribution of housing to meet West Oxfordshire’s identified housing needs taking account of past completions and anticipated future supply is as follows:

Witney sub-area	4,702 homes
Carterton sub-area	2,680 homes
Chipping Norton sub-area	2,047 homes
Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area	5,596 homes
Burford – Charlbury sub-area	774 homes

This is an indicative distribution based on past completions and anticipated future supply and should not be taken as an absolute target for each sub-area or maximum ceiling to limit development. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met.

The indicative distribution for the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area includes 2,750 homes to provide for Oxford’s unmet housing need. This will be delivered through a strategic urban extension to the west of Eynsham and a new Garden Village to the north of the A40 near Eynsham.

Development will be monitored annually to ensure that the overall strategy is being delivered. Sites for new housing will be identified through partnership working with local communities, landowners and self-build groups including the use of parish or neighbourhood plans.

Further allocations may be made through neighbourhood plans in accordance with the overall distribution of housing set out above and in accordance with other relevant plan policies, including in particular the general principles set out in Policy OS2.

Housing delivery

- 5.22 In this section of the plan we explain how the proposed housing target and distribution set out in Policy H1 above will be delivered. Regard should also be had to Section 9 which sets out the proposed strategy for each of the five sub-areas in more detail.

Homes already built

- 5.23 Of the overall housing requirement (15,950) a number of these homes have already been built in the first six years of the plan period (2011 – 2017). However, a relatively flat housing market and a lack of urgency from the development sector in bringing forward strategic sites, has meant that despite a healthy supply of planning permissions and resolutions to grant planning permission, the number of actual completions has been relatively low totalling just 1,982 from 2011 – 2017 (an average of 330 per year) and creating an under-supply ‘backlog’ of 1,318 homes when assessed against the annual requirement of 550 per year set out in Policy H2. This Local Plan therefore seeks to enable a significant increase in housing supply in order to meet identified needs although it strives to achieve this in a sustainable, controlled manner.

Existing commitments

- 5.24 It is also important to note that a large number of new homes are already in the development pipeline ranging from very small sites for just one house through to much larger sites for several hundred new homes. This includes sites that already benefit from planning permission as well as those sites that have a resolution to grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement being completed. In accordance with the Government’s practice guidance the Council will include C2 uses (residential institutions) in its housing land supply assumptions and count them against the overall housing requirement. However this will only apply to ‘self-contained’ properties (e.g. flats/apartments) with their own front door, kitchen etc. and access to communal facilities. The Council will not count individual

C2 ‘bedrooms’ eg. in a nursing home, although, in reality, the provision of such uses is likely to free up a proportion of the existing housing stock within the District.

- 5.25 There are existing commitments for a number of strategic scale housing and mixed use developments. The largest commitments are:
- Land to the west of Witney (1,000 homes)
 - Land to the east of Carterton (700 homes)
- 5.26 As of 1 April 2017, the number of homes expected to be delivered through existing commitments was 5,859 comprising 5,272 on larger sites of 10 or more dwellings and 587 on smaller sites of less than 10.

Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

- 5.27 Land to the north of Eynsham has been identified as a Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) – a broad area at which it is proposed that a new settlement is created in the form of a ‘Garden Village’. There is a working assumption that the ‘Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village’ SLG will provide around 2,200 homes in the period 2021 – 2031 which will assist neighbouring Oxford City with its unmet housing need. At present, only a broad area has been defined and the details of the proposal are yet to be fully worked up. As such the Council will prepare a separate Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide the detailed planning of the scheme in consultation with key stakeholders. The Area Action Plan (AAP) will provide a more definitive figure for the number of dwellings the Garden Village is likely to deliver. Further information is set out in Section 9 – Strategy at the Local Level.

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs)

- 5.28 Through this Local Plan we have identified a number of larger housing allocations referred to as ‘Strategic Development Areas’ (SDAs). These are sites of a ‘strategic’ scale that after considerable scrutiny and detailed consideration of reasonable alternatives, are considered to represent the most sustainable locations for strategic-scale housing growth within the District.

- 5.29 It is anticipated that these sites will deliver around 4,050 new homes by 2031 of which 550 (on land west of Eynsham) are intended to address unmet housing need from Oxford City. The strategic sites include:
- Land to the east of Witney (450 homes)
 - Land to the north of Witney (1,400 homes)
 - Land to the east of Chipping Norton at Tank Farm (1,200 homes)
 - Land west of Eynsham (1,000 homes)

5.30 Further information on these sites and the alternative options that have been considered is set out in Section 9 and in the Council's supporting background evidence¹².

Non-strategic housing allocations

- 5.31 In addition to the strategic location for growth and strategic development areas outlined above, this plan allocates 11 smaller, 'non-strategic' housing sites. These will help to ensure a deliverable housing supply in the short-term as smaller sites often have much shorter 'lead-in' times to development compared to larger strategic sites.
- 5.32 The allocated housing sites are as follows:
- REEMA North and Central, Carterton (300 homes)
 - Milestone Road, Carterton (200 homes)
 - Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton (70 homes)
 - Land east of Woodstock (300 homes)
 - Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock (120 homes)
 - Land north of Banbury Road, Woodstock (180 homes)
 - Land at Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough (50 homes)
 - Oliver's Garage, Long Hanborough (25 homes)
 - Former Airfield, Stanton Harcourt (50 homes)
 - Land west of Minster Lovell (125 homes)
 - Woodford Way Car Park, Witney (50 homes)

5.33 Further information on these smaller site allocations is set out in Section 9. Subject to resources, the Council will seek to prepare site-specific planning briefs to guide the development of these allocated sites.

Neighbourhood plans

5.34 A further potential delivery mechanism for new housing provision is neighbourhood development plans. These provide the opportunity for local communities to determine the most appropriate locations for development including housing. There are a number of neighbourhood plans underway in the District. Because there is some uncertainty about how many homes neighbourhood plans might deliver, a zero assumption has been factored into current anticipated housing supply figures. Any provision made by neighbourhood plans will therefore increase housing supply over and above that which has been identified in this Local Plan. Any housing allocations that are proposed through neighbourhood plans will need to be in accordance with the overall distribution of housing set out in Policy H1 as well as other relevant plan policies including in particular the general principles set out in Policy OS2.

Windfall development

5.35 'Windfall' developments are essentially speculative developments on sites that are not allocated for housing. Such sites can be previously developed (brownfield) land where the current use may no longer be viable or undeveloped, Greenfield sites that the owner wishes to bring forward for development. In some instances they may be 'rural exception sites' (RES) whereby affordable housing is provided in locations that would not normally be allowed for new housing.

¹² Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, LUC assessment of site options for the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and Site Assessment Matrix

5.36 Such windfall development has historically formed a large component of housing delivery in West Oxfordshire and it is reasonable to assume that this trend will continue. Having regard to past trends and taking account of existing commitments, the number of homes expected to come forward through windfall development in the period 2017 – 2031 is set out below. No reliance is placed on windfall development within the Burford – Charlbury sub-area to take account of the fact that much of the sub-area falls within the environmentally sensitive Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Witney Sub-Area	276
Carterton Sub-Area	238
Chipping Norton Sub-Area	188
Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area	289
Total	991

5.37 It is important that any windfall development supports the delivery of the Local Plan strategy. It should therefore contribute to meeting housing needs in sustainable locations, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and, where appropriate, encourage the re-use of previously developed land. Windfall housing development will be supported within the built-up area and on previously developed land where it accords with other relevant policies in the Local Plan and particularly the general principles set out in Policy OS2.

5.38 Windfall housing development on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will require robust justification. Sites outside the Cotswolds AONB will only be supported where convincing evidence is presented to demonstrate that it is necessary to meet identified housing needs, which could be district-wide needs, needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in policy HI and other relevant plan policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.

5.39 Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site. Any such development would also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy HI and other relevant policies, including in particular the general principles in Policy OS2 and Policy EH1.

Overall housing delivery

5.40 Taking account of homes already built, current commitments, proposed allocations and windfall development, the anticipated level of housing delivery is 15,799 homes which equates to 99% of the overall plan period requirement of 15,950 homes. Additional provision may also be made through Neighbourhood Plans. Housing delivery will be regularly monitored and should it become apparent that additional provision/measures are likely to be necessary to ensure the overall housing requirement to 2031 is met the Local Plan will be subject to review as appropriate.

Five-year housing land supply

5.41 With regard to 5-year housing land supply, the Council will apply the ‘Liverpool’ (residual) approach whereby the past backlog of housing ‘under-supply’ since the start of the plan period (2011) is delivered over the whole of the remaining plan period rather than in the immediate 5-year period which would be required under the alternative ‘Sedgefield’ methodology.

- 5.42 Insufficient capacity has been identified through this Local Plan and the supporting assessment of housing land availability to deliver a 5-year supply under the Sedgfield approach and it could only be achieved by releasing a large number of sites that have been assessed by the Council as being unsuitable for new housing. The Council does not consider this to be an appropriate way forward. Addressing the shortfall in a more measured way over the remaining plan period using the Liverpool approach is considered to be entirely justified.
- 5.43 In addition to the application of the Liverpool approach, the calculation of five year housing land supply will be based on a 'staged' housing requirement as set out in Policy H2. This approach applies a lower initial housing requirement of 550 dwellings per year from 2011/12 – 2020/2021, thereafter including an additional 275 homes per year for Oxford's unmet need and gradually increasing up to a total combined annual requirement of 1,125 homes per year.
- 5.44 The staged requirement is necessary in order to enable sufficient time for large strategic sites to start delivering. It should not be seen as a target and over-delivery against these targets, particularly in the early years, will be encouraged.
- 5.45 Oxford's unmet needs are set out separately in the phased requirement table for illustrative purposes only. As Policy H2 makes clear, housing supply and delivery will be assessed against the combined totals which will be derived from annual completions across the District. Thus, whilst it is anticipated that Oxford's unmet needs will be largely accommodated through delivery of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, the housing requirement is not disaggregated so that under or over supply at this location will not be treated separately when calculating the five year housing land supply:-
- 5.46 The Council's overall approach is summarised in Policy H2.

POLICY H2: Delivery of New Homes

Provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031.

This will include 13,200 homes in the period 2011 – 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire's housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 – 2031 to meet Oxford City's housing needs.

The housing requirement will be phased over the plan period in accordance with the following table:

Year	West Oxon's needs	Oxford City's needs	Combined annual requirement
2011 - 17	550 per annum		550 per annum
2017 - 18	550		550
2018 - 19	550		550
2019 - 20	550		550
2020 - 21	550		550
2021 - 22	525	275	800
2022 - 23	525	275	800
2023 - 24	700	275	975
2024 - 25	850	275	1125
2025 - 26	850	275	1125
2026 - 27	850	275	1125
2027 - 28	850	275	1125
2028 - 29	850	275	1125
2029 - 30	850	275	1125
2030 - 31	850	275	1125
Totals	13,200	2750	15,950

The 5 year housing land supply is to be calculated on the basis of the phased requirement set out in this table. The additional requirement of 2,750 dwellings to meet Oxford City's housing needs is set out separately for illustrative purposes but delivery and supply will be assessed against the combined annual requirement.

When assessing the 5-year housing land supply the Council will apply the residual (Liverpool) approach with any under-supply (backlog) of housing to be delivered over the remaining plan period to 2031.

The required level of housing delivery of at least 15,950 homes will be achieved through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, site allocations (strategic and non-strategic sites) windfall development and any additional provision in Neighbourhood Plans.

If, post adoption of the Local Plan, the phased housing requirement is consistently not delivered, or it becomes clear that this is likely to be the case during the remainder of the plan period, then the Council will undertake an early review of the plan. Such a review will consider up to date evidence on housing needs (including unmet needs from neighbouring authorities) and, if necessary, will allocate additional sites for housing.

Proposals for housing will be determined as set out below:

Main service centres, rural service centres and villages

New dwellings will be permitted at the main service centres, rural service centres and villages in the following circumstances:

- On sites that have been allocated for housing development within a Local Plan or relevant neighbourhood plan;
- On previously developed land within or adjoining the built up area provided the loss of any existing use would not conflict with other plan policies and the proposal complies with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and any other relevant policies in this plan;
- On undeveloped land within the built up area provided that the proposal is in accordance with the other policies in the plan and in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.
- On undeveloped land adjoining the built up area where convincing evidence is presented to demonstrate that it is necessary to meet identified housing needs, it is in accordance with the distribution of housing set out in Policy H1 and is in accordance with other policies in the plan in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.

Small villages, hamlets and open countryside

New dwellings will only be permitted in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside where they comply with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and in the following circumstances:

- where there is an essential operational or other specific local need that cannot be met in any other way, including the use of existing buildings. Where appropriate, new homes provided (other than replacement dwellings) will be controlled by an occupancy condition linked to the operational need and/or to the 'rural exception site' approach for permanent affordable dwellings;
- where residential development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset;
- residential development of exceptional quality or innovative design;
- new accommodation proposed in accordance with policies specifically for travelling communities;
- accommodation which will remain ancillary to existing dwellings*;
- replacement dwellings on a one for one basis;
- re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting and where it has been demonstrated that the building is not capable of re-use for business, recreational or community uses, tourist accommodation or visitor facilities or where the proposal will address a specific local housing need which would otherwise not be met; and
- on sites that have been allocated for housing development within an adopted (made) neighbourhood plan.

* Proposals for extensions or alterations to an existing dwelling to create a self-contained unit of accommodation may be subject to a condition ensuring the accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling.

Affordable housing

- 5.47 Housing affordability is a key issue in West Oxfordshire because of the relationship between property prices and household incomes. Even relatively small, modest properties are beyond the reach of most single income households and as a result, there are around 1,440 households on the Council's waiting list for affordable housing.
- 5.48 We define affordable housing as that which is affordable to those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to rent or purchase. It is housing provided with either public or private subsidy for people who would otherwise be unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing cost and local incomes.
- 5.49 There are a number of different forms of affordable housing including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers and has a guideline target rent market determined through the national rent regime. Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers to households who are eligible for social rented housing. It is subject to controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent. Intermediate housing is for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. It includes shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent. Other models of provision such as Build to Rent, Rent to Buy and Help to Buy are also being explored.
- 5.50 In addition to social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 broadened the definition of affordable housing to also include 'starter homes'. These are a new form of affordable housing intended for first time buyers between the ages of 23 and 40. Starter homes will be sold at no more than 80% of open market value, capped at £450,000 in Greater London and £250,000 across the rest of England.
- 5.51 There is a significant need for more affordable housing in West Oxfordshire. The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) identified a need for 274 affordable homes each year (excluding existing commitments). Further evidence commissioned by the Council more recently¹³ identifies a very similar level of affordable housing need. Increasing the number, type and distribution of affordable housing for both rent and subsidised sale is therefore a key priority for West Oxfordshire.
- 5.52 There are two main ways in which new affordable housing will be delivered; the first is through market housing developments (either as part of the development or in the form of a commuted sum towards off-site provision) and the second is through the delivery of rural exception sites (RES) which are essentially small sites used for affordable housing that would not normally be released for development.
- Delivery of affordable housing through market housing schemes*
- 5.53 In relation to market housing, previously the Council has sought the provision of affordable housing on larger housing schemes of 15 or more in the main towns and from smaller schemes of 2 or more dwellings in the rest of the District. However, current national policy states that affordable housing should only be sought on larger sites of 11 or more dwellings or which have a combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000m². The exception to this is within designated rural areas such as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) where a lower threshold can be applied with schemes of 6 – 10 dwellings being required to make a financial contribution towards affordable housing off-site (commuted until after completion of the units within the development). Smaller schemes of 1-5 dwellings are not required to make any provision for affordable housing.

¹³ Peter Brett Associates – Partial SHMA update for West Oxfordshire (2016)

- 5.54 Given the high level of affordable housing need within the District the Council considers that it is reasonable to seek a financial contribution from schemes of 6-10 dwellings within the Cotswolds AONB. The Council considers that an appropriate way of calculating such a commuted sum is to base it on the size of the private, market homes that are proposed¹⁴ and charge on a £ per m² basis in the same way as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) operates. Our viability evidence suggests that alongside CIL typical developments of 6-10 units should be able to afford an affordable housing commuted sum of £100 per m². This figure will however be kept under review.
- 5.55 Thus for example, a scheme of 6 market houses each with a floor area of 100m² would be required to make an affordable housing financial contribution of £60,000 (£10,000 per unit). This payment will be deferred until after the scheme has been completed.
- 5.56 Affordable housing commuted sums received from developers will be put into the Council's enabling fund and used to subsidise the provision of affordable housing throughout the District including the potential acquisition of land to facilitate the delivery of community self-build schemes in appropriate locations (see Policy H5).
- 5.57 Outside of the Cotswolds AONB, despite the high level of affordable housing need identified, the Council is unable to seek financial contributions towards affordable housing from housing schemes of 6-10 units by virtue of the national policy position.
- 5.58 For larger development proposals involving 11 or more dwellings or which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000m² the Council will require the provision of affordable housing on-site unless it can be robustly demonstrated that this cannot be achieved for reasons of viability.
- 5.59 The proportion of affordable housing required will vary according to location reflecting the fact that in some parts of the District, development will have a greater value and be able to make a larger contribution. The Council's evidence suggests that the District falls into three zones. These are defined on the plan overleaf.
- 5.60 Having regard to viability and identified affordable housing need, the Council considers it reasonable and justifiable to seek on-site provision of 50% affordable housing in the high value zone, 40% in the medium value zone and 35% in the low value zone.
- 5.61 Whilst it would be easier to adopt a flat rate across the District, this would be overly simplistic and would not reflect the fact that the gross development value of residential scheme in say Woodstock or Burford is likely to be significantly higher than a scheme in Carterton or Chipping Norton.
- 5.62 It is however acknowledged that proposals need to be economically viable and the Council will reassess these requirements where this is demonstrated to be necessary by a viability assessment that has been independently validated. In particular, the Council's evidence suggests that a reduced level of affordable housing provision should apply to extra-care housing. This is reflected in the lower thresholds for such housing set out in Policy H3.
- 5.63 In considering residential development proposals the Council will have regard to the possibility of threshold dodging whereby land is promoted for a smaller number of dwellings than it is capable of accommodating in order to avoid a requirement to provide for affordable housing. In such instances, the Council will resist proposals that fail to make efficient use of land.

¹⁴ Gross Internal Area (GIA)

Figure 5a: Affordable housing zones



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5.64 With regard to the type and size of affordable homes, this will need to reflect the current housing strategy, local housing need and relevant site constraints. The Council will seek, as a guide, an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- 65% to be one and two bedroom homes to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small family households;
- 35% to be three and four bedroom homes.

5.65 In terms of the type of affordable housing to be provided, there is a significantly greater need for rented accommodation than for the various forms of intermediate housing. As such a ratio of 2:1 in favour of affordable rented homes will be generally sought however this is a general guide only and the precise mix will be determined on a case by case basis. Starter home provision will be supported in principle as part of a broader mix of affordable housing types. The Government has indicated that starter homes will generally comprise 20%¹⁵ of the overall scheme mix.

Other mechanisms for delivering affordable housing

5.66 In addition to securing new affordable housing through market housing schemes, the Council will welcome in principle other solutions to meeting the District's affordable housing need such as self-build. New build affordable homes contributing towards the District target will include those provided as an element of new residential development and additional homes proposed and built by housing associations or community trusts on other land.

5.67 The Council will also continue to identify suitable sites for affordable housing through rural exception sites (RES). This approach has been in operation throughout West Oxfordshire (outside Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) for over 20 years and has delivered over 350 new homes to meet needs which were not otherwise being met within the local community. This exception approach will remain available for 100% affordable housing schemes to meet specific local needs on land which would not be released for market housing.

5.68 The NPPF refers to the possibility of allowing some market housing in rural areas where this would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. Any such proposal will be considered against the relevant policies of the Local Plan including in particular Policy OS2: Locating development in the Right Places and Policy H2: Delivery of new homes.

5.69 Where the site is in a location that would not normally be considered appropriate for new housing, it will be for the developer or landowner to demonstrate not only why the site is suitable for housing, but also why a traditional rural exception site approach (i.e. 100% affordable housing) is not appropriate or achievable. In other words, they will need to demonstrate why the market housing is needed to subsidise the delivery of the affordable housing. In such cases, any market housing would be expected to be a subsidiary element of a predominantly affordable housing scheme.

¹⁵ The 20% requirement for starter homes is still to be confirmed by Government and therefore subject to potential change.

POLICY H3: **Affordable housing**

In order to address identified affordable housing needs, the Council will require 'qualifying' market housing schemes to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the District.

Within the Cotswolds AONB, housing schemes of 6-10 units and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1,000m² will be required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing off-site within the District. This commuted sum will be deferred until completion of the development to assist with viability.

Across the District as a whole, housing schemes of 11 or more units or which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000m² will be required to provide affordable housing on-site as a proportion of the market homes proposed as follows:

- High value zone (50%)
- Medium value zone (40%)
- Low value zone (35%)

The following levels of affordable housing provision will be applied in relation to sheltered housing and extra-care housing:

Sheltered housing

- High value zone (50%)
- Medium value zone (40%)
- Low value zone (35%)

Extra-care housing

- High value zone (45%)
- Medium value zone (35%)
- Low value zone (10%)

In circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing being sought would make a scheme unviable, a revised mix and type of housing will be considered before a lower level of affordable housing provision is accepted.

Where external funding is available it may be applied to schemes to ensure affordability of rental levels or to increase the number or to change tenure or type of homes to meet priority needs.

Affordable housing mix and tenure will be responsive to identified local needs and site specific opportunities. A financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing on other sites in West Oxfordshire in lieu of on-site provision may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that:

- It is not physically possible or feasible to provide affordable housing on the application site; or
- There is evidence that a separate site would more satisfactorily meet local housing need and contribute to the creation of mixed communities.

In some instances, a combination of on-site provision and a financial contribution may be appropriate.

West Oxfordshire District Council and its partners will work with parish councils, registered providers of affordable housing and local housing, community land and self-build trusts to identify additional suitable rural sites for small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specific local housing needs which cannot be met in any other way. All new homes on these sites will remain affordable in perpetuity to people in housing need who have a local connection with the parish or appropriate adjoining parishes. Sites will be well-related to the existing built-up areas of towns and villages. Where family homes are proposed priority will be given to locations within a reasonable walking distance of a primary school.

The Council will consider the inclusion of an element of market housing in rural exception sites (RES) provided it is demonstrated to be necessary to delivery (eg. by subsidising the affordable element). In such cases, any market housing would be expected to be a subsidiary element of a predominantly affordable housing scheme.

Type and mix of homes needed

- 5.70 Having determined the amount of housing to be provided and how it will be distributed across the District, we need to consider what type and mix of homes should be sought through the Local Plan.
- 5.71 There are a number of issues to address including the size of new homes needed (i.e. 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed etc.) the type of new homes needed (i.e. flats, terraced houses, semi-detached houses, detached etc.) and how the needs of different groups of people can best be met including older people, people with disabilities, younger people, families, those wishing to self-build their own home etc.
- 5.72 We deal with each of these issues in turn below.

The size of new homes needed – market housing

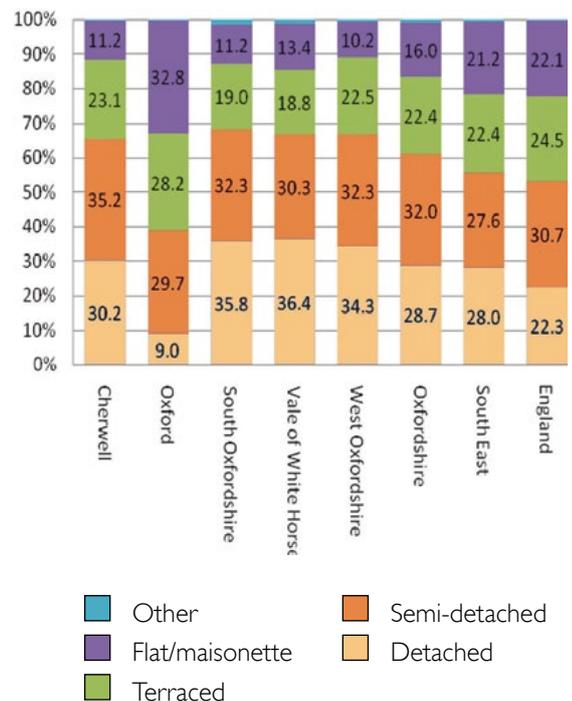
- 5.73 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is dominated by larger properties. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller homes available, the overall imbalance remains with the 2011 Census identifying that almost 70% of properties have 3 or more bedrooms. This is similar to the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole.
- 5.74 Previous evidence¹⁶ suggested that in order to create a more balanced housing stock, new housing developments should provide around 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+bed properties. More recent evidence¹⁷ suggests that future provision of market housing in Oxfordshire should be focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households.
- 5.75 As a general guide, it is suggested that market housing in West Oxfordshire should be sought in the following proportions:
- 4.8% 1-bed properties
 - 27.9% 2-bed properties
 - 43.4% 3-bed properties
 - 23.9% 4+bed properties

- 5.76 This suggests that the main focus should be 2 and 3-bed properties and to a lesser extent 4 bed and larger. We will consider this evidence as a starting point in relation to negotiations over housing mix taking into account the need to provide an appropriate balance of dwelling types and for development to be of a character that is appropriate for its location, in the interests of creating sustainable communities.

Type of homes needed

- 5.77 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable spread of different property types although there is a slight imbalance towards semi-detached and detached properties, the proportion of which is higher than the national and regional averages.

Figure 5b: Residential property types in Oxfordshire (2011 Census)



- 5.78 The Oxfordshire SHMA does not provide any guidance on future housing requirements by property type (only by size) but having regard to the current breakdown set out above, the Council will in general terms continue to seek a balanced mix of property types in future housing schemes across the District.

¹⁶ West Oxfordshire 2011 Housing Needs Assessment

¹⁷ Oxfordshire SHMA (2014)

Meeting the needs of specific groups

- 5.79 The NPPF requires local authorities to plan for a mix of housing having regard to the needs of different groups in the community such as, but not limited to; families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes.
- 5.80 The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) identifies a number of groups which may have housing needs that differ from those of the wider population including:
- Older persons;
 - People with disabilities;
 - Black and minority ethnic (BME) households;
 - Households with children;
 - Young people;
 - Students; and
 - Self-builders

Older persons

- 5.81 West Oxfordshire has a relatively old demographic profile reflecting the fact that it is an attractive District that people wish to remain living in or retire to. Between 1981 and 2011 the proportion of residents aged 60+ increased by 82% (11,900 people) and 18% of people are currently aged 65 and over (compared with 16% nationally).
- 5.82 Importantly, future projections suggest that the number of older people in West Oxfordshire will continue to increase. In the period 2011- 2031, the proportion aged 55+ is projected to increase by 54% with a particularly high increase in people aged 85+ (160%). This will be coupled with a significant increase in the number of people suffering from dementia and mobility problems. By 2040, older people aged over 60 are expected to make up a third of the population. An assessment by Oxfordshire County Council of older people's needs shows that while life expectancy is rising, more people are living into older age with disabilities - so for men in West Oxfordshire, disability free life expectancy at age 65 is 11.6 years, while for women it is 11.7 years.

- 5.83 However, not all older people will require specialist homes or provision for their needs; most of the rising number of older people will prefer to stay in the same home that they have lived in for many years. Indeed, many older people will not need, or necessarily seek, accommodation specifically for older people at any time in their lives. Generally, moves are made to a smaller home in order to reduce the costs associated with a larger family home or to move to a more accessible location closer to shops or services. Alternatively older people move to a house that is on one level or capable of a degree of adaption for mobility or health reasons, or simply to move to be closer to family members.
- 5.84 The Local Plan therefore has a key role to play in ensuring that suitable housing (and health care) is provided for older people. This is likely to be through a combination of specialist housing provision (e.g. retirement and extra-care housing) as well as ensuring that new homes are adaptable and allow people to stay in their own homes longer (eg. provision of wider doorways, lower windows etc).
- 5.85 In terms of specialist housing provision for older people there are a number of different types including:
- Sheltered/age exclusive housing;
 - Extra-care housing (also known as very-sheltered housing);
 - Close care or assisted living housing;
 - Care homes; and
 - Care homes with nursing (previously known as nursing homes)
- 5.86 There are currently around 614 older persons housing units in West Oxfordshire the majority of which (523) are in private market schemes with the remainder (91) provided in the affordable sector.¹⁸ Relative to the District's population this represents 66 units per 1,000 persons aged 75 and over, well below the county average (133 units per 1,000) and significantly below the national average (170 units per 1,000).

¹⁸ Oxfordshire SHMA (2014)

- 5.87 There is clearly a need to boost supply. The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) suggests that in order to achieve the current Oxfordshire average of 133 units per 1,000, an additional 1,891 new properties would need to be provided in West Oxfordshire in the period 2011 - 2031 (95 per year). To achieve the current national average of 170 units per 1,000, a total of 2,588 new properties would need to be provided (129 per year).
- 5.88 These are 'net' figures that take no account of replacement provision of existing accommodation that is no longer fit for purpose. The 'gross' need is therefore expected to be higher.
- 5.89 Whilst these figures are indicative only and should be treated with some caution, they clearly demonstrate that there will be an increasing need for specialist older persons housing in the District over the period of the Local Plan. The Council will therefore in line with Government practice guidance, count the provision of C2 uses (residential institutions) against the overall housing requirement and will seek to increase the supply of such housing by encouraging specific schemes in suitable, sustainable locations and seeking to ensure that older persons housing is provided including as part of the overall mix of development on larger developments.
- 5.90 We will also seek to ensure that new homes built in the District are able to be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of occupants as they get older and support people who require aids and adaptations in order to be able to stay in their own home. This will be achieved through the application of the optional building regulation standard M4 (2): Accessible and Adaptable dwellings on qualifying schemes as set out in Policy H4. Viability testing has shown this to be viable and therefore all housing developments of over 50 dwellings will be required to provide 25% of new dwellings as accessible and adaptable homes.
- 5.91 We will also:
- Support in principle the redevelopment of existing older persons accommodation that may be unsuitable and/or fails to comply with current legislative requirements;
 - Seek to effectively utilise the existing affordable housing stock and will support and encourage those in affordable housing who wish to down-size in order to help release larger affordable homes for younger households;
 - Seek to ensure enough subsidised or low cost housing of a decent quality is provided for those who cannot afford market prices;
 - Seek to facilitate the requirements of older owner-occupiers wishing to 'downsize' into non-specialist accommodation (e.g. bungalows); and
 - Work with the County Council, other local authorities and stakeholders in relation to the delivery of specialist housing for older people.
- People with disabilities
- 5.92 The SHMA suggests that across Oxfordshire as a whole, demographic trends are expected to lead to a significant growth in the population and number of households with disabilities over the period to 2031. The most recent information from Oxfordshire County Council shows that in West Oxfordshire over 20% of people over aged 65 were affected by a long-term health problem that was either related to old age, or had lasted for at least 12 months. A higher number, 25% are affected a little.
- 5.93 PANSI (Projecting Adults Needs & Service Information System) data estimates there will be 40,537 people with a serious and moderate physical disability aged between 18 and 64 in Oxfordshire by 2015. In West Oxfordshire, there will be 6,698 residents (17%) with a serious and moderate physical disability.

5.94 Oxfordshire County Council is aiming to deliver 390 homes for working age adults with various disabilities across Oxfordshire by 2020. Their strategy identifies¹⁹ that West Oxfordshire should be seeking to provide 63 of the overall 390 homes target with a particular focus on Witney.

5.95 The strategy envisages 3 main 'models' of delivery:

- Specially adapted, purpose built accommodation for groups of residents either in shared or self-contained homes;
- Purpose built wheelchair accessible homes, provided as part of the overall mix of housing on new developments;
- Conventional homes with limited adaptations and communal facilities but for groups of adults with a learning disability or mental health need to live in as a group.

5.96 In light of the identified needs outlined above, the Council will seek to increase the supply of housing for those with disabilities through a number of measures. This will range from encouraging the provision of specific purpose built properties to ensuring that a proportion of the homes provided as part of larger housing developments are built to high accessibility standards. This will be achieved through the application of the optional building regulation standard M4 (3): Wheelchair user dwellings, specifically a requirement to provide 5% of wheelchair adaptable dwellings on sites of over 50 dwellings. Where provided, these will be counted as contributing towards the 25% accessible and adaptable homes referred to in paragraph 5.77 above. The need for specialist housing on qualifying sites will be determined through a local register managed by the District / County Council. There may be some sites or types of development where provision may not be appropriate, for example non lift served flats. Our proposed approach is set out in Policy H4.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) households

5.97 The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) highlights black and minority ethnic (BME) households as potentially having particular housing needs. Notably, West Oxfordshire has a very low percentage of black or minority ethnic households (6.8%) when compared to Oxfordshire as a whole (15.4%) and the regional (13.9%) and national (19.3%) averages.

5.98 The SHMA concludes that across Oxfordshire as a whole, BME households appear to be typically younger and less likely to be owner occupiers. There is consequently, a greater reliance on the private rented sector. BME households are also more likely to be overcrowded and less likely to under-occupy dwellings. The SHMA suggests that the implications of this are more for housing strategy than planning.

5.99 Given the relatively small BME population of the District and the lack of clear actions identified for the planning system in the SHMA, we are not proposing any specific measures to address the housing needs of BME households other than in relation to our overall objective of securing a good, balanced mix of dwelling types and tenures to meet the needs of a range of different people (see Policy H4).

Gypsies and Travellers

5.100 There are a number of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople families living in West Oxfordshire on a range of specifically approved sites throughout the District and also in bricks and mortar. Planning has a role to play in facilitating the way of life for travellers, not least in ensuring there are appropriate sites, in suitable locations, available to meet their needs and, from which they can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.

¹⁹ Strategy for delivering an increased supply of specialist housing for adults with care and support needs in Oxfordshire – Oxfordshire County Council (May 2013).

- 5.101 The Government is aiming to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission to address under-provision and maintain an appropriate supply and, in doing so, reduce unauthorised sites, the antagonism between the settled and travelling communities and ensure greater fairness.
- 5.102 Local authorities formulate their own evidence base for the travelling communities' needs and use this to provide targets relating to pitch and plot requirements. In 2016 the Council commissioned a study into the accommodation needs of travellers in West Oxfordshire (2016 GTAA). The study covers the needs of Gypsies (including English, Scottish, Welsh and Romany Gypsies), Irish Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The study provides the evidence for Policies H7 and H8 on the travelling communities.
- 5.103 In 2015 the definition of 'traveller' was changed for planning related purposes to exclude those who have permanently ceased travelling. For those still travelling, Policies H7 and H8 are particularly relevant. For those that no longer meet the planning definition, the GTAA explains their needs will need to be addressed through alternative means, such as the SHMA and more general housing planning policies. The suggested level of need during the plan period is in the order of up to 24 additional pitches for non-travelling Gypsies and Travellers and up to 3 plots for Travelling Showpeople. Policy H4, and other appropriate policies in the Plan, will be used to help meet these possible requirements. This will include considering the potential for the strategic development sites to provide suitable areas for these communities.

Households with children

- 5.104 The SHMA provides some limited commentary on meeting the needs of families (i.e. any household with at least one dependent child). It suggests that across Oxfordshire, the number of children (aged under-15) is expected to increase markedly by around 38,000 in the period 2011 – 2031 (33%). In West Oxfordshire, according to the 2011 census there were 19,500 people aged 0 – 15 (18.6%) similar to the national and regional averages.
- 5.105 The SHMA highlights the fact that lone parents are households with children are about four times more likely than other households to be overcrowded and that other than for married couple households, levels of under-occupancy are very low. It states that households with children should be seen as a priority and that Councils should therefore seek to ensure that the housing offer meets the needs of such households, in particular the need to ensure a reasonable quality of housing in the private rented sector.
- 5.106 We will therefore seek to achieve a good, balanced mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures including market and affordable housing in order to ensure households with children are able to access suitable housing.

Service families

- 5.107 The SHMA does not consider the needs of service families in detail but with RAF Brize Norton located within the District this is an important consideration for West Oxfordshire. The Council works closely with the Ministry of Defence in order to understand the future needs associated with RAF Brize Norton including future accommodation requirements for service personnel and their families.

5.108 In 2012 the MOD announced that they needed fewer homes for service families than originally planned. 200 new homes were originally proposed to be built on the REEMA North site in Carterton although with a different mix of house types the number of dwellings could be increased. The REEMA Central site which had originally been reserved for service family housing has been partially released to the open market with the remainder to follow at a later date (See Section 9).

5.109 The needs of a number of service families are also met on the open market in rental or owner-occupied properties. We will therefore continue to work closely with the MOD to ensure that the accommodation needs of service families linked to RAF Brize Norton are catered for over the period of the Local Plan.

5.110 This will include consideration of the potential re-development of existing MOD housing stock in Carterton to provide a better quality housing offer and environmental enhancements more generally (see Section 9).

Young people

5.111 Providing for the needs of younger person households is an important consideration. The ability to retain young people in an area can assist in providing a more balanced demographic profile as well as providing a vital part of the local workforce. The SHMA highlights the fact that of those households that are headed by a younger person, very few are owner-occupiers and there is a particular reliance on the private rented sector and to a lesser degree, social rented housing.

5.112 It suggests that factors such as a balanced approach to housing in terms of bedroom sizes and property types, along with high standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will help younger households to access housing. There are very few HMOs in West Oxfordshire so this latter point is less relevant but we will seek to ensure a good, balanced mix of house types and tenures is provided in all new housing developments. The provision of affordable housing (Policy H3) including starter homes and support for self-build projects (Policy H5) will also help to meet the needs of younger people.

Students

5.113 The SHMA (2014) highlights the importance of student housing demand within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. It considers potential future growth in the student population and current plans to increase the supply of accommodation. The analysis is however centred largely around Oxford City and there are no conclusions of note reached in relation to West Oxfordshire.

5.114 Given the relative lack of higher education facilities in the District, student accommodation is not considered to be a key issue for West Oxfordshire and as such we do not propose any specific policies or proposals.

Summary

5.115 National policy requires future housing provision to take into account the needs of a broad range of groups of people. The above analysis has highlighted a number of key issues and considerations and these are reflected in Policy H4.

POLICY H4:

Type and mix of new homes

All residential developments will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of a good, balanced mix of property types and sizes.

Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposal would help create a more balanced housing stock within the District and meet the needs of a range of different groups having regard to specific local needs.

Particular support will be given to proposals for specialist housing for older people including but not restricted to, extra-care housing. Opportunities for extra care will be sought in the main and rural service centres and other locations with good access to services and facilities for older people.

In recognition of the ageing population the Council will also require larger housing developments of 50 or more units to provide a percentage of new homes as accessible and adaptable housing designed to meet Building Regulations Requirement M4(2). This will be a matter for negotiation but as a minimum the Council will seek the provision of at least 25% of market and affordable homes to this standard.

To support the anticipated increase in the number of people with disabilities (linked to the ageing population) the Council will require larger housing developments of 50 or more homes to provide a percentage of market and affordable homes as wheelchair adaptable dwellings designed to meet Building Regulation Requirement M4(3). This will be a matter for negotiation but as a minimum the Council will seek the provision of at least 5% of homes to this standard. Where wheelchair adaptable homes are provided they will be counted as contributing towards the 25% accessible and adaptable homes requirement.

The provision of specialist housing for those with a disability will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to other policies in this plan. The District Council will work with the County Council and other relevant partners to identify suitable sites and opportunities.

In recognition of the needs of households from the travelling communities who are no longer travelling, the Council will seek to ensure the provision of up to 24 additional pitches for non-travelling Gypsies and Travellers and up to 3 plots for Travelling Showpeople in the period to 2031. This will include consideration of all opportunities including within the strategic location for growth (SLG) and strategic development areas (SDAs) identified in the Local Plan.

Custom build housing

- 5.116 Custom build housing is where a builder is contracted by a home owner to create a 'custom built' home or where a private individual builds their home as a DIY 'self-build' project. This can range from single dwellings built for or by an individual to larger schemes with many homes built as custom or self-build housing.
- 5.117 The Government is massively supportive of custom build housing which is seen as a more affordable route to home ownership and an opportunity to create bespoke, well-designed and sustainably constructed new homes. It also offers opportunities to smaller builders and contractors, creating local jobs and contributing to the local economy.
- 5.118 In June 2014, the Government announced a £150m loan scheme that aims to provide around 10,000 serviced plots over the next 6-years. It has also endorsed an online self-build portal²⁰ to provide information to potential custom and self-builders.
- 5.119 In response to Government Guidance, the District holds and maintains a Register of Interest for those wishing to either self or custom build within West Oxfordshire. The Register enables the District to gauge the level of demand locally, to determine how many wish to build their own home following one of the several routes e.g. serviced plot or self-finish, examine how many potential self-builders meet the locally applied criteria to benefit from the District's enable role. These criteria include local connection, future occupation as sole residence, financial capacity etc.
- 5.120 The Government envisages that there are a number of ways in which demand for custom and self-build will be met including specific site allocations within local plans, policies within local plans that require developers to provide a proportion of land for custom and self-build and local authorities buying land and disposing of their own surplus assets. Potentially, local authorities will through these various measures need to offer a suitable and serviced plot to someone who has registered an interest within a prescribed period of time (eg. 3 years).
- 5.121 The SHMA (2014) provides some limited commentary on self-build in Oxfordshire, highlighting the fact that research is fairly limited including data about how many schemes are coming forward. It suggests that in policy terms there is some potential to encourage developers of large sites to designate parts of those sites as 'serviced plots' which can then be developed as self-build. It also highlights the financial challenge faced by those wishing to self-build with most self-build schemes commissioned by those with substantial savings rather than borrowings.
- 5.122 The District now holds and maintains a Register of those wishing to be involved in the development of their own home. The preferred routes include serviced plot, water tight shell, self-finish. To date the number of those registered with the District is 183. This is in addition to those potentially registered with site finding and specialist self-build agencies.
- 5.123 There is clearly a good level of demand for custom build and self-build housing in the District and the Council is keen to support increased delivery to promote greater diversity in the local housing stock, innovative design and more affordable and sustainable construction.

²⁰ www.selfbuildportal.org.uk

- 5.124 We will therefore implement a number of measures including:
- Continuing to establish an accurate picture of demand for custom and self-build in the District;
 - Offering support and advice to those wishing to undertake a custom/self-build project in the District;
 - Maintaining a database of those individuals and organisations who have expressed an interest in custom/self-build projects in the District;
 - Working with individuals and self-build groups to help identify suitable and deliverable sites including through the development of Neighbourhood Plans;
 - Endeavouring to offer a suitable plot to those individuals/organisations within a reasonable period of time;
 - Utilising affordable housing commuted sums secured under Policy H3 to acquire land in order to promote affordable custom/self-build projects;
 - Requiring a proportion of larger housing developments (100 or more dwellings) to set aside a proportion of their site for custom/self-build or to provide other suitable land available off-site for custom/self-build purposes; and
 - Encouraging the re-use of existing buildings through custom/self-build projects (see Policies OS2 and H2 and E3).

5.125 Our proposed approach is summarised in Policy H5. Where custom build involves or is delivered via a housing association, the scheme should comply with the definition and requirements set out at Policy H3: Affordable Housing.

POLICY H5:

Custom and self-build housing

In order to address the need for custom and self-build housing, the Council will require all housing developments of 100 or more dwellings to include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for this purpose. This can include the partial completion of units to be made available for self-finish.

As an alternative, the developer may provide serviced land for an equivalent number of custom and self-build plots in another suitable, sustainable location.

If any of the serviced plots/units offered for custom/self-build/self-finish remain unsold after 12 months marketing, they may be built out by the developer.

Only where it can be robustly demonstrated that the provision of on-site plots is unviable or cannot be achieved for some other reason and the developer is unable to make off-site provision will the Council waive the 5% requirement.

All schemes will be considered in accordance with the Council's custom/self-build Design Code.

The Council will generally control access to custom/self-build housing schemes by establishing and maintaining a Register of Interest of those who wish to become custom builders and meet relevant criteria.

Elsewhere, proposals for custom and self-build housing will be approved in suitable, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant policies of this plan including Policies OS2, H2 and E3.

Existing housing

- 5.126 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaptation. Alterations, extensions and sub-division of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.
- 5.127 In some instances, existing dwellings may come under pressure for redevelopment to alternative uses. In such cases the loss of a dwelling will only be supported where there is an overriding community benefit and/or the existing living accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- 5.128 Given the attraction of a rural home within commuting distance of London and more restrictive planning policies on new housing in small villages, hamlets and open countryside in particular, existing modest properties are invariably the subject of proposals for substantial extension or rebuild.
- 5.129 A large country house is a traditional feature of our countryside. However it is essential that the addition of substantial new buildings and associated activity creates a positive addition to the landscape and meets sustainability objectives in order to outweigh the loss of existing smaller homes. Replacement dwellings in small villages, hamlets or open countryside should be on a one for one basis only.
- 5.130 Consideration also needs to be given to the issue of 'empty homes' in particular properties that remain vacant for more than 6-months. Whilst this is not a significant issue for West Oxfordshire with less than 1% of the existing housing stock being classified as a long-term empty home, the District Council, in appropriate circumstances works with relevant organisations and property owners to seek to bring properties back into occupation.
- 5.131 Our approach is set out in Policy H6.

POLICY H6: Existing housing

Changes to existing housing will be managed to maintain sustainable communities and a high quality environment in accordance with the following principles:

- the loss of existing dwellings to other uses will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they are in an unsuitable location for housing, do not provide satisfactory living accommodation, are not needed to meet an identified local housing need, or the proposed use will make a positive contribution to local services and facilities;
- alterations, extensions or sub-division of existing dwellings will respect the character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect the environment of people living in or visiting that area. Sub-division of existing dwellings in the open countryside and small villages will be limited to large properties where continued residential use cannot be secured in any other way;
- proposals to replace an existing permanent dwelling which is not of historical or architectural value will be permitted on a one-for-one basis, provided the character and appearance of the surrounding area is not eroded, there would be no harmful impact on ecology or protected species and the replacement dwelling is of a reasonable scale relative to the original building.

The District Council, in appropriate circumstances, will work with relevant organisations and property owners to ensure the number of empty homes is kept to a minimum. Proposals to bring empty residential properties back into occupation will be favourably supported in principle.

Travelling communities

- 5.132 All Councils are required to make adequate provision to meet the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Councils should undertake an assessment of need and develop effective strategies to meet those needs through the identification of land for sites.
- 5.133 They should set 'pitch' targets for Gypsies and Travellers and 'plot' targets for Travelling Showpeople. The SHMA (2014) does not address the needs of travelling communities but the Council commissioned new evidence in 2016 to establish future accommodation requirements in the period up to 2031.
- 5.134 At present in West Oxfordshire there are eleven authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites, three in the northern half of the District (at Burford, Kingham and Chadlington) and eight in the southern half (Standlake, Alvescot, Minster Lovell, Weald, Carterton, Stanton Harcourt, Barnard Gate and Eynsham).
- 5.135 Most of the sites are small, accommodating one family. The Beeches, near Chadlington, and the site at Ting Tang Lane, near Minster Lovell, are the two largest sites with in excess of 20 and 23 pitches respectively. Other than The Furlong at Standlake which is owned and managed by Oxfordshire County Council, all the sites are privately run. There are four sites for Travelling Showpeople in the District, all privately owned, at: Cassington, Witney, Shilton and Freeland.
- 5.136 In terms of future requirements, in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, the most recent evidence suggests there is a theoretical need for around 19 additional pitches in the period up to 2031. For Travelling Showpeople there is a need for around 5 plots over the same period. The 5-year housing land supply requirement for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is 2 pitches and 3 plots respectively, based on known travelling households.
- 5.137 Investigation into where the 2 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers can be accommodated will be continued. Despite a call for sites (through the SHLAA/SHELAA process) no new sites have been put forward. Initial analysis of existing sites shows there is, however, potential for expansion and/or intensification. Now the scale of the need has been established, discussions will recommence with site owners.
- 5.138 The existing Travelling Showpeople site at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland, has been identified as suitable for limited expansion. Planning approval was given for 6 additional plots in March 2017.
- 5.139 In addition to the pitches and plots identified for the first 5 years, the criteria-based Policy H7 will help to bring forward accommodation to meet the needs of the travelling communities. It is worth noting that while the level of further provision is technically identified as up to 15 additional pitches, the recent study into accommodation needs has a note of caution. The study explains that, based on national evidence, only 10% of Gypsies and Travellers (but 70% of Travelling Showpeople) now meet the government's definition of the travelling communities. For Gypsies and Travellers, it is likely that the requirement beyond the first 5 years is likely to be closer to 2 additional pitches, rather than 15. For Travelling Showpeople, it is likely to be up to 1 additional plot. The accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who have permanently ceased travelling, and no longer meet the planning definition of 'traveller', will be considered under Policy H4.
- 5.140 Further potential for an additional site to meet the accommodation needs of the travelling communities will be considered as part of the future masterplan work of the Strategic Development Areas, especially the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village.

Cuckoowood Farm

- 5.141 Approval was given in 2009 for a private site to accommodate Travelling Showpeople on 6 plots at Cuckoowood Farm, south of Freeland. Although in open countryside, the site is near to the services and facilities at Eynsham and lies close to the A40, providing easy access to the main road network which is important for the transportation of fair equipment to venues throughout the country. As the peripheral hedgerow planting has become established, so the site has softened into the landscape.
- 5.142 A field adjoining this established site has been identified as appropriate for expansion. The site has capacity for a further 6 plots, each of which will be large enough for both showpeople accommodation and storage of equipment and will be separated by hedgerow planting. Development will be phased in order to ensure a continual 5-year deliverable supply of plots with 3 plots to be provided in the period 2016 - 2021 and any further provision to be made beyond 2021. Planning permission was given for the expansion of this site in 2017.
- 5.143 The landscape of this area is characterised by pockets of woodland and well-established hedgerows. Much of the proposed site's boundary already consists of hedgerows and trees and two sides are also surrounded by bunding. These features will need to be retained, enhanced and managed in the future to ensure that the site is well-screened, especially from the public right of way that runs along the western boundary. In addition, the northern part of the site should be planted to create a new woodland/copse of local, native species which will compliment Vincents Wood further to the north.
- 5.144 The increase in the overall size of the site will mean there are likely to be a substantial number of children living here. Land is identified for a formal recreation play area to serve both the existing and proposed residents.

POLICY H7: Travelling communities

West Oxfordshire will provide at least 5 pitches and 5 plots to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople respectively from 2016 – 2031.

To help achieve a five-year housing land supply, additional provision will be made through:

- Expansion and/or intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller sites for the provision of 1 – 2 pitches.
- Allocation of land at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland for an expanded showpeople's site to provide up to 6 plots (with 3 plots provided by 2021 and any remaining provision made beyond 2021).

To further ensure the availability of adequate accommodation for travelling communities we will also:

- safeguard existing sites
- extend existing sites where appropriate
- consider the scope to include specific provision as part of the larger strategic development areas including in particular the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village.
- bring forward new sites if required, either through planning permission or through the development plan process including allocations in neighbourhood plans.

New sites should meet the following criteria:

- be well located to the highway and public transport network, as well as having safe and convenient vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access to local services and facilities, especially schools, shops and healthcare;
- be of an appropriate location and scale not to have an adverse impact on environmental or heritage assets and the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- not conflict with the objectives of Green Belt or AONB designation;
- not be located in areas at flood risk; and
- be designed in accordance with Government's Good Practice guidance.

POLICY H8:

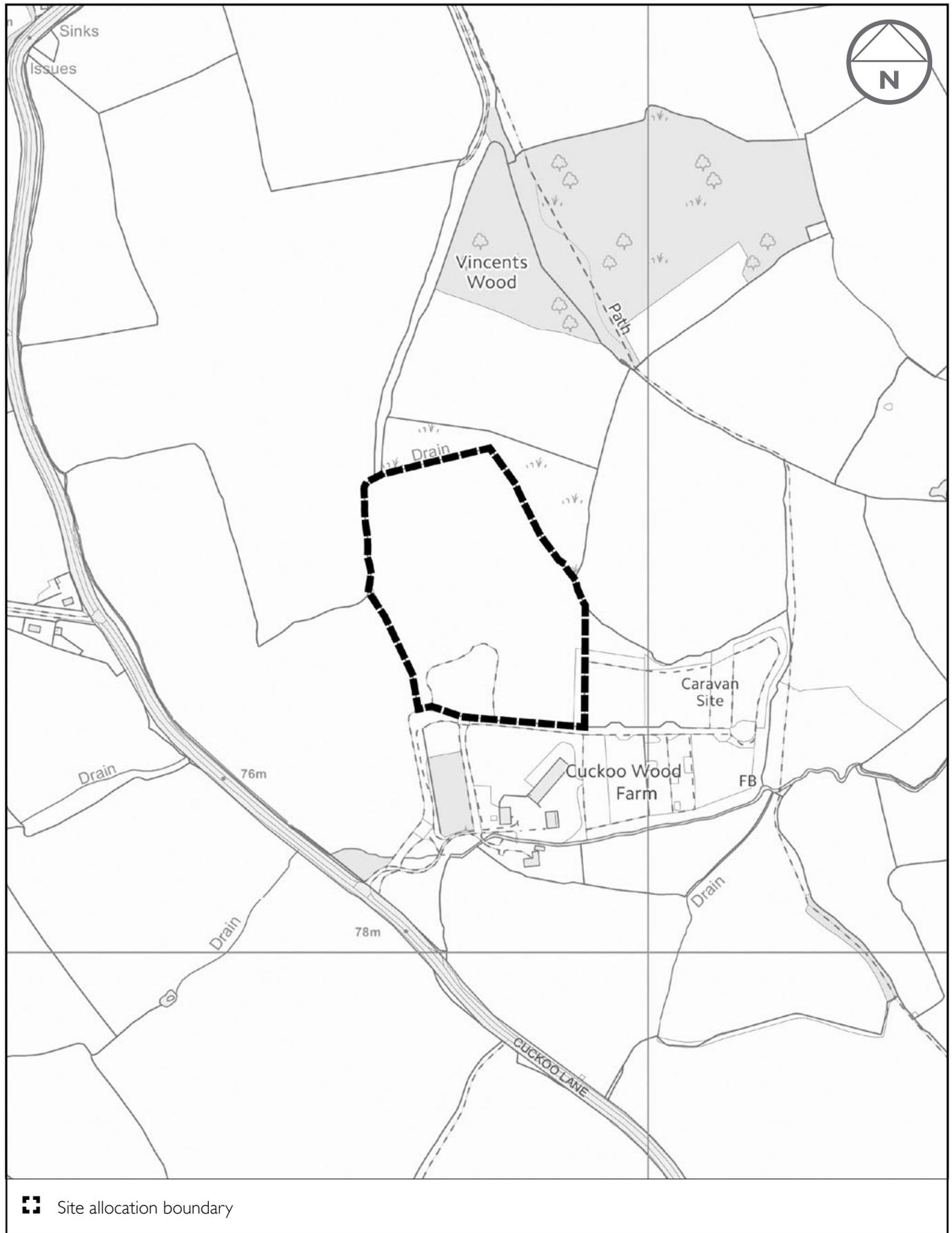
Land at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland

Land at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland to accommodate up to 6 plots for showpeople as an extension to the existing showpeople's site.

Proposals for development should be consistent with the following:

- a) provision of structural landscaping to comprise substantial boundary hedgerows and bunding on the western, northern and southern boundaries and a woodland/copse within the northern section of the site.
- b) provision of satisfactory vehicular access.
- c) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- d) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.
- e) provision of an area of open space, to include for children's play.

Figure 5c: Land at Cuckoowood Farm



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