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• PLANNING •

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Community Development Officer  
West Oxfordshire District Council  
Elmfield  
New Yatt Road  
Witney  
OX28 1PB

20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Response to Submission Draft Consultation of Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan 2031**

### **Land north of Jeffersons Piece, Charlbury**

Oxford & Country Planning act on behalf of Cottsway Housing Association, the largest housing provider in West Oxfordshire and a key partner of the District Council.

Our client controls land north of Jeffersons Piece and considers that this site has the potential to address a key issue for the town identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, namely the affordability of housing for local people. This representation is submitted in support of the aims, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan as they relate to housing needs, and to outline initial proposals for the site with a view to opening a dialogue with the Town Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the high cost of housing is creating a serious affordability problem, meaning that people who have grown up in the area cannot afford to live there. Section 5 of the document refers the conclusions of the Housing Need & Policy Analysis (Appendix A). One of these conclusions is that the Neighbourhood Plan policies should seek to address the affordability issue and ensure as far as possible that any housing provided should meet identified local needs.

This is reflected in *Policy CH1: Meeting the needs of the parish of Charlbury*. The policy states that housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining the built-up area will only be supported where there is convincing evidence that the scheme will meet specific local needs.... 'Mixed' proposals will only be supported where it is convincingly demonstrated that the market housing proposed is necessary for the scheme to be viable.

The Housing Needs Assessment 2018 commissioned by the Town Council concludes that there currently exists a need for some 23 affordable houses in the town over the next 5-year period.

Of course, this issue identified in Charlbury is reflected in many towns and villages across West Oxfordshire which our client is committed to addressing. Cottsway's development team delivers more than 160 affordable homes per year and has successfully provided new homes on a number sites

across the district. Cottsway would very much like to work with the Town Council in helping meet their housing needs through the potential development of the land at Jeffersons Piece.

The parcel of land is situated on the northern edge of the town and extends to around 1.9 hectares (about 4.7 acres). The site is a sloping pastoral field and is a well contained site bounded by trees and hedgerows on all sides. It is located immediately north of the properties and garages in Jeffersons Piece, where the site would be accessed from.

A full planning application (ref 17/02376/FUL) for 48 new homes was submitted on this site in 2017. This scheme submitted by Lagan Homes, included 29 open market houses and 19 affordable houses. The application was finally disposed of by the District Council and removed from the planning register in May 2018.

Cottsway is now considering a new proposal for the site, which is much smaller in scale. This would comprise of some 31 dwellings, the majority of which (about 75%) would be affordable homes to meet the needs of local people. In order for the scheme to be viable, eight of the houses would be open market units. The attached plan is an initial draft of how the site could be developed and is for purely illustrative purposes only (there have been no discussions with Council planning officers at this stage). The indicative affordable housing mix is as follows:

6 x 1 bed maisonettes; 5 x 2 bed houses; and 12 x 3 bed houses – Total 23 dwellings.

Our client considers that this significantly revised proposal for the land at Jefferson Piece represents an opportunity to help address the affordable housing needs for the town in line with the aims of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

We have copied our representation to Charlbury Town Council and our client would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposal in more detail with both the Town and District Council in the near future.

Kind regards



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Director

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Cc – Roger Clarke, Charlbury Town Clerk



