

To: Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: 27th July 2017

Executive Member: Board Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

Title: Detailed response to Scrutiny recommendations on university housing needs

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Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
<p>That options are explored through the new Local Plan 2036 processes relating to student accommodation, and that early discussions are sought with the two universities (and neighbouring authorities where relevant) aimed at building shared concerns and shared efforts to improve the housing situation in the city. Consideration should be given to:</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>April 2017 - I welcome the constructive and open dialogue with the two Universities about their accommodation needs, which have been held between officers, members and the two institutions over a prolonged period, and will continue to be held.</p> <p>I recognise the positive contribution that the Universities make to the city in terms of economic growth, vitality, and employment, and the City Council wants to continue to support them. This kind of engagement is exactly what this stage of the Local Plan is all about, as we work towards publishing the Preferred Options in June 2017.</p> <p>At present detailed evidence, technical work, consultation responses from last summer, and sustainability appraisal are all being considered, and will inform the direction of policies to be published in the Preferred Options. The evidence given by the Universities to the Scrutiny Committee, and the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations, will be included in that consideration.</p> <p>While that work is still ongoing it would not be appropriate to respond in detail at this stage to the precise proposals, other than to confirm that they are all being considered alongside all other proposals. That being said, there are a number of very useful and interesting proposals within the report which are being given very careful consideration as to whether they could be included in the Preferred Options document.</p> <p>Given that it is not possible at this stage to pre-empt the proposals that will be included in the Preferred Options document, but being aware of the detailed work that the Scrutiny Panel have done on this issue, I propose that a full and detailed response to each proposal in the Scrutiny Panel report is sent back to the Panel once the Preferred Options document has been published.</p>

a) Encouraging the University of Oxford to present proposals for accommodating postdocs in the city; (para. 4)		July 2017 – Officers have had a series of meetings with the University to discuss a range of issues relating to their operations in the city including how to address accommodation needs beyond undergraduates, such as post-docs and staff accommodation needs.
b) Allocating specific sites for new student accommodation for the two universities; (paras. 8a & 16)		July 2017 – Various sites are proposed to be explored further as potentially suitable for site allocations for student accommodation for the two universities. Some are existing allocations being rolled forward, and some are new sites which the landowner has promoted through the call for sites for the Local Plan. For example sites 006, 010, 012, 017, 021, 023, 027, 031, 044, 050, 054 and others. See Table 5 in Preferred Options document for the full list.
c) Limiting the amount of student accommodation allowed within any given geographical area; (para. 17)		July 2017 – Opt 21: <i>New student accommodation</i> The options considered include limiting the concentration of student accommodation in certain areas or relaxing policies to allow student accommodation in all areas. The Council's Preferred Option is to focus new purpose built student accommodation in areas close to the academic and other facilities such as public transport.
d) Encouraging the universities to provide accessible accommodation as part of any proposed new developments of student accommodation; para 18)		July 2017 – Opt 21: <i>New student accommodation</i> The Council's Preferred Option is to focus new student accommodation developments in accessible areas, close to facilities and public transport.
e) Exempting groups such as post-doctoral researchers and nursing and teaching students from the target of no more than 3,000 students from each university living outside of university-provided accommodation in the city, balanced by a reduction in the target figures; (paras. 2a, 8b & 19)		July 2017 – OPT 20 <i>Linking the delivery of new University academic facilities to the delivery of University provided residential accommodation</i> The options considered include reviewing the 3,000 target. The Council's Preferred Option is to adjust the figure to reflect the 2016 baseline, which would mean a new target of 1,500 University of Oxford full-time undergraduate and taught course post-graduate students, and 3,500 Oxford Brookes full-time undergraduate and taught course post-graduate degree students. These figures exclude students studying and working on placements, such as teaching and nursing students, and post-graduates on research-based courses.
f) Extending the targets for students living outside of provided accommodation to other large educational institutions based in the city; (para. 20)		July 2017 – Opt 7: <i>New academic floorspace for private colleges/language schools;</i> and Opt 21: <i>New student accommodation</i> The Preferred Options propose to restrict new purpose built student accommodation to the two universities, thereby limiting the provision of new purpose-built

		accommodation available to other large educational institutions based in Oxford. Those students will still be able to study in Oxford, but using homestays and existing accommodation of those institutions. This is combined with Preferred Options to limit the amount of new academic floorspace for those institutions. As such, there is no target for those institutions.
g) Limiting the use of new student accommodation to the two universities; (para. 21)		July 2017 – Opt 21: <i>New student accommodation</i> The options considered include restricting the occupiers of new student accommodation. The Council's Preferred Option is to tie new speculatively-built student accommodation to students of the University of Oxford and/or Oxford Brookes University only. This is a shift from the current policy position which seeks to restrict new accommodation only in terms of linking it to those students on courses of a year or more, which means that other institutions are still eligible.
h) Whether university students housed in non-university provided student housing should count towards the 3,000 target figure; (para. 22)		July 2017 – OPT 20 <i>Linking the delivery of new University academic facilities to the delivery of University provided residential accommodation</i> The options considered include reviewing the 3,000 target and how it is defined.
i) Encouraging private developers of student accommodation to work closely with the universities; (para. 23)		July 2017 – Opt 21: <i>New student accommodation</i> The options considered include restricting the occupiers of new student accommodation, to tie new speculatively-built student accommodation to students of the University of Oxford and/or Oxford Brookes University only. This would require private developers to work closely with the universities if they wish to bring forward development of student accommodation in Oxford.
j) Reviewing the local key worker definition to potentially include post-doctoral researchers, nursing and teaching students and lower-paid university support staff; (para. 24)		July 2017 – Opt 12: <i>Meeting intermediate housing or employment sector specific needs based on local affordability approaches</i> The Preferred Options review the definition of key worker, and the City Council's Preferred Option is to have a specific local affordability policy, pegged to local incomes and house prices, rather than to specific occupations or employment sectors. This would be fairer and clearer, and help to target those in greatest need. The Option to continue having 'key worker' as a specific sub-category of intermediate housing is rejected and not proposed to be taken forward.
k) Providing some flexibility to substitute some of the social rent planning		July 2017 – Opt 12: <i>Meeting intermediate housing or employment sector specific needs based on local affordability approaches</i>

<p>obligations with key worker housing obligations in order to encourage key worker housing schemes (including accommodation for post-doctoral researchers and lower-paid university support staff); (para. 25)</p>		<p>The Preferred Options propose that on specified sites, to allow schemes that are up to 100% intermediate housing, with reduced or no element of social rent homes. It is suggested that this could apply to University and Hospital Trust sites, to support key staff (as well as school campus sites or other staff accommodation schemes).</p>
<p>l) Providing additional flexibility in the balance of dwellings policy specifically for key worker housing schemes. (para. 26)</p>		<p>July 2017 – Opt 16: <i>Mix of dwelling sizes to maintain and deliver balanced communities ('balance of dwellings')</i> Opt 17: <i>Thresholds for mix of dwelling sizes ('balance of dwellings')</i> As set out in Opt 12 it is not proposed to carry forward 'key worker' as a specific category, but rather to define affordability based on income and house prices. Nonetheless the Preferred Options considers the balance of dwellings policy across all schemes, not just key worker, in terms of how the policy should be applied and which size sites it should apply to. The Council's Preferred Option is to raise the threshold at which the policy applies, so that a mix is only specified for larger strategic-scale developments (eg 25+ units), which is a shift from the current policy where the threshold is 10 units in the city and district centres, and 4 units in other areas. For those larger sites where the policy is triggered, then the Preferred Option is to continue to specify a dwelling size mix and to prioritise larger (3+ bed) units in key areas.</p>