

Chapter 3:

A pleasant place to live, delivering housing with a mixed and balanced community



It is important we try to provide for all types of household needs and circumstances, including families, single people, the elderly and those with special needs. Good quality, affordable housing helps enable stable and secure family lives. We can be healthier and happier if we have decent homes close to schools, healthcare and transport links. Good housing can improve our social, environmental and economic well-being. It helps create stronger communities that can attract investment and skilled workers.

Part 1: Meeting Housing Needs

3.1 The scale of new housing provision

To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes (as stated in the NPPF), it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

This Plan has clear strategic objectives that aim to create mixed and balanced communities, both across Oxford and at a more local level, within the overall priority of delivering new homes. The City Council will plan to encourage a range of tenancies and household types, with no one group being dominant over others. This helps to build sustainable, lifetime communities. Within this context, policies identify the size, type and tenure of homes required for different groups in the community (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

The City Council has taken some difficult decisions and made some bold choices in drafting the policies of this Plan, prioritising the delivery of housing whilst striking an appropriate balance with the other needs of a sustainable city. A comprehensive approach has been taken to identifying all possible deliverable sites for development. In this Plan the City Council has carefully considered the contribution that new policies on building heights, increased density, open spaces, parking levels and others can make to maximising the efficient use of land available for housing. The housing target is a minimum rather than maximum number of units. Where proposals are presented for housing development on unallocated brownfield sites, the City Council will take a positive approach, applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Policy S1).

The scale of new housing need

The urgent need for more homes and the constrained supply in Oxford is well documented and frequently features in the press and research studies¹. The constrained housing supply and increasing unaffordability of homes in Oxford have significant sustainability impacts for those living and working in the City. Housing provision is a key determinant in attracting and retaining people to support the economy of the city, and the wider region. The current shortage of housing in Oxford also has environmental and social impacts, such as the congestion on roads around the city caused by employees travelling into the city to work, and the disconnection of networks of family and friends as people move to more affordable areas to live.

The main evidence for housing need in Oxford continues to be the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was commissioned by the six Oxfordshire local authorities. This partnership of the 5 District Councils and the County Council forms the Oxfordshire Growth Board. The SHMA identifies the overall scale of housing need, as well as the mix of housing and range of tenures which the local population is likely to need in the 20 year period to 2031. It considers household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change. It also addresses the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing needs, and the needs of different groups in the community. The SHMA brings this information together to identify the 'objectively assessed need' (OAN) for each district within the 'housing market area'.

¹ Eg Cities Outlook 2018, Centre for Cities: <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18-01-12-Final-Full-Cities-Outlook-2018.pdf>

The Oxfordshire SHMA 2014 covers the period until 2031, so a roll-forward was commissioned by the City Council in order to understand housing need to 2036. The SHMA roll-forward has used the same methodology as the previous SHMA, but has used the most up-to-date household forecasts and has re-calculated the implications of economic growth. A new calculation of housing need based on the Government's standard methodology set out in 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places: Consultation Proposals' (2017) was not undertaken for a number of reasons. It is considered that exceptional circumstances justified the use of an alternative approach, as allowed for in the NPPF (paragraph 60). In particular all Oxfordshire Councils in this current round of local plans are working to deliver the housing need identified in the 2014 SHMA and it is important that Oxford's Plan is consistent with the plans prepared and made by other Councils, and that the preparation and adoption of the Plan is not delayed. Moreover, the Councils have received Growth Deal funding to deliver these homes. The SHMA roll-forward has reflected current and future demographic trends and market signals, which reflect Oxford's particularly young and dynamic population demographic.

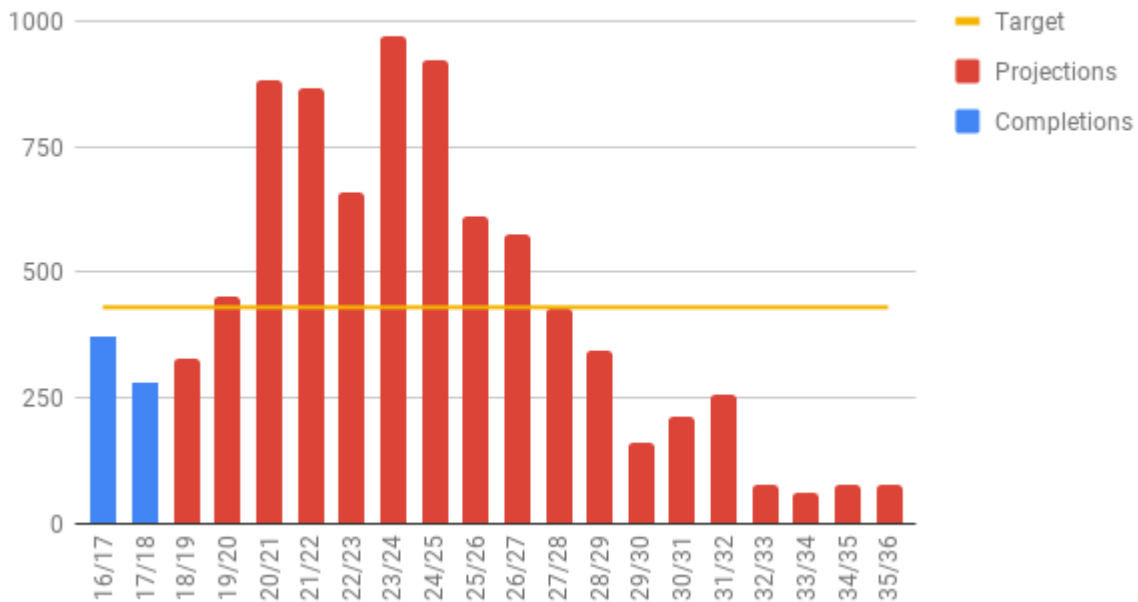
The 2018 SHMA roll-forward to 2036 found that, in order to meet Oxford's affordable housing need in full, based on a policy of 50% delivery of affordable housing, 1,356 dwellings per annum would be required. As identified above, affordability is a critical factor for Oxford. The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with Government, signed by all of the local authorities in Oxfordshire in February 2018, commits the Oxfordshire authorities to work together to deliver 100,000 homes in the 20 year period to 2031. The assumption built in to this overall figure was that 1,400 dwellings per annum were identified as required in Oxford to 2031. Therefore, the housing target remains as it was in the 2014 SHMA, namely 1,400 per annum. Furthermore, in Autumn 2017 the National Infrastructure Commissions (NIC) work on the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge corridor was published². This report identified the important economic potential of the corridor and its constituent clusters and the need for an additional 1 million new homes along the corridor to be provided in the period to 2050. The NPPF says that the NIC recommendations and the government's response to them will be a material consideration in future planning decisions. The housing which is being planned for through this Local Plan is important in contributing to meeting the target for the corridor.

Setting a capacity-based housing target

The need for new homes for Oxford over the plan period to meet affordable housing need and the commitments of the growth deal is much higher than the city can realistically accommodate within its administrative boundaries. However there are very significant constraints on the capacity of the city – physically with the city's tight administrative boundary and Green Belt, and environmentally with large areas of national or international biodiversity interest and areas within flood zone 3b functional flood plain, as well as heritage and townscape considerations. The Oxford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) assesses the availability, suitability and likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.

² Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc, National Infrastructure Commission

Housing Trajectory 2016-2036



In recognition of these significant constraints and limitations Oxford City Council has taken the pragmatic and realistic decision, in consultation with neighbouring authorities, to set a capacity-based housing target. This rolls-forward the prior recognition by Inspectors for the previous Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and the Oxford Core Strategy, which both used a constraint and capacity-based target. As such this Plan sets a capacity based housing target. This provides for a minimum housing target of 8,620 new homes to be delivered by 2036. This reflects the capacity and availability of land/sites in the city, the need to provide for a mix of homes to support the growth of sustainable communities, the need to provide land for other essential uses (such as employment, retail, health and education facilities, and other community and leisure facilities) and the need to respect the historic, built, and natural environment of the city. A 10% discount has also been applied to the total capacity figure calculated in the HELAA to reflect historic rates of non-delivery of sites.

Managing Oxford's unmet housing need

In 2016 the Oxfordshire Growth Board confirmed that Oxford was unable to meet its proportion of the SHMA figures due to the constrained nature of Oxford. For Oxford the OAN in the 2014 SHMA is a range of between 24,000 to 32,000 additional new homes required for the period 2011 to 2031 (or 1200 to 1600 per year). The approach taken by the Oxfordshire Growth Board was that the mid-point of this range should be taken as the starting point for assessing the level of need and unmet need (i.e. 28,000). Based upon extensive evidence, the Oxfordshire Growth Board agreed an apportionment of homes to be provided within each of the districts. This agreement was signed by all but one of the district councils. The assumed capacity for Oxford was 10,000 dwellings. The Local Plans for the other Oxfordshire districts are delivering 13,100 dwellings to meet Oxford's unmet need, **as follows:**

Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review: Oxford's unmet needs	4,400 (Plan submitted March 2018, Examination Autumn 2018)
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033	3,750 (Plan yet to be submitted)
Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2	2,200 (Examination July 2018)
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	2,750 (Main mods 2017)

Total provision towards Oxford's unmet needs by 2031	13,100
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The Oxfordshire authorities have committed to producing a new Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) for Oxfordshire for the period to 2050. The JSSP will provide the strategic planning framework for Oxfordshire and will be submitted for examination by March 2020. The JSSP will deal with the key strategic planning matters for Oxfordshire; it will deal with the key elements relating to housing and economic growth needs and the infrastructure to support it. This will include dealing with any objectively assessed housing need from Oxford in the period 2031-50 which cannot be met within Oxford's administrative boundary, and the apportionment of homes provided in other districts.

Policy H1: The scale of new housing provision

Provision will be made for at least 8620 new homes to be built in Oxford over the plan period 2016-2036. This equates to a delivery of 431 dwellings per annum.

This will be achieved by:

- a) making site allocations in this Plan (see Chapter 9 site allocations); and
- b) promoting the efficient use and development of land/sites, including higher densities and building heights in appropriate locations (see Chapter 6 on Heritage and Design); and
- c) ensuring that all new housing developments contribute to the creation and/or maintenance of mixed and balanced communities.

Housing will be delivered from the following sources:

Deliverable sites from the HELAA	7600
Windfalls	60pa x17 = 1,020
Total 2016-2036	8620

3.2 Delivering affordable homes

The provision of affordable homes is a key element of creating and maintaining mixed and balanced communities. One of the biggest issues facing residents in Oxford is the unaffordability of homes, to rent or to buy. Oxford is one of the least affordable places in the country, resulting from a combination of high land values, reducing land availability, and a shortage of homes. This means that housing is so expensive in absolute terms and compared to average salaries, that many people are priced out of the market. As such, delivering housing that is affordable in Oxford is a key priority of the City Council to help ensure that Oxford is a sustainable and inclusive city.

Social rent (the most discounted form of affordable housing to rent) is the only option for many people. It is also the form of housing targeted to those in greatest housing need. If this option is unavailable, people who are unable to afford alternative tenures may resort to living in sub-standard or overcrowded housing conditions, or may have to move out of the city altogether in order to find more suitable and affordable accommodation. For this reason, of the 50% affordable housing requirement, 40% is expected to be social rented housing.

The delivery of genuinely affordable housing has long been a priority of the City Council. In successive Plans the City Council has adopted a series of policies that require the delivery of a high percentage of affordable housing on site from larger schemes, and requires contributions towards the cost of delivering affordable housing on smaller sites and from commercial development.

Monitoring shows that the City Council has been successful in securing delivery of affordable homes through these mechanisms³.

Securing new affordable housing on sites as part of larger developments is one way that homes can be provided. The Council will therefore seek that on residential development sites of 10 or more units, a proportion of affordable housing is provided on-site. For smaller residential developments of 4-9 units a financial contribution will be sought in lieu of on-site provision. For residential uses where onsite provision may not be appropriate (e.g. student accommodation) then a financial contribution will be sought.

Affordable housing must be truly affordable to those that need it. The Government defines affordable housing as comprising *social rent, affordable rented, and intermediate housing* (such as shared ownership, starter homes and rent to buy) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. However the high land values and the affordability gap in Oxford is so extreme that many of the models used elsewhere for making housing more affordable, do not achieve genuine affordability for people looking to rent or to buy in Oxford. The Housing Tenancy Strategy⁴ looks at overall earnings and tenure costs in Oxford. The benchmark for affordability in this study is that rent and/or mortgage costs should be 35% or less of net household income. Some affordable home ownership models may not be affordable in Oxford or may only benefit a very small portion of households. The Government's definition of affordable rent is 80% of market rents. Affordable rent in Oxford exceeds Local Housing Allowance levels and cannot be considered genuinely affordable in Oxford. In Oxford, to achieve genuine affordability as set out in the Housing Tenancy Strategy, rents would need to be further reduced from 80% of market rents. Of the 50% affordable housing requirement, 10% is expected to be intermediate housing that is genuinely affordable in Oxford.

The City Council recognises the role of small-scale house builders in delivering new homes in Oxford, and the importance of small sites to the supply of new housing, the majority of which are sites of less than 10 homes due to the urban and constrained nature of sites in Oxford. The City Council has tested its approach, including undertaking viability study to assess the level of affordable housing contribution that could reasonably be required from new residential developments. This has shown that the affordable housing requirements, as set out in the policy to be viable (in light of all other policy requirements), including the contributions required from smaller developments. Owing to Oxford's significant need for affordable housing and because the majority of Oxford's housing is delivered from small sites, contributions will be required from sites of 4-9 units. These sites have made significant contributions to delivering affordable housing, and they will be needed in future to help deliver affordable housing.

³ AMR https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20067/planning_policy/746/annual_monitoring_report

⁴ Tenancy Strategy 2018-2023- Appendix c to be updated annually

Policy H2: Delivering affordable homes

Planning permission will only be granted for residential development if affordable homes are provided in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) Contributions from self-contained residential developments (C2 and C3, including retirement homes, sheltered housing, but excluding student accommodation and employer-linked housing):
 - i) Affordable homes from larger sites:
Where sites* have a capacity for 10 or more homes (gross) or exceed 0.5 ha, a minimum of 50% of units on a site should be provided as homes that are truly affordable in the context of the Oxford housing market (defined in the Glossary). At least 40% of the overall number of units on a site should be provided as on-site social rented dwellings. The remaining element of the affordable housing may be provided as intermediate forms of housing provided that they are affordable in the Oxford market. The affordable homes must be provided as part of the same development (“on-site”) to ensure a balanced community. Where affordable housing is provided onsite it should incorporate a mix of unit sizes (see policy H4 on housing mix).
 - ii) Affordable homes through financial contributions from smaller sites:
Where sites* have a capacity of 4-9 homes (gross), a financial contribution will be sought towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in Oxford. The contribution required will be equivalent to 15% of the gross development value (see Appendix 3.1).
**site area includes everything within the red line boundary of the planning application, which may include existing properties which are being materially altered.*
- b) For new student accommodation of 20 student units (or 4 self-contained student units) , a financial contribution should be secured towards delivering affordable housing elsewhere in Oxford. The contribution will be calculated using the formula in Appendix 3.2. Alternatively, the affordable housing contribution can be provided on-site where both the City Council and the applicant agree that this provision is appropriate. For mixed-use developments of student accommodation with general housing a pro-rata approach will be used to determine whether a contribution is required, and how much this should be.

If an applicant can demonstrate particular circumstances that justify the need for a viability assessment, and through an open book exercise demonstrate the affordable housing requirement to be unviable, a cascade approach should be worked through with the City Council until development is viable, as set out in Appendix 3.1. PPG para 7

Across all types of development, where the number of dwellings proposed falls below the relevant thresholds set out above to require affordable housing, the Council will consider whether or not the site reasonably has capacity to provide the number of dwellings that would trigger a requirement to make a contribution towards affordable housing. This is to ensure that developers may not circumvent the policy requirement by artificially subdividing sites or an inefficient use of land.

This policy will apply to all types of residential development including conversions and changes of use.

* See Appendix 3.3 for more details

3.3 Employer-linked affordable housing

Employers in Oxford are facing significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff as a result of the lack of availability and affordability of housing. There is not only a shortage of homes in Oxford, but a shortage of homes that are affordable to local people working in Oxford. Many of these workers are unable to afford market housing or even private rented accommodation in the City. Many people find themselves living outside of Oxford with expensive and time consuming commutes into the city, or living in shared accommodation in Oxford that is too small for their needs. People are discouraged from taking jobs in Oxford if they cannot afford to live close enough to their place of work. People with no option but to rent a room in a house-share prevents them from moving on with their lives with a partner or family.

As a result many employers, including critical services such as the NHS, are having recruitment and retention difficulties. Assisting employers based in Oxford with recruitment and retention problems would support the Local Plan objectives in three ways: economic (productivity of the employer and local investment); housing (provision of affordable housing); and sustainability (opportunity to live closer to place for work, increased energy efficiency and reduced emissions).

This policy provides an alternative approach to that of Policy H2 on affordable housing. On named sites it would allow employers to address their own recruitment and retention issues on their own land by providing housing for their employees at a rent affordable to them. If employers can deliver 100% homes for rent at a level that is genuinely affordable to their employees, in perpetuity, on their sites as employer-linked accommodation then this could free up social rented homes or places on the housing waiting list and would help the employer address their recruitment difficulties. Employers important for Oxford were identified and contacted to find interest in this policy. The policy is restricted to specified sites as listed in Appendix 3.4. For most of the specified sites, employer-linked housing will only be one element of uses, for example hospital uses will be retained on the hospital sites. If market housing is also to be provided, policy H2 will apply to that element of the housing.

By exempting these developments from the normal requirements for affordable homes, the City Council is offering a significant opportunity for those employers to provide for their own needs and address the sector of society between those able to access traditional affordable housing and those able to access market housing for sale or rent. Application of this alternative approach is dependent on a series of criteria that collectively ensure that benefits truly outweigh the compromises. For example, the employer-linked housing must meet many of the features of traditional affordable housing and be available to a true cross-section of employees.

It is important that that the housing provided through this policy remains affordable in perpetuity and the City Council will secure this through a legal agreement. In the event that over time, the employer no longer has a need for the employer linked housing, the legal agreement will also ensure that 50% of the units are transferred to a registered provider or the City Council's housing company as affordable housing, with at least 40% as social rented tenure, and not sold on the open market. This claw-back approach will ensure that the city does not lose out on the provision of valuable affordable housing (one of the main objectives of this Plan) through misuse of this policy or changing circumstances over time.

Policy H3: Employer-linked affordable housing

Planning permission will be granted on specific sites (as listed in Appendix 3.4) for affordable housing for rent. On these sites an affordable housing approach will need to be agreed with the Council setting out how the proposed affordable homes will be developed and managed by the employers (or their development partners on their behalf) to meet the housing needs of their employees. Where this policy is applied the standard affordable housing requirements of Policy H2 will not apply, except to any market housing element on the site.

All the following criteria must be met to apply this policy:

- a) the employer has an agreed affordable housing approach in place setting out access criteria and eligibility, rent policy and rent levels, approved by the City Council and reviewed every five years; and
- b) 100% of the housing should be available to be occupied by those employees who meet the requirements of the affordable housing approach agreed with the council and be available in perpetuity; and
- c) the occupation of such housing will be limited to households where at least one member works for the employer linked to the site (for the duration of their employment). This also applies to social care workers who work for but are not employed directly by Oxfordshire County Council and to some NHS staff.
- d) an occupancy register should be kept and made available for inspection by the City Council at any time; and
- e) planning applications must be accompanied by a detailed explanation and justification of the approach proposed and the mechanisms for securing the requirements of this policy.

A legal agreement will be required to secure the benefits of this policy. In addition the legal agreement will be used to:

- f) agree the allocations policy;
- g) ensure that in periods where there are vacant units for more than 6 months the employer works with the City Council's housing team who will ensure those units are offered to those on the housing register;
- h) agree that if the employer finds they no longer have a need for the housing 50% of the housing must be managed by a Registered Provider or the City Council's housing company, with 40% retained for social rent.

Part 2: Creating a balanced and mixed community

3.4 Mix of dwelling sizes

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for a mix of homes based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. In addition, local authorities must identify the size, type, tenure and range of homes that is required to reflect local needs to ensure that mixed and balanced communities are created.

The mix of dwelling sizes in Oxford differs from the surrounding areas as it tends to be higher density development and typically smaller homes, with a higher than average proportion of 1 and 2 bed properties (43% compared to 34% across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area, HMA)

It is particularly important that a range of affordable housing types come forward, in order that specific needs can be met. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies the

particular need for affordable homes. This evidence, alongside that provided by the mix of unit sizes required according to the affordable housing register (together taking into account factors such as the need to downsize and the existing housing stock) has informed the % requirements in Policy H4.

Policy H4: Mix of dwelling sizes

Planning permission will be granted for residential development that is demonstrated to deliver a balanced mix of dwelling sizes to meet a range housing needs and create mixed and balanced communities.

Proposals for 25 or more homes (gross) (C3 residential), or sites of 0.5 ha. and greater, and which are outside of the city centre or district centres, will be expected to comply with the following mix of unit sizes for the affordable element, where it is feasible:

- 1 bedroom homes: 20-30%
- 2 bedroom homes: 30-40%
- 3 bedroom homes: 20-40%
- 4 bedroom homes: 5-10%
- 5+ bedroom homes: 3-5%

Sites below the threshold or within the city centre or a district centre should demonstrate how the proposal has had regard to local housing demand, including for affordable housing demonstrated by the housing register.

3.5 Development involving loss of dwellings

Given the scale of the objectively assessed housing need in Oxford it will be important to ensure that the existing stock of homes is protected, particularly those that are best suited for family living; otherwise the benefits of building new housing would be undermined. However, the lack of available land and sites can constrain development of important community facilities needed locally.

The policy approach is to resist any net loss of any dwelling, but with some flexibility to allow a loss where there are exceptional justifications. Some flexibility is important to allow facilities important to the local community (those identified in Policy H5) to come forward. Often these uses will be classed as 'town centre uses', which attract moderately large numbers of people, in which case it will be expected that they will be located in the city centre or a district centre, or can demonstrate that a sequential approach has been followed.

Policy H5: Development involving loss of dwellings

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that results in the net loss of one or more self-contained dwellings on a site, including family homes (loss of an HMO converted from a self-contained dwelling would be considered a loss of a self-contained dwelling), except in one of the following circumstances:

- a) where essential modernisation is proposed to make living accommodation acceptable and it can be shown that loss of a unit is essential for operational reasons or to secure space standards; or
- b) a change of use of a C3 dwelling or dwellings to a non-self-contained C2 extra care, specialist or supported housing, sheltered accommodation or care home is proposed; or
- c) a change of use of a dwelling to form a primary health care facility, children's nursery or community hub providing community benefits and for which the applicant can demonstrate a local need. In such cases, the following criteria should all be satisfied:
 - i) it must be demonstrated that the unit retains capacity to be turned back into a residential unit in future; and
 - ii) the scale and nature of the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and with the surrounding area, and is not likely to give rise to unacceptable impacts and effects from noise, nuisance, traffic, or on-street parking.

3.6 Houses in Multiple Occupation

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a shared house occupied by three or more unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. It is estimated that 20% of Oxford's population live in an HMO indicating the important role they play in meeting housing needs in Oxford. For many people, HMO offer the only available and affordable solution than renting individually or buying a property when prices are so high in Oxford.

In some areas of Oxford however, high concentrations of HMO are resulting in changes to the character of the local area, and can contribute to local parking problems and large numbers of transient households. This has led to concerns in some communities that their communities are becoming unbalanced because the number of short-term tenants with less-established community ties has increased.

In February 2012 an Article 4 Direction was brought into force that means that planning permission is also now required in Oxford for change of use of a C3 dwelling house to a C4 'small' HMO with 3-6 occupiers.

Purpose-built HMO could help to reduce some of the potential management issues or neighbour conflicts, because issues like car and cycle parking and bin storage would be fully addressed at the planning application stage and properly integrated into the design rather than existing buildings having to be adapted or retrofitted. Being designed for the purpose, they will also meet space standards and current building regulations. Purpose-built HMO in appropriate locations could also help to provide staff accommodation for key employers which have highlighted the issues with recruitment and retention resulting from affordability issues.

The policy approach is designed to manage how and where new HMO are allowed by setting criteria to control how they are provided and managed and by restricting HMO numbers where there is already a high concentration of existing HMO. The City Council will use its planning powers and the

opportunities provided by the Article 4 direction to prevent over-concentration of HMO in areas where there are already significant numbers. The City Council considers that more than 20% of buildings in HMO use within a 100 metre length of street will result in over-concentration.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the property fully complies with its 'Amenities and Facilities for Houses in Multiple Occupation: Good Practice Guidance' or any Oxford City Council publication that updates or supersedes this. It is important that adequate provision should be made for refuse storage and collection. Cycle and car parking policy for HMOs is set out in Policies T4 and T6.

Policy H6: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Planning permission, where sought for the change of use of a dwelling in Use Class C3 to an HMO, will only be granted where:

- a) the proportion of buildings used in full or part as an HMO within 100 metres of street length either side of the application site does not exceed 20%; and
- b) the development complies with the space standards set out in Policy H15; and
- c) the development complies with the City Council's good practice guidance on HMO amenities and facilities, or any equivalent replacement document.

For the purposes of this policy, street length is defined as:

- the frontage either side of the proposed development, including frontage that wraps around corners or that is broken by a road or footpath; and
- the frontage either side of the point directly opposite the proposed development, including frontage that wraps around corners or that is broken by a road or footpath; and
- all buildings opposite the frontages described above.

Appendix 3.5 illustrates how this will be applied.

Applications for changes from C4 HMO to a Sui Generis HMO must be compliant with points b and c above.

Planning permission will be granted for new purpose-built Houses in Multiple Occupation, where they are in accordance with the above criteria.

3.7 Community-led and self-build housing

Self-build and custom housebuilding is a key element of the government's agenda to increase supply and tackle the housing crisis. Self-build and custom housebuilding is defined in the Housing and Planning Act as: *"...the building or completion by— (a) individuals, (b) associations of individuals, or (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. But it does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person.*

As required by the Self Build and Custom House Building Act 2015, the City Council keeps a register of individuals and associations who have expressed an interest in acquiring serviced plots for self and custom build. In May 2018 there were 52 entries on the Register. The intention of the Act is that LPAs grant suitable development permission for serviced plots to match demand on their register, although there is no mechanism for ensuring applications come forward.

Community-led housing projects can be delivered through a number of approaches, including group self-build and cohousing. Community-led housing requires that meaningful community engagement occurs throughout the process, with the local community group or organisation ultimately owning or managing the homes to the benefit of the local area/specified community group. It can provide many benefits, for example enabling communities to deliver projects that meet local needs, giving greater social benefits including community support for older people.

The approach of the policy is to help encourage sufficient self-build and custom housebuilding to come forward to meet demand, to support community-led housing, and to guide decisions on applications that come forward for these housing types. It is anticipated that proposals for community-led housing will include shared outdoor amenity space, as allowed for in Policy H16 and the car parking standards, as allowed for in Policy T4.

Policy H7: Community-led housing and self-build housing

There are several organised groups with ambitions for providing community-led housing in Oxford. Proposals for community-led housing will be supported because of the benefits they are expected to bring in terms of community cohesion and sustainable development.

Proposals for self-build housing will be supported as a way of enabling people to meet their own housing needs.

On residential sites of 50 units or more, 5% of the site area developed for residential should be made available as self-build plots. Employer-linked housing, student accommodation, C2 accommodation and residential development in conversions or on brownfield sites where only flatted development is provided are excluded from this requirement. Plots will be part of the 50% market housing element of the scheme, unless they are to be conditioned to be brought forward as housing that meets the affordable housing definition. Plots should have services (water, foul drainage and electricity supply) to the boundary and access to the public highway. Plots should also have surface water drainage, telecommunications services, and gas (or district heating) where available.

A legal agreement will be used to ensure that if the self-build plots have not sold after 12 months of marketing, then dwellings should be built and brought forward in the normal way, in accordance with other policies including regarding affordable housing and housing mix.

Part 3: Providing for specialist housing needs

3.8 Student accommodation

The large number of students resident in Oxford has an impact on the availability of general market housing. Students who live outside purpose-built accommodation tend to house-share in the private rental market. This affects the availability and costs of larger houses in the general market. However, if developing student accommodation were to be given a higher priority than general housing then this could compromise the delivery of housing in Oxford, and in particular the delivery of affordable housing. It is important that policies are in place to control these uses, particularly as they often compete for the same sites.

The Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply in Oxford includes a baseline analysis of the current structure of the student population, its current accommodation, and the future plans of the different educational institutions. Growth of students at each university of 1-2% per annum is

expected. The Assessment also found that 37% of all students in Oxford are at the various non-university institutions. Of the institutions that responded to the survey, 6 were found to own or long-term lease purpose-built accommodation, with a total number of rooms of 530. A further 1,504 rooms in purpose-built student accommodation were found to be short-leased to these institutions. This includes the use of university accommodation for summer school students during the holidays. Several institutions had plans to increase provision of purpose-built student accommodation. While some of this is off-site accommodation, much of it is within the institutions' main academic sites.

Location of new student accommodation and occupancy restrictions

It is appropriate that some additional student accommodation should continue to be provided in order to meet the need generated by the two universities increasing the number of full time students. Accommodating university students in purpose-built halls and other university-provided accommodation can help to reduce the demand from students on the general housing stock. However there is a very limited number of sites in Oxford and the priority of the Local Plan is to deliver general housing on suitable sites. Aiming to accommodate all students in purpose-built student accommodation would therefore conflict with the overall strategy and vision for Oxford, which is to balance different needs and particularly to maximise provision of general and affordable housing. It is also the case that not all students will choose to live in university-provided accommodation. Furthermore, student halls will not be appropriate in all locations because of their potential adverse impact on local communities.

The policy approach aims to ensure new student accommodation is built only in suitable locations, and is limited to those on courses of a year or more who are receiving the greatest and longest term educational benefit. It prioritises students of the two universities to assist with the economic aims of the Plan in supporting the universities. Student accommodation should be limited in occupancy to students of the two universities. This is compliant with the Plan's economic strategy as outlined in Chapter 2. This is to achieve the best balance between competing demands and to be clear about priorities for the use of scarce resources in the city.

Linking the delivery of new/redeveloped and refurbished university academic facilities to the delivery of university provided residential accommodation

In order to balance competing demands in Oxford, the policy approach is to restrict the number of students that each university is permitted to have living outside of university-provided accommodation. This will be achieved by not permitting new, redeveloped or refurbished academic floorspace unless the university has fewer than the threshold number of student numbers living outside of university-provided accommodation. The policy applies to university students on full-time taught degree courses of an academic year or more. These are the categories of student most suited to living in student accommodation. Student teachers, medical students and post-graduate research students (who could also be viewed as employees of the university) are amongst those categories of students not covered by the policy. These students help support key economic sectors and services in Oxford, might be working on placements outside of the city for much of their course (for example teaching and nursing students) and have very different accommodation needs. The policy approach acknowledges that accommodation needs of undergraduates, postgraduates and staff and those on work placements are all different and should be addressed individually. It is anticipated that the use of the Employer Linked Housing Policy H3 will help to meet some of these housing needs.

Most of the University of Oxford's growth is expected to be in post-graduate students, both taught and research. Oxford Brookes University in recent years has seen increased growth in undergraduate and full-time students, and fewer students from within Oxfordshire (who are more likely to live at

home). Therefore, despite increases in provision of accommodation by Oxford Brookes University there has also been a significant increase in the number of students living outside of university accommodation. To reflect the current situation, the policy allows for no more than 2,500 University of Oxford full-time taught degree students and no more than 3,500 Oxford Brookes University full-time taught degree course students to live outside of university-provided accommodation. This will ensure any increase in students resulting from improved academic accommodation will be matched by increased accommodation provision. Because of the number of new rooms expected to come forward in the next few years, these thresholds will reduce to 1,500 University of Oxford students by 2022 and 3,000 Oxford Brookes University students by 2022. These figures reflect what it is considered can reasonably be achieved, with consideration of sites already in the pipeline, or allocated and able to come forward. These thresholds will be reconsidered as part of the Local Plan review cycle.

The reference to students not living in accommodation provided by either University of Oxford or Oxford Brookes University excludes those students who were resident in Oxford before applying to study at the university and who continue to live at their home address while studying.

Indoor and outdoor amenity space

Communal space is important for residents of student accommodation. Shared indoor space ensures that occupants have space to gather, socialise and hold events. The nature of provision will depend on the scale of development, and could be a common room, or an informal lobby area.

Loss of student accommodation

It is important that existing student accommodation sites are not lost to other uses. Proposals that would lead to the loss of student accommodation will only be acceptable if an equivalent amount of new student accommodation is available for occupancy, within a reasonable and acceptable timeframe, by students of the same university or institution. The new provision must take into account the mix, occupancy and affordability of the rooms being lost.

Vacation uses

Policy H8 limits occupation to full-time students enrolled on courses of one academic year (including vacation periods). This restriction does not apply outside the semester or term-time. This ensures the opportunity for efficient use of the buildings for short-stay visitors, such as conference delegates or summer language school students. However, it is important that these visitors are also managed and that the institution undertakes to sign a management agreement with short-stay visitors, which includes reference to not bringing a car into Oxford (allowing use of park and ride sites only).

Management and parking restrictions

It is important that student accommodation is well managed such that it results in no unacceptable impact on amenity for local residents, including through any increase in cars brought into an area. Only operational and disabled parking should be provided for new student accommodation. Operational parking should be available for students and their families, for a limited period, arriving and departing at the start and end of semesters or terms. Appropriate management controls will be secured, including an undertaking that students do not bring cars to Oxford. The City Council will seek management controls to be secured by planning conditions or obligations which commit the operator to getting an undertaking from their tenants, which will be monitored and enforced by the landlord.

Policy H8: Provision of new student accommodation

Planning permission will only be granted for student accommodation in the following locations:

- on or adjacent to an existing* university or college campus or academic site, or hospital and research site, and only if the use during university terms or semesters is to accommodate students being taught or conducting research at that site; or
- In the city centre or a district centre; or
- On a site which is allocated in the development plan to potentially include student accommodation.

Planning permission will only be granted for student accommodation if:

- a) student accommodation will be restricted in occupation to full-time students enrolled in courses of one academic year or more; and
- b) new student accommodation (other than accommodation developed by an institution on a campus site) will be restricted in occupation in perpetuity to students attending the University of Oxford, Ruskin College or Oxford Brookes University; and
- c) for developments of 20 or more bedrooms, the design includes indoor communal amenity space for students to gather and socialise; and
- d) a management regime has been agreed with the City Council that will be implemented on first occupation of the development (to be secured by a planning obligation); and
- e) the development complies with parking standards that allow only operational and disabled parking, and the developer undertakes and provides a mechanism to prevent residents from parking their cars anywhere on the site, and anywhere in Oxford (unless a disabled vehicle is required), which the developer shall thereafter monitor and enforce; and
- f) a management strategy is agreed if it is intended there will be occupants other than students of the named institutions outside of term times.

Planning permission will not be granted for developments that would lead to the loss of student accommodation unless new student accommodation is available for occupancy, within a reasonable and acceptable timeframe, by students of the same university or institution. New accommodation should be equivalent in amount, mix and affordability to the rooms being lost.

*An existing university or college campus or academic site is one that exists at the time the Plan is adopted.

Policy H9: Linking the delivery of new/redeveloped and refurbished university academic facilities to the delivery of university provided residential accommodation

Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic, research or administrative accommodation for the University of Oxford where it can be demonstrated that the number of their full-time taught course students living in Oxford in non-university-provided accommodation does not exceed 2,500 at the time of the application. This threshold will be reduced to 1,500 at 01 April 2022.

Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic or administrative accommodation for Oxford Brookes University where it can be demonstrated that the number of their full-time taught course students living in Oxford in non-university-provided accommodation does not exceed 3,500 at the time of the application. This threshold will be reduced

to 3,000 at 01 April 2022.

The reference to students not living in accommodation provided by either University of Oxford or Oxford Brookes University excludes those students who were resident in Oxford before applying to study at the university and who continue to live at their pre-application home address while studying.

3.10 Accessible and adaptable homes

Achieving mixed and balanced communities requires the City Council to plan for people's different needs. The City Council wishes to see new homes built that are accessible to all who may wish to live in them, and visit them, including those with disabilities.

It is important to consider the demands and requirements people will have from their homes, and how these will change over the plan period. In particular, addressing how homes can be made adaptable to the changing needs of their inhabitants will be an important consideration. These changes include adaptations in the size and composition of households, the potential for adult children and older parents moving back in to the family home, and an ageing population. Ensuring all new homes are adaptable is also a more efficient use of resources as a home that is adaptable will have a longer functional life.

Oxford has a relatively young population compared to neighbouring districts and the UK, mainly because of the large number of students. The trend of Oxford having a younger population than average is set to continue, but people are living longer and there will be an increase in the number of older people resident in the city, particularly those over 75. As it is projected that Oxford will have a greater proportion of older residents making up its population, there will be changing housing requirements over the Plan period. Providing opportunities for residents to maintain their independence is very important and can considerably alleviate pressure on health and social care. In addition, there are around 18,000 people (12.4% of the population) in Oxford with long a term health problem or disability. Some of those will need specialist adaptations to their homes, so providing housing that is adaptable will play an important role in ensuring that these people have an adequate choice of homes available to them.

The government introduced an optional Building Regulation requirement in 'Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings' in March 2017. Local authorities can adopt a policy to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability through Requirement M4(2) Accessible and adaptable dwellings and/or M4(3) Wheelchair user dwellings.

Policy H10: Accessible and adaptable homes

Proposals for residential development should ensure that all affordable dwellings and 15% of general market dwellings are constructed to the Category 2 standard as set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M4. 5% of all dwellings on sites of 4 or more dwellings should be provided to Category 3 standards (or at least 1 dwelling for sites below 20 units).

3.11 Older persons and specialist and supported living accommodation

Many people with disabilities are likely to want to live in their own homes. However, other households may require more specialist housing designed to meet their needs, which may include

extra-care or Registered Care Homes. The County Council's strategy is to seek to provide more community based alternatives to Registered Care Homes, rather than increasing provision of them. Additional extra care units in the city would help to achieve this aspiration. Specialist dementia care schemes are being developed across the County to meet countywide needs. Needs for particular groups such as those requiring care homes offering specialist nursing for people with dementia could potentially be met in the city by provision of specialist units within any new extra care scheme, for example.

Specialist housing may be self-contained (C3) or non-self-contained (C2), and can include:

- retirement housing- usually new build housing focussing on older owner-occupiers (and including affordable homes), suitable for those who wish to downsize;
- sheltered housing- self-contained accommodation with an emergency alarm system, communal facilities and sometimes a resident warden;
- Extra-Care housing- this has additional care support for residents who may be less independent. It may be aimed at older people or younger people with particular care needs, and can be delivered as affordable housing and also be available for owner-occupiers;
- Residential Care schemes such as nursing homes. These may be for older people, or other groups requiring specialist nursing, for example people with dementia.
- Supported living schemes such as those provided for people who have mental or physical disabilities and who require a resident support worker.

The Oxfordshire SHMA found relatively little need for additional provision of specialist housing for older people in Oxford, with a net need in the 20-year period to 2031 of 33 units. In 2016 the City Council undertook a review of older person's accommodation in Oxford. The review considered the current provision of sheltered and other housing options for older people aged 55+ in Oxford, alongside the competing needs. The review found that there is a range of sheltered and general needs accommodation provided in Oxford. Demand and take-up is relatively low, and the waiting list for extra care schemes is relatively short. The review states: "*it would appear that the current level of supply in Oxford is generally meeting the current level of demand for this type of accommodation (that is extra care).*" One recommendation of the review was that, given the rising life expectancy and quality of health in older age groups, that the City Council should focus on accommodating older people aged 75+ and those persons who are younger but with significant health needs, and this would be expected to free up enough homes to ensure needs can be met.

Although there is not a significant current need for additional specialist older persons or care accommodation, there is still expected to be a need for additional provision of care accommodation during the Plan period, including of specialised dementia-care housing. Therefore, existing extra-care accommodation should be protected unless it is to be replaced elsewhere or unless it can be shown that it is surplus to requirements. Also, provision of new extra-care and elderly persons' accommodation is generally supported. It is important it is well designed, with good access to local facilities, and that it is well integrated into a mixed community.

Policy H11: Older persons and specialist and supported living accommodation

Planning permission for elderly-persons and supported and specialist care accommodation will only be granted where it:

- a) is located with good access to local facilities and services including public transport, shops and healthcare facilities; and
- b) is located close to or as part of a mixed community and will contribute positively to the creation and maintenance of mixed and balanced communities; and
- c) is appropriate for its intended residents and the neighbourhood in terms of form, scale and

- design; and
- d) includes gardens and amenity space of appropriate size and quality; and
- e) meets the affordable housing requirements of Policy H2.

Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing specialist care accommodation unless it can be demonstrated that provision is to be replaced or that there is not a need for the facility. This may be secured by a legal agreement.

3.12 Accommodation for travelling communities

The Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2017 assesses current and future needs for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. Because Oxford has no existing sites, there are therefore no waiting lists that can be used to demonstrate demand. Demand can also be measured by assessing whether there are members of the travelling community living in bricks and mortar. The Assessment concluded is that there is no current or forecast need for sites in Oxford. If sites do come forward in the city, they will be judged against the criteria in the following policy as well as all other relevant policies of the Plan, for example Green Belt policy.

Policy H12: Homes for travelling communities

Planning permission will only be granted for residential pitches in Oxford for gypsy, traveller, and travelling showpeople if all of the following criteria are met:

- a) sites have adequate accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to facilities and services including shops, healthcare, education and employment; and
- b) sites are acceptable in respect of vehicular access, parking and services and there is adequate access for emergency services; and
- c) there is adequate access to or provision of facilities and servicing, including water supply, electricity and disposal facilities for sewage and waste; and
- d) the development site is not a biodiversity site, scheduled monument, registered park and garden or public open space; and
- e) sites are not located in Flood Zones 3a or 3b; and
- f) sites are located, and can be managed, so as not to result in any significant conflict with existing land uses; and
- g) the proposed development will not cause any adverse visual impacts.

3.13 Homes for boat dwellers

Residential boats and their dwellers on both permanent and temporary visitor moorings, contribute to the cultural and housing diversity of Oxford and provide a type of accommodation that can be more affordable. Much of the boat-dwelling community relies on the existence of residential moorings, which are defined as having planning permission for long-term mooring in a fixed location, and for occupation as a household's sole or main residence.

Furthermore, there are boat-dwellers whose transitory nature generates a significant demand for the supply of temporary moorings with a range of appropriate restrictions on length of stay. This group includes those who identify as Bargee Travellers as well as those who continuously cruise through Oxford city and neighbouring areas.

A dedicated Oxford Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment 2018 was undertaken to better understand current provision of moorings and services and to determine need. The study

showed that there is a demand/need for 41 new residential moorings in Oxford. This demand relates to the numbers of people already using unauthorised moorings as residential moorings. Efforts to meet this need will include creation of new residential moorings with access to adequate services, but also by providing social housing accommodation suitable for those currently living in unauthorised moorings. This may even be more affordable for people than obtaining a mooring, with a suitable boat, in an authorised residential mooring.

There are not many potentially suitable new sites for moorings within Oxford, because of constraints such as the need to maintain safe navigation on the main channel of the Thames and Cherwell. However, by multi-agency working with navigation authorities and landowners, there is potential to increase the number of residential moorings. In particular, working to dredge some existing sites would allow new space for moorings, and working with landowners to change some visitor moorings to residential moorings would also help to meet needs. The needs assessment also identified that temporary moorings with access to vital services such as potable water and waste disposal, and suitable for a range of visitors and length of stay, could also have a role to play.

The following policy sets out criteria against which potential new moorings will be assessed. Regard should be had to other policies of the Plan, and some have particular relevance, especially that for proposals in Green Belt a 'very special circumstances' case will need to be demonstrated. Mooring spaces for permanent moorings must enable a suitable and safe living environment. The potential impact of the development, for example on Green Belt and biodiversity, should also be considered. It is important that new residential moorings do not conflict with the Canal and River Trust's or the Environment Agency's operational requirements or interfere with navigational safety. The Environment Agency is responsible for the management of the River Thames, River Cherwell and other river channels that join their main course. The Canal and River Trust is responsible for the management of the Oxford Canal. Both have set out policies on the approach to residential mooring on the waterways they manage. The Environment Agency maintains a policy of not allowing permanent moorings on the main channel of the River Thames and supports the creation of new residential moorings in off-river channels and basins.

Policy H13: Homes for boat dwellers

Planning permission will only be granted for new residential moorings on Oxford's waterways where all of the following criteria are met:

- a) they do not have negative impacts on navigation and navigational safety or operational requirements of the waterway; and
- b) the biodiversity of the water, its margins and nearby nature conservation sites will be maintained or enhanced; and
- c) there is adequate access for emergency services to ensure safety; and
- d) sites have adequate accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to facilities and services including shops, healthcare, education and employment; and
- e) there is adequate access to or provision of facilities and servicing, including water supply, electricity and disposal facilities for sewage and waste; and
- f) use of any adjacent paths will not be impeded; and
- g) the proposed development will not cause any adverse visual impacts or restrict the ambition for increased access to and opportunities to enjoy enhanced water related infrastructure facilities for all residents .

Planning permission will be granted for additional temporary visitor moorings only where residential moorings are not suitable and provided they:

- h) do not cause environmental damage or nuisance; and

- i) do not interfere with navigation; and
- j) make adequate provision for refuse and sewage disposal facilities. Any new refuse and sewage disposal points should be sited so as not to detract from the canal or river scene.

Part 4: Ensuring a good quality living environment for our residents

3.14 Privacy, daylight and sunlight

Ensuring all homes are built with adequate privacy, daylight and sunlight (internal and external) helps to ensure the wellbeing of residents. It is also important to consider the impacts on neighbouring residential properties to ensure they do not lose their sense of privacy. This is particularly important in the context of Oxford, where high density development is expected in order to make efficient use of land.

When planning new developments, regard should always be paid to the impact of windows overlooking other homes' windows (including French windows and patio doors) and gardens. Potential for unacceptable overlooking will depend on the proximity of windows to neighbours' habitable rooms and gardens and the angles of views and gardens.

New homes' access to daylight and sunlight will depend both on the way new and existing buildings relate to one another, and the orientation of windows in relation to the path of the sun. In particular, windows that are overshadowed by buildings, walls, trees or hedges, or that are north-facing, will receive less light. The policy approach will ensure that new development provides adequate daylight and privacy, and will not reduce privacy and daylight in existing development to an unacceptable level.

Policy H14: Privacy, daylight, and sunlight

Planning permission will only be granted for new development that provides reasonable privacy, daylight and sunlight for occupants of both existing and new homes. Proposals should demonstrate consideration of all of the following criteria:

- a) whether the degree of overlooking to and from neighbouring properties or gardens resulting from a proposed development significantly compromises the privacy of either existing or new homes (or existing other uses where there might be a safeguarding concern, particularly schools); and
- b) the orientation of windows in both existing and new development in respect of access to daylight, sunlight and solar gain (i.e. natural heating from direct sunlight); and
- c) existing and proposed walls, hedges, trees and fences, in respect of protecting or creating privacy, and also in respect of their impact on overshadowing both existing and new development; and

To assess access to privacy, sunlight and daylight, the 25° and 45° guidelines will be used, as illustrated in Appendix 3.6, alongside other material factors. On constrained sites with proposals for specialist accommodation, developers may use other methods to demonstrate that dwellings will receive adequate daylight.

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that has an overbearing effect on existing homes.

3.15 Internal space standards

It is important to ensure that new homes are of an adequate size and layout to provide high quality, functional homes that meet the needs of a wide range of people, and take into account how those needs might change over time. This should apply to development at all scales, from large strategic sites down to infill development, which represents an important contribution to meeting Oxford's housing need.

The increasing pressure to deliver homes leads to increased pressure to deliver smaller homes. This could result in housing that is unacceptable in terms of internal space because it doesn't offer occupiers appropriate living standards or meet the national aim that everyone should have access to a decent home. The pressure to make efficient use of land, and the fact that dense development is to be encouraged, makes it particularly necessary to ensure that the internal living environment of new homes is adequate.

The government introduced a nationally described space standard in March 2015. Local authorities now have the option to adopt the nationally described space standards, or have no space standard at all; space standards cannot be set locally. The City Council has carefully considered the local need for space standards and the viability impact of taking such an approach and decided to adopt the nationally described standards.

This will ensure that new developments are designed and built to provide adequate space for occupants. It will be important to ensure that designs maximise the useable space within housing, through functional layout, and provide scope to adapt and modify housing to meet future requirements. The demand for housing in Oxford means that a small proportion of larger and family homes will be provided in the form of flats or apartments; ensuring adequate space and quality environments will play a crucial role in changing the perception of apartments and their suitability as family homes.

Policy H15: Internal space standards

Planning permission will only be granted for new dwellings that provide good quality living accommodation for the intended use. All proposals for new build market and affordable homes (across all tenures) must comply with the MHCLG's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard Level 1⁵.

The standards for bedroom sizes and dimensions will be applied to new-build HMOs and other communal accommodation including extra care housing and student accommodation.

For properties converted to HMO, bedroom sizes should be in accordance with the Government's mandatory minimum room sizes for licensed HMO⁶.

3.16 Outdoor amenity space standards

Provision of outdoor amenity space brings many benefits, including to biodiversity, permeable surfaces and the health and wellbeing of residents. Outdoor amenity space enhances development and the area surrounding the development. Where high density development is expected and where many sites are infill development, standards for outdoor amenity space become increasingly

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111167359/regulation/2>

important in order to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents. However, flexibility is also important so that design can respond to the often complicated needs of infill and mixed development sites and to ensure maximum use of the outdoor amenity space that is provided.

New homes should provide some open space that allows the occupants to enjoy fresh air and light in privacy. Where appropriate, balconies or private terraces should be provided for flats. A private garden can be shared between flats, although all 3 bedroom flats should have direct access to an area of private amenity space. Houses with 2 or more bedrooms should provide direct access to outdoor amenity space with adequate space for children to play in, and for family activities. This should be equivalent in size to the original footprint of the dwelling. It could be provided as shared amenity space, although there should always be an area of private amenity space. Private outdoor areas should allow space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with reasonable circulation, which will require a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres deep by 3 metres long.

There are many important considerations in the design of usable and attractive private amenity space. Public and private space should be clearly delineated through the use of landscaping and design, without the need for signs. Orientation to ensure adequate sunlight will affect the usability of the space, although should be considered in terms of the whole fabric of the design. Different types of space should be designed into the same larger communal space, with attention to providing areas to play, sit, shelter, sunny areas and grass. Communal outdoor amenity space should be adaptable to changing needs, allowing opportunities for residents to influence the design of their amenity space and introduce food growing areas if desired. However as there may be little interest in gardening amongst residents so easily maintained communal spaces will be important, which are uncluttered and have high quality, resilient materials and trees and other low-maintenance planting.

Policy DH1: 'High quality design' should also be referred to when designing outdoor amenity space.

Policy H16: Outdoor amenity space standards

Planning permission will only be granted for dwellings that have direct and convenient access to an area of private open space (in addition to bin or bike storage space), to meet the following specifications:

- a) 1 or 2 bedroom flats and maisonettes should provide either a private balcony or terrace of usable level space, or direct access to a private or shared garden;
- b) flats and maisonettes of 3 or more bedrooms must provide either a private balcony or terrace of useable level space with a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres depth by 3 metres length, or, in the case of ground floor flats, direct access to a private garden or shared garden with some private space. These private outdoor areas should allow space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with reasonable circulation, which will require a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres depth by 3 metres length;
- c) houses of 1 or more bedrooms should provide a private garden, of adequate size and proportions for the size of house proposed, which will be considered to be at least equivalent in size to the original building footprint. Where a directly accessible private outside area is provided, the remaining requirement for outdoor amenity space could be met by provision of shared private amenity space. The private outdoor areas should allow space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with reasonable circulation, which will require a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres deep by 3 metres long.
- d) the following factors will be material in assessing whether adequate space has been provided:
 - i) the location and context of the development, in relation to the layout of existing

- residential plots, and proximity to public open space; and
- ii) the orientation of the outdoor area in relation to the path of the sun;
 - iii) the degree to which enclosure and overlooking impact on the proposed new dwellings and any neighbouring dwellings; and
 - iv) the overall shape, access to and usability of the whole space to be provided; and
 - v) clear delineation between public and private space; and
 - vi) for communal spaces that there is a variety of space, including provision of space to sit and to play, and that space is adaptable to the changing needs of residents, being easy to maintain with resilient materials, but with opportunities for communal gardening or food growing.