

# Chapter 2- A Healthy Inclusive City to Live In

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## Glossary

**Affordable housing** – This comprises of Social Rent, Affordable Rented, and intermediate housing (with varying levels of ownership of the home) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. The high property and rental values in Oxford are so extreme that many of the models for affordable housing do not achieve genuine affordability for people looking to rent or buy in Oxford. The most recent Tenancy Strategy will be used to assess whether proposed forms of affordable housing are genuinely affordable in Oxford. Affordable housing will also comply with one or more of the following definitions:

**a. Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: i) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent (see separate definition) or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); ii) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider. This may also include employer-linked housing); and iii) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for

rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

**b. Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Income restrictions should be used to limit a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those who have maximum household incomes of £80,000 a year or less (or £90,000 a year or less in Greater London).

**c. Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

**d. Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

**Contaminated land** – Where substances are causing or could cause: significant harm to people; property or protected species, significant pollution of surface waters (for example lakes and rivers); or groundwater or harm to people as a result of radioactivity.

**Demographic** – The measures (such as age, gender and income) of a specific group of people.

**Employer-linked affordable housing** - Housing that is provided on specified sites by key employers in the city for staff carrying out their work. The housing should be rented at levels that are affordable to a cross-section of the key employer's employees, and should be available at Affordable Rent levels in perpetuity.

**Flood zones** - Areas with different probabilities of flooding as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change:

**Zone 1 (low probability)** - Land having a less than 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding.

**Zone 2 (medium probability)** - Land having between a 1% and 0.1% annual probability of river flooding; or land having between a 0.5% and 0.1% annual probability of sea flooding.

**Zone 3a (high probability)** - Land having a 1% or greater annual probability of river flooding; or Land having a 0.5% or greater annual probability of sea.

**Zone 3b (the functional floodplain)** - Land where water from rivers or the sea has to flow or be stored in times of flood. This is land that is designed to flood.

**Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment** - A strategic assessment reviewing the supply of potential sites and their capacity to meet future needs for housing, and for economic growth.

**Housing Delivery Test** – A check run by the Government to check whether the level of housing delivery in each planning authority is meeting the housing requirement set out in the local plan.

**Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO)** - A house, flat or building will be a house in multiple occupation (HMO) if it meets the definition under the Housing Act 2004 s254 or s257. A HMO is usually a house or flat that is shared by 3 or more people, who are unrelated, form more than 1 household and is their only main residence. There are 2 types of HMO: C4 HMO, and sui generis HMO. A C4 HMO is a small house or flat that is occupied by 3-5 unrelated people who share basic amenities such as the bathroom and/or kitchen. A sui Generis HMO is the same as a normal C4 HMO except that it is a large house or flat occupied by 6 or more unrelated people and can be subject to slightly different planning rules.

**Housing need** - Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area (DLUHC).

**Housing target / requirement** – The number of homes set out to be delivered in the plan period to 2040, also expressed as an annual requirement. In the case of Oxford this number reflects the capacity rather than the need, as the need is greater than can be met.

**Intermediate housing** - Housing at prices and rents above those of Social Rent, but below market or affordable housing prices or rents. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), intermediate rent and other low cost homes. The Council will consider the suitability of other forms of intermediate housing, such as low-cost market housing, in light of its genuine affordability to those in housing need. NB: Key worker housing is defined separately from intermediate affordable housing.

**Market housing** – Housing provided by the private sector with no intervention from public bodies and sold or rented via the private market.

**Planning Practice Guidance** - A web-based resource that brings together national planning practice guidance for England.

**Principal elevation** - In most cases the principal elevation will be that part of the house that fronts (directly or at an angle) the main highway serving the house (the main highway will be the one that sets the postcode for the house concerned). It will usually contain the main architectural features such as main bay windows or a porch serving the main entrance to the house. Usually, but not exclusively, the principal elevation will be what is understood to be the front of the house. Where there are two elevations that may have the character of a principal elevation, for example on a corner plot, a view will need to be taken as to which of these forms the principal elevation.

**Social Rent** - Homes that are let at a level of rent set much lower than those charged on the open market. The rent will be calculated using the formula as defined in the Rent Standard Guidance of April 2015 (updated in May 2016) or its equivalent or replacement guidance (relevant at the time of the application).

**Standard Method** – The Government has set out a Standard Method for identifying housing need. This should be the starting point for assessing housing need and it identifies an overall minimum average annual housing need figure.

**Student accommodation** - Accommodation whose main purpose is to house students in higher education, registered on full-time courses of an academic year or more in Oxford.

## **Introduction and wider context**

2.1 There is a limited supply of housing in the city, which exacerbates inequalities by leading to high property prices and a limited supply of affordable housing. This means that many lower paid essential workers cannot afford to live in the city and employers experience high staff turnover and vacancy rates which can affect their operation. This is particularly apparent in the city's schools, hospitals, care homes, public transport services, the building industry and the universities.

2.2 This chapter sets out policies for the following topics:

- Housing need and requirement
- Delivering affordable homes
- Creating a mixed and balanced community
- Specialist housing needs.

## **Housing need and requirement**

2.3 Housing need must be established and confirmed through the evidence base, and then planned for. We cannot meet all the city's housing need within Oxford, so the calculated need is different to the housing requirement in the Plan (the requirement is also sometimes referred to as the housing target). This was also the situation in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, and work was undertaken with the neighbouring districts to include allocations in their adopted local plans to accommodate Oxford's unmet need).

2.4 The Local Plan must set out a total housing requirement for the plan period to 2040, setting out the number of houses that are required to be delivered each year. The Government checks delivery of housing in each planning authority in the Housing Delivery Test and there are sanctions if the requirement is not met.

2.5 The minimum housing need figure for Oxford can be calculated by using the Government's Standard method as set out in national planning policy guidance. However, simply taking the standard method number would not tackle the fundamental issue of Oxford's urgent need for more homes. Oxfordshire's economic dynamism and its economic growth performance, and particularly the role of Oxford in the regional and national economy, are particular drivers of housing need, and an alternative approach to assessing housing need has been explored which reflects these exceptional circumstances and their impact on current and future demographic trends and market signals. If the Plan sought to deliver lower levels of housing (such as calculated using the Standard Method) then it would be likely to result in more in-commuting and worse affordability of homes, in addition to constraining economic growth, not only in Oxford but with implications for the regional and national economy as well.

2.6 To help address the housing need, we have also been seeking to maximise capacity in the city through our approach in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA – see HELAA methodology for more details) and site allocations policies which prioritise residential development over other uses. More widely in the Council there are further measures to help address the issue of housing need and affordability, including setting up a housing company (OxPlace) to build more homes, and an ambitious programme of delivering Social Rented homes directly by the Council as a registered provider. This is complemented by the innovative policy on Employer-Linked Housing which supports specific major employers in

Oxford to deliver affordable housing on their own sites to help address the housing needs of their own employees.

### **Housing requirement**

The Housing and Employment Needs Assessment ('HENA'), jointly commissioned with Cherwell District Council, objectively assessed the housing need for Oxford.

The housing need in Oxford is for 1,322 new dwellings per annum. This need is greater than the capacity of the city to deliver it. The assessment of capacity (set out in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2023) is 9,612 homes over the plan period, or 481 dwellings per annum.

Delivery of housing is a priority, and the Local Plan's strategy is to maximise housing delivery while balancing protection of other important land uses.

### **Policy H1 – Housing Requirement**

**Provision will be made for at least 9,612 new homes to be built in Oxford over the plan period 2020-2040 (average of 481 per annum).**

**Housing capacity in the city has been maximised in the local plan by:**

- a) making site allocations for housing in this Plan (see Chapter 8: Site allocations);**
- b) promoting the efficient use and development of land/sites, including highest appropriate densities and building heights in appropriate locations;**
- and**
- c) allowing an element of housing on all employment sites if suitable.**

### **Delivering affordable homes**

2.7 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 genuinely affordable in Oxford is a long-standing priority of the City Council to help ensure that Oxford is a sustainable and inclusive city, with mixed and balanced communities.

2.8 The Government defines affordable housing as comprising Social Rent, Affordable Rent, and intermediate housing (with varying levels of ownership of the home) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. However, the high land and rental values in Oxford are 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 when taking into account average salaries in Oxford. The Housing Tenancy Strategy<sup>1</sup> and the HENA look at the affordability of different tenures in Oxford. They look at overall earnings and tenure costs in Oxford. Generally, the benchmark for affordability is that rent

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4784/tenancy\\_strategy\\_2018-2023](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4784/tenancy_strategy_2018-2023)

and/or mortgage costs should be 30-40% or less of net household income, however with such high prices in Oxford some 'affordable' home ownership models are not affordable in Oxford or only benefit a very small portion of households.

2.9 Affordable housing tenure types in Oxford currently include:

- Social Rent: the most affordable housing type. Rent set at a much lower rate than available on the open market (calculated using the Government's formula)
- Affordable Rent: rent discounted to at least 20% below local market rents. This is not considered truly affordable in Oxford because of the high rental prices, which mean that with a 20% discount, market rent levels still exceed Local Housing Allowance levels.
- First Homes: a government-mandated scheme to sell homes discounted to under £250,000 (a 40% discount is required in Oxford) and only available to first-time buyers/ households earning no more than £80,000. This does not meet local needs in Oxford because the market in Oxford can only typically deliver 1 bed homes within the price cap because house prices are so high.
- Other affordable routes to home ownership include shared ownership where a share of the homes is bought (using a mortgage) and the remainder is rented.

2.10 Of these tenures, there is currently a requirement in national planning policy that all qualifying sites provide First Homes as part of the affordable housing element. The introduction of the First Homes requirement reduces the potential for delivery of Social Rented housing in Oxford (which was formerly 80% of the affordable housing element), as well as funnelling smaller dwellings to First Homes because of the national price cap policy. It is considered that Oxford has exceptional circumstances in terms of housing need and affordability, so in order to prioritise Social Rented and regain control of delivering the size of homes the city needs, First Homes are not included in the affordable housing tenure split set out in Policy H2, because of their detrimental effects on meeting the City's housing need.

2.11 Securing new affordable housing on sites as part of larger developments is one way that affordable housing can be provided. In successive Plans the City Council has adopted policies that require the delivery of an ambitious percentage of affordable housing, either onsite or via financial contributions where more appropriate. These contributions – whether onsite or financial – have made a significant contribution to the supply of affordable homes in Oxford, alongside other Council-led initiatives including an affordable housing delivery programme, and the City Council's own Housing Company OX Place. The introduction of the Employer-Linked housing policy in the most recent local plan, has also contributed to the supply of affordable homes for those working at the hospitals and other key economic sectors in Oxford.

2.12 The provision of affordable housing contributions being delivered on-site is important and is preferred to the collection of financial contributions to fund off-site provision, because it provides more certainty in helping to deliver mixed and balanced communities across Oxford. In addition, provision of on-site affordable housing by the developer helps to alleviate the challenge of finding other sites, which is very demanding when supply is so limited. When on-site provision is not practicable then a financial contribution will be sought.

#### Delivering affordable homes

Securing new affordable housing on sites as part of larger developments is a significant way that more affordable homes can be provided in Oxford. The Council will therefore

expect that on residential development sites of 10 or more units, a proportion of affordable housing is provided onsite. For residential uses where onsite provision may not be appropriate (e.g. student accommodation or retirement homes) then a financial contribution will be sought, which will be secured through a planning condition (see separate policies for contributions from Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) or older people's accommodation, and for employer-linked affordable housing).

In Oxford, 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: those least able to access market housing. If Social Rent is not available, 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 to find more suitable and affordable accommodation. For these reasons, social rented housing is the priority tenure of affordable housing in Oxford, and of the 40% affordable housing requirement on qualifying developments, the majority is expected to be Social Rented housing. The remainder may be provided as intermediate forms of affordable housing. First Homes will not be required to be provided as part of the affordable housing element.

## 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) **On self-contained residential developments (including for example C3 and C4 but excluding student accommodation and employer-linked housing) where sites\* have a capacity for 10 or more homes (gross) or exceed 0.5 ha, a minimum of 40% of units on a site should be provided as homes that are truly affordable in the context of the Oxford housing market.**
- b) **At least 80% of the affordable units on the site should be provided as onsite Social Rented dwellings. The remaining element of the affordable housing may be provided as intermediate forms of housing onsite provided that they are affordable in the Oxford market.**
- c) **The affordable homes must be provided as part of the same development (i.e. on site) to ensure a balanced community.**
- d) **Where affordable housing is provided onsite it should incorporate a mix of unit sizes (see Policy H6 on housing mix for affordable homes).**

**\* site area includes everything within the red line boundary of the planning application, which may include existing properties which are being materially altered.**

**Where the number of dwellings (including conversions and changes of use) proposed falls below the thresholds set out above, the Council will consider whether the site reasonably has capacity to provide 10 or more dwellings that would trigger a requirement to contribute towards affordable housing. This is to ensure that developers may not circumvent the policy requirement by artificially subdividing sites or through an inefficient use of land.**

**If an applicant can demonstrate particular circumstances that justify the need for a viability assessment and can 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**

## Policy S4.

### Affordable housing contributions from new Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)

Contributions towards much-needed affordable housing will be sought from developments of student accommodation because many sites for student accommodation could equally be suitable for non-student homes, from which 40% affordable housing would have been sought. It also helps to ensure that the provision of much-needed ordinary homes is not disadvantaged in the market in comparison with student accommodation.

This requirement for contributions only applies to sites where residential development including affordable housing provision could have been otherwise anticipated. The requirement does not therefore apply to development within university campus sites or redevelopment of existing PBSA that is currently and will continue to be owned and/or managed by the universities. This is in recognition of the onus placed on the universities by Policy H10 to provide accommodation for their students, and because development on those sites would not displace mainstream residential development or result in lost opportunity to achieve affordable housing.

In terms of delivery, onsite provision of general affordable housing within new PBSA developments is unlikely to be appropriate if the site is on campus (unless the affordable housing is via employer-linked housing). Some PBSA developments are off-campus and in residential areas, but typically are designed as flats or apartments which would be challenging for registered landlords to manage if the affordable housing units were not in a self-contained block. Hence onsite provision of affordable housing is seldom achieved owing to management, design, and landownership issues, so a financial contribution will instead be sought, and then be secured through a planning condition.

Direct provision of affordable PBSA bedspaces targeted at students considered to be in need of lower cost rent is also not considered appropriate in Oxford. PBSA is by its nature provided for students who do not live in the city full time, so affordable PBSA bedspaces would not therefore meet the city's affordable housing need.

For monitoring and reporting purposes, the Council use the ratio published by Government in the Housing Delivery Test of 2.5 student bed spaces to 1 dwelling. Therefore, with the threshold at 10 dwellings for residential development affordable housing contributions, the threshold for student accommodation will be 25 bed spaces (or 10 or more self-contained student units as these are counted in monitoring terms as a dwelling).



### Policy H3 Affordable housing contributions from new purpose-built student accommodation

**A financial contribution will be sought towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for new student accommodation of 25 or more student units (or 10 or more self-contained student units). Alternatively, the affordable housing contribution can be provided on-site where both the City Council and the applicant agree that this provision is appropriate.**

**Contributions towards affordable housing provision from new student accommodation will not be sought where:**

- a) The proposal is within an existing or proposed university or college campus site, as defined in the glossary; or**
- b) The proposal is for redevelopment of an existing purpose-built student accommodation site which at the date of adoption of the Plan is owned by a university, and which will continue to be owned by a university to meet the accommodation needs of its students after the redevelopment.**

**The contribution will be required only from the number of units creating a net gain. For mixed-use developments which include general housing on the site alongside student accommodation, then a pro-rata approach will be used to determine whether a contribution is required, and how much this should be.**

**The contribution will be calculated using the formula in Appendix 2.1.**

### Affordable housing contributions from self-contained older persons accommodation

In line with other forms of residential development making contributions towards much-needed affordable housing, contributions will also be sought from developments of accommodation for older persons because those sites could typically also be suitable for residential use, from which 40% affordable housing would have been sought. This requirement only applies to sites where residential development including affordable housing provision could have been otherwise anticipated.

Policy H13 sets out further explanation about different forms of older persons accommodation.

Onsite provision of affordable housing within new developments for older persons such as retirement complexes, is unlikely to be appropriate because of the different housing needs and lifestyles. Management agreements and other restrictions (e.g. car parking) are also imposed which are also not necessarily appropriate to general housing. So a financial contribution will instead be sought towards provision of affordable housing off-site, and then be secured through a planning condition or S106.

#### Policy H4 Affordable housing contributions from self-contained older persons accommodation

**A financial contribution will be sought towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for new self-contained older persons accommodation of 10 or more self-contained units. Alternatively, the affordable housing contribution can be provided on-site where both the City Council and the applicant agree that this provision is appropriate.**

**The contribution will be required only from the number of units creating a net gain. For mixed-use developments which include general housing on the site alongside older persons accommodation, then a pro-rata approach will be used to determine whether a contribution is required, and how much this should be.**

**Where the number of dwellings or units proposed falls below the relevant thresholds set out above to require affordable housing contributions, 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 development including conversions and changes of use.**

**The contribution will be calculated using the formula in Appendix 2.1.**

#### 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 jobs in Oxford still require people to attend their workplaces because they are jobs that are not possible to do remotely, such as in frontline healthcare, teaching in schools and universities, as well as those working in manufacturing and R&D labs. Many of these workers are unable to afford market housing or even private rented accommodation in the city and 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 with no option but to rent a room in a house-share are prevented from moving on with their lives with a partner or family. In summary people can be discouraged from taking jobs in Oxford if they cannot afford to live close enough to their place of work, and many employers, including critical services such as the NHS, have recruitment and retention difficulties associated with the lack of affordable housing in Oxford.

Employer-linked housing is a new approach that was introduced in Oxford in the LP2036, as an additional means to help increase delivery of much-needed affordable housing. The policy provides an alternative means of delivering affordable housing, to supplement the affordable homes delivered via policy H2.

It involves housing being developed on specified sites, by specified key employers in the city to provide a means of delivering affordable housing for their own staff. This allows those employers to address their own recruitment and retention issues by providing housing on their own land. A typical example is the NHS providing staff accommodation within the hospital sites. For most of the specified sites, employer-linked housing will only be one element of use on the site, for example hospital uses will be retained on the hospital sites.

This approach allows for 100% of the homes built to be employer-linked affordable housing, with no requirement to provide the Social Rented housing that is usually required. By exempting these developments from the normal requirements for affordable homes contributions, 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 and retained as Affordable Rent homes in perpetuity. This can help to address recruitment issues, and also free up Social Rent homes in the rest of the city or places on the housing register.

The policy is restricted to specified sites as listed in the policy, which have been chosen for their suitability, availability and potential capacity to cater to the housing needs of essential workers, whilst also not prejudicing the potential supply of new Social Rent homes.

In the event that market housing is also to be provided on the site then Policy H2 is engaged on the market housing element. The employer-linked affordable housing could then contribute to the requirement for the intermediate element within Policy H2 but could not be relied on to meet the Social Rent tenure requirement within Policy H2.

It is important 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 as affordable housing, with a tenure split that reflects affordable housing policy H2, and not sold on the open market. This clawback 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 H5 Employer-linked affordable housing**

**Planning permission will be granted on the following sites for employer-linked affordable housing for rent.**

**The sites identified as appropriate for employer-linked affordable housing are:**

- **Campus sites of the colleges of the University of Oxford and of Oxford Brookes University. These are sites with academic accommodation existing**

at the time of the adoption of the Local Plan, and where academic institutional use would remain on the site, even with the development of some employer-linked housing

- Edge of Playing Fields Oxford Academy
- Edge of Playing Fields Bayards Hill Primary School
- Slade House
- Manzil Way Resource Centre
- Warneford Hospital
- West Wellington Square
- Osney Mead
- John Radcliffe Hospital
- Churchill Hospital
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital

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, or under those circumstances identified under criterion h).

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 by development partners on their behalf) to meet the housing needs of their employees.

All of the following criteria must be demonstrated as part of the planning application and will be secured through the relevant planning permission:

- 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 with an appropriate review mechanism in place; 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 the 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; and
- 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) agree an appropriate re-letting of units in the property in the event that there are units vacant for more than 6 months;
- h) agree that if the employer decides they no longer have a need for the housing, then the affordable housing requirements detailed under Policy H2 will be applied.

## **Creating mixed and balanced communities**

### Mix of dwelling sizes (number of bedrooms)

It is important that a range of affordable housing types are available to meet the wide range of needs.

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. The size, type, tenure and range of homes needs to reflect local needs to ensure that mixed and balanced communities are supported. The housing need across Oxford is high and as such all types and sizes of dwellings are required. However, some sites and the area context will lend itself to certain mixes of dwellings. The city centre and district centres are most likely to be suitable for higher density developments and it is expected that dwelling densities would continue to be higher than those in neighbouring districts reflecting Oxford's urban area.

### Policy H6 Mix of dwelling sizes (number of bedrooms)

**Planning permission will be granted for residential development that is demonstrated will deliver an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes that responds to the site context, including local needs, and that results in mixed and balanced communities. Evidence to support the proposed mix should be proportionate to the application and may include evidence from the HENA, market demand, design considerations, and should include regard to the housing register and current requirements if the below mix for affordable housing does not apply.**

**Proposals for 25 or more homes (gross) (C3 residential) or sites of 0.5ha 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 housing element, unless it can be shown not to be feasible (this does not apply to employer-linked affordable housing):**

**Mix of dwelling sizes for affordable housing (for rent and for ownership):**

**For affordable rented forms of homes:**

Size of dwelling	% of the affordable housing element
1 bedroom homes (all 2 person unless by agreement based on specific need. Or: At least half of these to be 2 person)	30-35%
2 bedroom homes	25-35%
3 bedroom homes	20- 35%
4+bedroom homes	6-15%

**For affordable ownership forms of homes: When there are 10 or more units of affordable home ownership types (excluding employer-linked housing):**

Size of dwelling	% of the affordable
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	housing element
<b>1 bedroom homes (all 2 person unless by agreement based on specific need. Or: At least half of these to be 2 person)</b>	<b>20-35%</b>
<b>2 bedroom homes</b>	<b>30-40%</b>
<b>3+ bedroom homes</b>	<b>20- 35%</b>
<b>4+bedroom homes</b>	<b>6-15%</b>

#### Development involving loss of dwellings

Oxford cannot meet its full housing need and as such it is important to ensure that the existing stock of homes is protected. This is particularly the case in order to protect the supply of family-sized homes which are often under pressure to be subdivided into flats or converted into a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The city also faces considerable pressure from the use of residential units as short term lets such as Airbnb which are taking more properties away from the longer term private rented sector and/or providing family homes. At the time of writing, the Government is exploring options to deliver a new tourist accommodation scheme and to review the Use Classes Order to enable places to control changes of use to short term lets if they wish. Also see policy E5 which sets out criteria for assessing any proposals for change of use to short term lets.

The policy approach is to resist any net loss of any dwelling, including for short-term lets where planning permission is required, 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 to come forward.

## Policy H7 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 (this includes all HMOs that are suitable for occupation by a single household), 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 care facility, dentist, children's nursery or local community hall or meeting place (Use Class F.2) (defined as a building (or parts of a building) or space that is open and accessible to the local community, providing services or activities that the local community wants and needs).**

**In such cases, the following criteria should all be satisfied:**

- d) **it must be demonstrated that the layout of the unit retains capacity to be turned back into a residential unit in future; and**
- e) **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.**

## 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 and who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. It is estimated that around 20% of Oxford's population live in an HMO, so they are important in meeting housing needs in Oxford. For many people, HMOs offer the only available and affordable solution as renting individually or buying a property in Oxford is often too expensive, consequently it is important that the occupation is controlled, and this important supply of homes does not inadvertently become additional student accommodation to circumvent Policy H10.

High concentrations of HMOs can result in changes to the character of the local area and can contribute to local parking problems and large numbers of transient households. The policy approach therefore sets criteria to manage how and where new HMOs are allowed and to restrict HMO numbers where there is already a high concentration of existing HMOs. The City Council considers that more than 20% of buildings in HMO use within a 100 metres length of street from the applications site's principal elevation will result in over-concentration.

Purpose-built HMOs can 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. Being designed for the purpose, they will also meet space standards and current building regulations. Purpose-built HMOs 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.

In March 2021, Oxford City Council introduced a new designation requiring all HMOs in Oxford to have an additional license from 10 June 2021, in order to improve conditions in private rented housing across the city. Minimum bedroom sizes for HMOs are governed by Government Regulations<sup>2</sup>. In addition, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the property fully complies with the '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 C7 and C8.

### Policy H8 Houses in Multiple Occupation

**Planning permission for conversions to or new HMOs, will only be granted where:**

- a) the proportion of buildings that are used in full or part as a licensed/ pending licensed HMO, within 100 metres of street length either side of the application site's principal elevation, does not exceed 20%; and**
- b) 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 measured as:**

- i) 100m either side of the mid-point of the principal elevation of the proposed development, including principal elevations that wrap around corners or that are broken by a road or footpath; and**
- ii) 100m either side directly opposite the mid-point of the principal elevation of the proposed development, including principal elevations that wrap around corners or that are broken by a road or footpath; and**
- iii) all buildings opposite the principal elevations described above.**

**Appendix 2.2 illustrates how this will be applied.**

**Applications for changes from C4 HMO to a Sui Generis HMO must be compliant with point b above.**

**In addition, for new purpose-built HMOs, the tenure will be secured through the inclusion of a planning condition or planning obligation, to ensure that Policy H9 is not circumvented (location of student accommodation).**

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<sup>2</sup> Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018



## **Providing for specialist housing needs**

2.14 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for the needs of groups with specific housing requirements; these include but are not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) also states that policy-making authorities need to plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on a campus.

2.15 The PPG recognises that encouraging more dedicated student accommodation may provide low-cost housing that takes pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock. The City Council recognises that some additional student accommodation should continue to be provided to meet the student accommodation needs of both universities. However, the options recognise that aiming to accommodate all students in purpose-built student accommodation could use up sites better suited to general housing and would undermine the desire to deliver mixed and balanced communities. The policy sets out a strategy for encouraging student accommodation development in the most suitable locations.

### **Location of new 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. Oxford Brookes expects student growth to increase by 8% in the first five years and 1.8% after that. University of Oxford expects growth of 2.9% in the first five years and 1.9% after that. This would leave to a total number of students at the universities of 71,000 in the high growth scenario. The high growth scenario would lead to an increase in university students needing accommodation from 22,577 students in 2020/21 to 32-37,000 in 2040. Language school students create a demand nearly entirely for temporary accommodation, which is met largely by homestays, and then by residential accommodation, of which language schools have over 350 rooms. Other further education institutions house most of their students in residential accommodation and have over 500 rooms. There is no significant forecast need for additional student accommodation for students of these institutions.

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. It is recognised that generally, there is a difference between the needs of those students who are on undergraduate courses and those on postgraduate courses, with the latter more akin to young professionals and who are less likely to have a potential adverse impact on local communities. Therefore, to provide more flexibility, it is considered that allowing new postgraduate accommodation adjacent to existing postgraduate accommodation would be suitable, subject to meeting the relevant requirements of the policy.

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.

Policy H9 limits occupation to full-time students enrolled on courses of one academic year or more (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).

It is important that student accommodation is well managed so 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 that student housing will be excluded from the schedule of streets in the traffic regulation order that creates the Controlled Parking Zone so that students cannot apply for parking permits. 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 H9 Location 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.

In addition, if purpose-built postgraduate accommodation already exists at a particular location, subject to meeting criteria a) to e) below, new purpose-built postgraduate accommodation will be granted planning permission adjacent to existing postgraduate 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, subject to the provisions of criterion e below; and
- b) for developments of 20 or more bedrooms, the design includes indoor communal amenity space for students to gather and socialise; and
- c) 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
- d) 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, (unless a disabled vehicle is required), which the developer shall thereafter monitor and enforce; and
- e) a management strategy is agreed if it is intended there will be occupants other than students meeting the definition set in criterion a) outside of term times.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would lead to the loss of student accommodation linked to an educational institution unless new, alternative student accommodation is available for occupancy, within a reasonable and acceptable timeframe, by students of the same 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.**

### Linking new academic facilities with the adequate provision of student accommodation

In order to balance competing demands on land in Oxford, the policy approach is to ensure that expansion numbers of students at higher education institutions does not occur without consideration of how they will be accommodated. Higher educational institutions

offer courses for students of 18+, many of whom move to live in the city and therefore generate additional accommodation needs. Not all expansion of these institutions will create additional capacity for students, so institutions may be able to set out in the first instance that their proposals for academic or administrative accommodation will not generate an associated increase in capacity for students. Where that is not the case, it should be demonstrated that the additional students may be accommodated through provision of additional student accommodation. For the two universities this is to be done through demonstration that the thresholds set in Policy H10 are not exceeded at the time of the application. The thresholds restrict the number of students that each university is permitted to have living outside of university- provided accommodation and other purpose-built accommodation (in the case of Oxford Brookes). This will be achieved by not permitting new academic floorspace, (or redevelopment or refurbishment which results in an increase in capacity) unless the university has fewer than the threshold number of student numbers living outside of university-provided accommodation. The policy thresholds are to be re-considered from the academic year starting in 2028. Forecasting student numbers beyond the first 5 years is very unreliable. Therefore, at this time it will be considered whether the thresholds are still achievable, and if not information will be needed to explain the current situation and the impacts of a proposal to inform decisions at the planning application stage.

The policy thresholds apply 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.

This will ensure any increase in students resulting from improved academic accommodation will be matched by increased accommodation provision. 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 continue to live at their home address while studying. Full details of how the universities will be assessed against the threshold are provided in Appendix 2.3.

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 at the same university or institution. The new provision must take into account the mix, occupancy and affordability of the rooms being lost.

## Policy H10 Linking new academic facilities with the adequate provision of student accommodation

Planning permission will only be granted for new redeveloped or refurbished academic, research or administrative accommodation for higher education institutions where it can be demonstrated that either:

- a. the new accommodation would not generate or facilitate any increase in student numbers; or
- b. there is a plan in place for managing the accommodation needs of the additional students, either because the institution has sufficient existing accommodation, or because sufficient accommodation has been identified as being available. For Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford this criterion will be measured and can be demonstrated through application of the threshold of the number of qualifying students living outside of relevant student accommodation, as follows.

### University of Oxford

Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic or administrative accommodation (that generates or facilitates an increase in student numbers) for University of Oxford where the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation exceeds the level of university owned or managed accommodation by the following thresholds at the time of the application:

- until the academic year starting in 2028: 1,300
- academic year starting 2028 onwards to be negotiated based on consideration of the situation at the time.

### Oxford Brookes University

Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic or administrative accommodation (that generates or facilitates an increase in students numbers) for Oxford Brookes University where it can be demonstrated that the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation exceeds the level of university owned or managed accommodation or known purpose-built student accommodation by the following thresholds at the time of the application:

- until the academic year starting in 2028: 6,900
- academic year starting 2028 onwards to be negotiated based on consideration the situation at the time.

The reference to full time, taught course students requiring accommodation 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. Appendix 2.3 explains how the threshold will be calculated.

### Homes for travelling communities

The Council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on the assessment of need for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This includes taking into account waiting lists and whether there are members of the travelling community living in bricks and mortar.

There are currently no existing public or private sites in Oxford, although there are several authorised sites close to the City boundary (Redbridge Hollow, Ten Acre Park Sandford on Thames) as well as Manor View Marston (unauthorised), so it may be that the needs of people wishing to live close to the Oxford urban area is in practice being met by those sites. The most recent published local needs study (2017) indicated that there was no identified current or forecast need for pitches or plots in Oxford up to 2036, and there have been no applications received for these types of home in Oxford during the monitoring period up to 2021/22. Further evidence is currently being gathered to update this assessment, and to assess any need through the full plan period up to 2040.

This Plan therefore does not make any specific site allocations for new sites in Oxford but provides criteria to assess any proposals for new sites that may come forward during the Plan period, along with all other relevant policies of the Plan such as Green Belt policy.

## Policy H11 Homes for travelling communities

**Proposals for permanent or transit residential pitches or plots for Gypsy, Traveller, or Travelling Showpeople in Oxford will only be granted planning permission where all of the following criteria are met:**

- a) The applicant or updated Council evidence base has adequately demonstrated a clear need for the site in the city, and the number, type, and tenure of pitches/plots proposed, which cannot be met by a lawful existing or available allocated site; and**
- b) The site is accessible to facilities and services including local shops, healthcare, education and employment by walking, cycling and public transport; and**
- c) The site has safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, including adequate access for emergency services and the other types of vehicles that could reasonably be expected to use or access the site; and**
- d) The site has adequate access to or provision of essential facilities and servicing including water supply, electricity and disposal facilities for sewage and waste; and**
- e) The site will provide an acceptable living environment and the health and safety of the site's potential residents should not be put at risk. Factors to take into account include: flood risk (site should not be located in Flood Zone 3a or 3b), site contamination, air quality, and noise; and**
- f) The site is located, and can be managed, so as not to have unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents or other existing uses, or the appearance or character of the surrounding area. Appropriate boundary treatment and landscaping should be capable of being provided.**

## 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.

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. There are also boat-dwellers whose transitory nature generates a significant demand for temporary moorings, including those who identify as Bargee Travellers, as well as those who continuously cruise through Oxford and neighbouring areas.

There are few 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 River Thames and River Cherwell. However, by multiagency working with navigation authorities and landowners, there is potential to increase the current number of residential moorings within existing sites. For example, dredging some existing sites could allow more 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 identifies 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. Providing more social housing accommodation in the city will also help provide an affordable alternative for some of those currently living in unauthorised moorings.

The following policy sets out criteria against which potential new moorings will be assessed.

### Policy H12 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) Proposal does not impede navigation, navigational safety, or operational requirements of the waterway including use of footpaths;**
- b) Proposal will maintain or enhance the amenity, visual character, water quality, historic and ecological value of the waterway or nearby land;**
- c) Proposal is close to existing services and amenities including potable water and waste disposal;**
- d) Proposal is served by adequate pedestrian/cycling access, and vehicular access for emergency vehicles.**

### Older Persons and Supported Accommodation

Older people are another identified group in the NPPF with specific housing requirements. Nationally, the population is ageing and whilst Oxford has a younger than average age profile of residents, it is important to ensure that the needs of older people are considered. Specialist housing for older people is provided in a range of formats and can include:

- Age-restricted general market housing, generally aimed at those over 55, potentially with some shared amenities but without on-site support or care services;
- Sheltered housing, typically purpose-built flats with some communal facilities, a warden and some support such as on-site assistance via alarm;
- Enhanced sheltered housing/assisted living, which will have additional services to enable people to retain independence such as some meals provided;
- Extra care housing, which has access to medium to high level of care with 24-hour access to support services and registered care staff and meals available; and
- Residential care/nursing homes, for those with a high level of dependency and which have rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care for daily living.

No need for additional affordable housing types of specialist accommodation has been identified; instead, the focus should be on delivery of market accommodation. As it is



market accommodation, it is expected that the market will respond by bringing forward specialist housing types. All types have a moderate need, although there is limited need for nursing and residential care. The policy approach is to set criteria for assessing proposals that come forward.

Although there is not a large current need for additional specialist older persons or care accommodation, 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. 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.

### Policy H13 Older Persons and Other Specialist Accommodation

**Planning permission for older people 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/or maintenance of mixed and balanced communities; and**
- c) is appropriate for the neighbourhood in terms of form, scale and design; and**
- d) Includes internal rooms and design, gardens and amenity space of appropriate size and quality for residents; and**
- e) meets the affordable housing requirements of Policy H2/H4 as applicable.**

**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 a not a need for the facility. This may be secured by a legal agreement.**

### Self-Build & Custom housebuilding

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 or 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 Housebuilding 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 March 2023 there were 133 members and 1 group/association (with 20 members) on the Register. The intention of the Act is that LPAs grant suitable development permission for serviced plots to match demand on the register, although there is no mechanism for ensuring applications come forward.

A local connection test to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register was introduced by the City Council in July 2022 in order to help protect anyone with a connection to Oxford in accessing community and self-build plots and prevent people with no connection to the city adding excess demand. In March 2023, 3 individuals have submitted evidence of local connection and have subsequently been added to Part A of the Register. Individuals who have not met the criteria or have not demonstrated that they can meet the criteria will remain on Part B of the Register.

Within Oxford there are several organised groups with ambitions for providing community-led housing. Defined as *'local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing'*<sup>3</sup>, community-led housing is a means of delivering housing which allows for people and communities to be more involved in the process of meeting their specific needs and wants. Community-led housing can be delivered through several approaches including community land trusts, co-housing and co-operatives and can involve homes that are market sale, shared ownership, market or affordable rent, rent to buy, or a combination of all.

The approach of the policy is to help encourage and support community-led housing schemes to come forward. Where applicable proposals will also need to address shared outdoor amenity space in Policy G2, and the bicycle and car parking standards in Policies C7 and C8.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-housing-fund-prospectus/community-housing-fund-prospectus-accessible-version#:~:text=What%20is%20community%2Dled%20housing,to%20achieve%20through%20mainstream%20housing.>

## Policy H14 Self-Build & Custom housebuilding

**Proposals for self-build and custom-build housing including community-led housing will be supported as a way of enabling people to meet their own housing needs.**

**On residential sites of 100 homes or more, 5% of the site area developed for residential use should be made available as self-build/custom-build plots. Plots will be part of the market housing element of the scheme, unless they are 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 access to a fuel or energy source in line with policy R1.**

**A legal agreement will be used to ensure that if the self-build plots have not sold after 6 months of marketing, then dwellings should be built and brought forward in the normal way, in accordance with other policies regarding affordable housing and housing mix. The following development types are excluded from this requirement: Employer-linked affordable housing; student accommodation; other C2 or Sui Generis types of accommodation; and residential development in conversions or on brownfield sites where only flatted development is provided.**

## Hostels

Temporary housing (hostels) is an important housing type for meeting specific, temporary housing needs. Most hostels are operated by small specialist housing associations or registered social landlords, but they may also be run by charities, voluntary organisations, churches and local authorities. There are a variety of different types and sizes of temporary housing forms. These can provide longer or shorter-term stays. Some provide basic accommodation for a few nights at a time, for emergencies, and which is easily accessed by those in need, for example people who sleep on the streets at times when they need a short respite. These do usually have a charge. Longer-term accommodation may provide varying levels of support and related entry requirements, for example for treating drug and alcohol dependencies and mental health issues.

In order to meet these needs most effectively, it is important that these accommodation types are in the right locations. Problems can arise when hostels become concentrated in any one area of the city, or if they are in locations not easily accessed by those who need them or where they cause conflicts with other uses. Therefore, criteria in the policy are aimed at ensuring the residential character of an area and the amenity of neighbours is protected, and that a suitable living environment for occupiers is provided, in an easily accessed location.

## Policy H15 Hostels

**Planning permission will be granted for new hostels and similar temporary housing**

types, and extensions to these, provided that:

- a) The location is in the city centre or a district centre or on an arterial road or other location that is not on a residential road and that will not cause disturbance to existing residents; and
- b) The location is within 800metres of the city centre or a district or local centre, to ensure it is easily accessible to residents; and
- c) It would not result in a concentration of such uses to the detriment of the character of the area, the range of housing available in the area and residential amenity; and
- d) The proposal is not immediately adjacent to or opposite another hostel and would not sandwich another residential use between two hostels; and
- e) 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 legal agreement); and
- f) The construction and internal arrangement of the premises will minimise potential noise disturbance to and from adjacent properties; and
- g) Adequate accommodation including garden or amenity space is provided to meet the needs of the residents.

#### Boarding school accommodation

There are many boarding schools in Oxford with children aged 16 or under. Most of these schools are campus-based, so that the children live in accommodation on the teaching campus. These relatively large sites are able to provide continuous supervision for the children and there is no travel needed to reach lessons during the school day.

If boarding accommodation comes forward outside of the main school site, this could have a variety of negative implications. It may prevent the site for coming forward for alternative residential uses for which there is a greater need. It could lead to children being accommodated in a location removed from the school, with a potential drop in supervision and their safety, and with an increased need to travel to reach lessons. There may also be a negative impact on the amenity of surrounding residents if the new accommodation is a conversion of a property not designed for the purpose, for example.

The policy criteria in the policy below are aimed at minimising these conflicts and potential negative impacts and ensuring a good living environment for the children.

## Policy H16 Boarding school accommodation

**Planning permission will be granted for new or extended boarding school accommodation for children aged 18 and under, provided that:**

- a) It is on or adjacent to a teaching campus of the school the children will attend; and**
- b) The accommodation would provide an adequate, safe and supervised environment for the children;**
- c) It will not harm the amenity of any neighbouring residential properties; and**
- d) It will not cause severe traffic impacts that cannot be mitigated;**
- e) 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 legal agreement) to ensure the safety of students and to avoid harm to the amenity of surrounding residential uses.**

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