

CHAPTER TWO

A HEALTHY INCLUSIVE CITY TO LIVE IN

INTRODUCTION

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 is an important element of enabling people's stability and security. Good and sufficient housing can improve our social, environmental and economic wellbeing. It helps to create stronger communities that can attract investment and skilled workers.

This chapter sets out policies for the following topics:

- Housing need and requirement and delivering affordable homes
- Creating mixed and balanced communities

HOUSING NEED AND REQUIREMENT AND DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOMES

Oxford has acute housing pressures that need to be addressed. The city has an urgent need for more housing, and demand continues to outstrip supply. This 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. Therefore, the supply of available and affordable housing for all is a priority for people, the economy and the services on which we all rely, including healthcare and education.

HOUSING NEED AND REQUIREMENT

Policy Context

- The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* sets out the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and stresses the importance of bringing forward a sufficient amount and variety of land where needed.

- Delivery of housing is a priority for the City Council, and the Local Plan's strategy is to maximise housing delivery while balancing protection of other important assets such as biodiversity, open space and functional floodplain.
- The minimum housing need figure for Oxford has been calculated by using the Government's Standard Method as set out in National Planning Policy and guidance. The housing need in Oxford is for 1,087 new dwellings per annum. However, this need is greater than the capacity of the city to deliver it. The assessment of capacity (set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2026) is 9,267 homes over the plan period, or 463 dwellings per annum.
- The Local Plan must set out a total housing requirement for the plan period to 2045, setting out the number of houses that are required to be delivered each year. Local Plans should seek to meet identified needs, and in establishing a housing requirement figure should show the extent to which their identified housing need can be met over the plan period.

Policy Implementation

- Every effort has been made to maximise the identified capacity in the city through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and a Green Belt assessment.
- A range of policies that prioritise residential development over other uses, design policies including Policy HD8 on efficient use of land and Policy H6 on Employer-Linked Housing work together to maximise delivery of housing.
- However, the calculated housing need is greater than the capacity identified. Therefore, the housing requirement is less than the housing need, and results in a level of unmet need in Oxford.
- The Council is continuing to work with adjoining authorities to deliver sites in adjoining districts to help meet Oxford's housing needs to address the unmet housing need.



POLICY H1: HOUSING REQUIREMENT

Provision will be made for at least 9,267 new homes to be built in Oxford over the plan period 2025-2045 (average of 463 per annum).

Measures in the Local Plan to promote housing delivery include:

- Making site allocations for residential uses in this Plan (see Chapter 8: Site allocations);
- Promoting the efficient use and development of land/sites; and
- Prioritising housing across the city and by allowing an element of housing on all employment sites if suitable.

DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOMES

Policy Context

- Oxford is one of the least affordable places in the country, resulting from a combination of high housing demand, high land values, reducing land availability, and a shortage of homes. Housing is so expensive, in absolute terms and compared to average salaries, that many people are priced out of the market.
- “Affordable” homes models (for ownership or discounted market rent) are often not affordable in the Oxford context and are out of reach for many households. This means that in Oxford, social rent is the only option for many people who are not able to access market housing, or even other tenures of affordable housing,

- Securing new affordable housing as part of larger developments is a significant way that more affordable homes can be provided in Oxford.
- The NPPF also sets out ‘Golden Rules’ for Green Belt development relating to affordable housing provision requirements, including that, to reflect that they are likely to be cheaper to develop, a higher level of affordable housing than elsewhere should be sought if viable.

Policy Implementation

- The policy seeks to deliver housing that is genuinely affordable in Oxford to help ensure that Oxford is a sustainable and inclusive city, with mixed and balanced communities.
- Social rent is the priority tenure of affordable housing, with a lesser proportion provided as intermediate forms of affordable housing.
- Viability testing indicates the levels of contributions set out in the policy are viable for the majority of development typologies likely to come forward during the Plan period in Oxford. However, where there are exceptional circumstances that mean viability is a challenge then Policy S4 sets out a cascade of adjustments that proposals should work through until the site becomes viable.

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:

On self-contained residential developments (including Use Classes C3 and C4 but excluding self-contained student accommodation, older persons accommodation and employer-linked housing) where sites* have a capacity for 10 or more homes (gross), a minimum of 40% of units on the site should be provided as homes that are truly affordable in the context of the Oxford housing market. On sites in the Green Belt or released from the Green Belt, this should be a minimum of 50%. The following criteria apply in all cases.

- a) 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.
- b) The affordable homes must be provided as part of the same development (i.e. on site) to ensure a balanced community.
- c) Where affordable housing is provided onsite it should incorporate a mix of unit sizes (see Policy H7 on mix of dwelling sizes).

Where the gross 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.

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Policy Context

- Securing contributions towards affordable housing from new student accommodation, older persons accommodation and employment-generating uses can help contribute towards the supply of affordable homes in Oxford, which is important because many sites proposed for those uses could equally be suitable for homes, from which a percentage of affordable housing would have been sought under Policy H2.
- This requirement also helps to ensure that the provision of affordable homes is not disadvantaged in the market in comparison with these other uses.
- Direct provision of new student accommodation with affordable bedspaces targeted at students considered to be in need of low-cost rent does not negate the requirement for contributions. This is because discounted student accommodation bedspaces are, by their nature, provided for students who do not live in the city full time, and it does not contribute to meeting the city's affordable housing need.
- Employment-generating uses can impact on affordable housing needs by encouraging workers in housing need to move to Oxford to take up new jobs generated by the proposed use of the new development. As such this policy seeks financial contributions towards affordable housing provision.

Policy Implementation

- Financial contributions are required on a comparable basis so that the development of sites for residential is not disadvantaged in the market or viability terms.
- Financial contributions are more likely to be appropriate than on site provision as many qualifying schemes are likely to be designed in a way which would be challenging for registered landlords to manage the affordable housing units or are unlikely to be appropriate because of the different housing needs and lifestyles. Management agreements and other restrictions (e.g. low car parking) may also be imposed related to those uses, which are also not necessarily appropriate to general housing in all locations.

- For new student accommodation, the policy does not apply to development within university campus sites or redevelopment of existing purpose-built student accommodation that is currently and will continue to be owned and/or managed by the universities.

POLICY H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER DEVELOPMENT TYPES

The City Council will seek financial contributions towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for new purpose-built student accommodation, new older people's accommodation and new employment-generating uses.

The contribution will be required only from the number of units creating a net gain or the additional floorspace that is new to employment-generating use. For mixed-use developments a pro-rata approach will be used to determine whether a contribution is required, and how much this should be. The usual affordable housing contributions policies will apply to any residential elements of mixed-use developments. The contribution will be calculated using the formulas in Appendix 2.1.

On proposals for new purpose-built student accommodation

- A financial contribution will be sought towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for new student accommodation of 24 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:
 - The proposal is within an existing or proposed university or college campus site, as defined in the glossary; or
 - 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.

On proposals for new 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.

On proposals below the thresholds for contributions

- Where the number of dwellings or units proposed falls below the relevant thresholds to require affordable housing contributions set out in A or C, 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.

On proposals for new employment-generating uses

- E) A financial contribution will be sought towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for major employment-generating uses (defined in Glossary), or flexible E-Class uses which could be used for employment-generating use, delivering a net gain in floorspace of 1000sqm GIA or more.
- F) Where description of development is listed as flexible class E, it will be assumed that all of it is employment-generating (unless specified otherwise in the planning application). This is to avoid proposals circumventing the policy and providing appropriate contributions towards affordable housing.

EMPLOYER-LINKED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Policy Context

- Employers in Oxford, including critical services such as the NHS, are facing significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff because of the shortage of homes that are affordable to local people working in Oxford on average Oxford salaries. People can be discouraged from taking jobs in Oxford if they cannot afford to live close enough to their place of work.
- 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, cleaning and servicing. Many of these workers may find themselves living away from the city, with expensive and time-consuming commutes, 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 can be prevented from moving on with their lives with a partner or family.
- Employer-linked housing is a bespoke approach that was introduced in Oxford in the LP2036. It involves housing being developed on specified sites, by specified key employers, to provide a means of delivering affordable housing for their own staff. This allows those employers to help to address their own recruitment and retention issues by providing housing on their own land.
- For most of the specified sites, employer-linked housing will only be one element of use on the site, for example operational hospital uses will be retained on the hospital sites.

Policy Implementation

- The policy provides an alternative means of delivering affordable housing, to supplement the affordable homes delivered via Policy H2.
- Employer-linked affordable housing provides 100% affordable housing.
- The policy is designed to enable delivery of on-site affordable housing on sites that would not be suitable for delivering housing to the usual requirements of

Policy H2. It is not intended as an alternative to H2, it is a supplementary approach to be used only in specific circumstances.

- The policy is restricted to specified sites and specified employers, which have been chosen for their suitability, availability and potential capacity to cater to the housing needs of essential workers, and also to avoid the policy being used to circumvent normal affordable housing contribution policies or the provision of social rented housing.
- The tenure mix and size of dwellings on employer-linked sites needs to respond to the needs and circumstances of the employees, there is not a one size fits all approach.
- Additional criteria in the policy collectively ensure that the benefits truly outweigh the compromises.
- In the event that market housing is also 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.
- 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 40% 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.

POLICY H4: 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
 - Slade House
 - Manzil Way Resource Centre
 - Littlemore Mental Health 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 f)iii).

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 City 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 who are not directly employed by the NHS; 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; and
- f) A legal agreement will be required to secure the benefits of this policy. In addition, the legal agreement will be used to:
 - i) agree the allocations policy;
 - ii) agree an appropriate re-letting of units in the property in the event that there are units vacant for more than 6 months;
 - iii) 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

Local planning authorities are required 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. There is also a 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. Helping to meet specialist housing needs is important to creating mixed and balanced communities.

MIX OF DWELLING SIZES (NUMBER OF BEDROOMS)

Policy context

- The NPPF sets the expectation that within the overall aim of meeting an area's identified housing need, an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community should be sought. This policy contributes towards this by shaping the mix of dwellings sizes (number of bedrooms).
- To inform the % requirements in Policy H7, evidence from the Specialist Housing Needs evidence (2025, Iceni) was combined with factors from the affordable housing register including mix of unit sizes, need to downsize and the existing housing stock.
- Some sites and locations will be more suitable for different types of dwelling.
- The plan should aim to meet the full variety of needs over the plan period, which includes the need for family housing, with sufficient flexibility to respond to changing needs over time.

Policy implementation

- The % requirements have been proposed as a range to allow for flexibility, in response to constraining elements such as site size or layout.
- The % mix set out in Policy H7 should be understood as relevant only to the affordable housing element of a site, not the market element. However, the overall mix should still be explained and justified. The relevant evidence base that may inform the appropriate mix includes the Specialist Housing Needs evidence (2025, Iceni), consideration of the housing register, demographics, household sizes and trends over time. Also relevant is the nature of the site, local context and the need to make efficient use of land.

POLICY H5: MIX OF DWELLING SIZES (NUMBER OF BEDROOMS)

Planning permission will be granted for residential development where it is demonstrated that it will deliver an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes that responds to the site context, including local needs, and that it results in mixed and balanced communities. Evidence to support the proposed mix should be proportionate to the application and may include evidence from the Specialist Housing Needs Evidence, market demand and design considerations. Evidence should also demonstrate 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):

Size of dwelling	% of the affordable housing element
1 bedroom homes (all 2 person unless by agreement based on specific need)	20-35%
2 bedroom homes	30-45%
3 bedroom homes	25- 35%
4+bedroom homes	5-15%

For affordable rented forms of homes for those 65 and over, the mix should be 35-50% 1 bed and the remainder 2-bed+.

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

Size of dwelling	% of the affordable housing element
1 bedroom homes (all 2 person unless by agreement based on specific need.)	20-30%
2 bedroom homes	45-55%
3+ bedroom homes	20- 30%
4+bedroom homes	5-15%

LOSS OF DWELLINGS

Policy context

- Oxford cannot meet its full housing need, and as such it is important to ensure that the existing stock of homes is protected.
- However, it is also the case that the lack of available land and sites in Oxford can constrain development of other facilities needed to support the local community, which sometimes are best delivered by conversion of an existing house.

Policy implementation

- The policy generally resists any net loss of dwellings, including for short-term lets.
- The policy allows some flexibility in particular circumstances, in order to allow facilities important to the local community to come forward. Where this does happen, the policy requires that the conversion is done in such a way that the unit could be converted back to a dwelling in the future.

- The policy also ensures that the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the local area.

POLICY H6: 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 HMO that are suitable for occupation by a single household), except in one of the following circumstances:

- 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
- 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
- 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:

- It must be demonstrated that the layout of the unit retains capacity to be turned back into a residential unit in future; and
- 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 (HMO)

Policy Context

- The NPPF sets out an expectation that within the overall aim of meeting an area's identified housing need, an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community should be sought. This policy contributes towards this by shaping the approach for the supply of HMO.
- HMO offer the only available and affordable solution for many people as renting individually or buying a property in Oxford is too expensive.
- It's important to monitor and control the supply of this type of home as high concentrations of HMO can result in changes to the character of the local area.

Policy Implementation

- A percentage threshold has been included to ensure there is not an overconcentration of HMO in certain streets/ areas of the city
- The policy includes a requirement for HMO applications to comply with good practice guidance on HMO amenities and facilities

- The policy does not allow new purpose-built HMO as this type of accommodation reduces potential for delivering housing that meets greater needs (e.g. social rented housing).

POLICY H7: HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Planning permission for conversions to or new HMO, 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.

New purpose-built HMO will not be permitted.

LOCATION OF NEW STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Policy Context

- It is important to acknowledge, support and build on the vital economic and educational role of the universities and other educational institutions, whilst managing potential adverse impacts that a large number of students resident in Oxford may have on established communities and on the availability of general market and affordable housing.
- The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) recognises that encouraging more dedicated student accommodation may provide low-cost housing that takes the pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock.
- The City Council accepts that some additional student accommodation should continue to be provided to meet the accommodation needs of both universities.

However, aiming to accommodate all students in purpose-built student accommodation is not a sensible approach for a number of reasons:

- Purpose-built student accommodation will not be suitable for the whole student body.
- It could use up sites better suited to general housing.
- It could lead to a dominance of student accommodation resulting in less availability, loss of opportunities to bring forward affordable housing and result in a high proportion of transient occupants in the area that would undermine the desire to deliver mixed and balanced communities.
- Not all types of students have the same accommodation needs or impacts on the community, for example post-graduate researchers and those on vocational courses tend to be working alongside their course and student halls may not be suited.
- Some students may already live in or near the city at home, and they do not need accommodation.
- Delivering student accommodation in only the most suitable locations can help to ensure that quieter residential streets are not subject to unacceptable changes in character or increased activity.
- Student accommodation is generally not used for every week of the year, giving opportunities for efficient use of student accommodation outside of semester or term-time, if well managed.

Policy Implementation

- Occupation of new student accommodation is limited to full-time students enrolled on courses of one academic year or more.
- The policy allows for slightly more flexibility towards location of post-graduate accommodation than graduate accommodation, reflecting its slightly different impacts.
- The policy ensures that existing student accommodation sites are not lost to other uses and that any loss, must be provided for by at least an equivalent amount of new student accommodation.
- The policy does not restrict use of the accommodation outside semester or term-time by allowing it to be used by short-stay visitors.
- Larger schemes are required to include indoor communal amenity space for students to gather and socialise, which should minimise impacts outside the accommodation.
- The policy allows only operational and disabled parking for new student accommodation.

POLICY H8: 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 25 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; and
- f) It provides affordable housing contributions where required in compliance with Policy H3.

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

Policy Context

- Higher education institutions offer courses for students of 18+, many of whom move to live in the city and therefore generate additional accommodation needs.
- In order to balance competing demands on land in Oxford, there is a need to ensure that the expansion of numbers of students at higher education institutions does not occur without consideration of how they will be accommodated. Minimising the number of students who are reliant on living outside of university-provided accommodation so that housing can be retained for market and affordable housing is a priority for this Plan.
- Not all students have the same needs, for example those on vocational courses with work placements away from Oxford (e.g. student teachers, nurses) would not require accommodation for that period, and postgraduates may have different needs to undergraduates.
- The threshold levels for each institution have been reconsidered and have been based on the latest forecasting needs for each university, whilst ensuring they are still effective. They are to be re-considered from the academic year starting in 2033 as forecasting student numbers becomes less reliable over time.

Policy Implementation

- The threshold is limited to the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation.
- Not all expansion of these institutions will create additional accommodation capacity for students, and if institutions can demonstrate that their proposals for academic or administrative accommodation will not generate an associated increase in capacity for student residences then the policy does not apply. Where that increased capacity for students is generated, it should be demonstrated that the additional students may be accommodated through provision of additional university-provided student accommodation.
- From 2033, 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 annual Authority Monitoring Report will be used to identify the current numbers and set a threshold above this, reflecting any anticipated short-term changes, for the year ahead.

POLICY H9: 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 facilities for higher education institutions where it can be demonstrated that either:

- a) The new facilities 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 facilities (that generates or facilitates an increase in student numbers) for the University of Oxford, where the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation, does not exceed the level of university owned or managed accommodation by more than the following thresholds at the time of the application:

- Until the academic year starting in 2033: 3,100
- Academic year starting 2033 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 facilities (that generates or facilitates an increase in student numbers) for Oxford Brookes University, where it can be demonstrated that the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation, does not exceed the level of university owned or managed accommodation or known purpose-built student accommodation by more than the following thresholds at the time of the application:

- Until the academic year starting in 2033: 5,750
- Academic year starting 2033 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.

HOMES FOR TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES

Policy Context

- The Council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on the Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat dwellers Accommodation Assessment. This includes taking into account waiting lists and whether there are members of the travelling community living in bricks and mortar. It does not identify current or forecast need for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Oxford. 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.

Policy Implementation

- The criteria-based policy provides a framework for assessing planning applications for these types of specialist housing should they be submitted.
- Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are defined as two separate groups with different criteria applicable to each. The relevant criteria should be applied, depending on which group the application is for.

POLICY H10: HOMES FOR TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES

Proposals for permanent or transit residential pitches or yards 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 City Council evidence base has adequately demonstrated a clear need for the pitch/yard in the city, and the number, type, and tenure of pitches/yards proposed, which cannot be met by a lawful existing or available allocated site; and
- b) The pitch/yard is accessible to facilities and services including local shops, healthcare, education and employment by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- c) The pitch/yard 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 pitch/yard; and
- d) Proposals make adequate access to or provision for essential on-site facilities that meet best practice for modern Traveller pitch/ yard requirements, including, play areas, and provision for servicing including water supply, electricity and recycling and waste management (and for Travelling Showpeople space for the storage and maintenance of equipment appropriate to their business activities); and
- e) The pitch/yard will provide an acceptable living environment and the health and safety of the pitch/yard's potential residents should not be put at risk. Factors to take into account include: flood risk (pitch/yard should not be located in Flood Zone 3a or 3b), site contamination, air quality, and noise; and
- f) The pitch/yard 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

Policy Context

- 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.
- 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.
- The City Council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on the assessment of need for accommodation for boat dwellers. The analysis of houseboat need suggests that there is additional need for residential moorings across waterways in Oxfordshire, the majority of need arising from Oxford, which has a need with a range of 20-50 additional moorings.
- There is limited potential for additional sites in Oxford because of constraints such as the need to maintain safe navigation of the main river channels and avoiding conflict with the operational requirements of both the Canal and River Trust and Environment Agency.

Policy Implementation

- The criteria-based policy provides a framework for assessing planning applications for this type of specialist housing if sites do come forward.

POLICY H11: 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) Proposals do not impede navigation, navigational safety, or operational requirements of the waterway including use of footpaths;
- b) Proposals will maintain or enhance the amenity, visual character, water quality, historic and ecological value of the waterway or nearby land;
- c) Proposals are close to existing services and amenities including potable water, electricity (including consideration of demand and need for EV boat charging) and waste disposal;
- d) Proposals are served by adequate pedestrian/cycling access and public transport facilities and services including shops, healthcare, education and employment, and vehicular access for emergency vehicles; and
- e) Proposals have investigated impacts of flood risk and addressed provision for safe access/egress and/or evacuation plans where appropriate.

OLDER PERSONS AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Policy context

- Nationally, the population is aging, and whilst Oxford has a younger than average age profile of residents (12% aged 65+ compared to 19.8% in the South East, 2024, ONS), the population of those 65+ in Oxford is expected to grow by around 35.9%-38.7% by 2045 (representing 7,336-7,905 additional people in this age range).
- The NPPF lists older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with care and care homes) and people with disabilities as groups whose housing needs should be understood and attempted to be met.
- The Oxfordshire County Council Specialist Housing Need Assessment 2024, and the Oxford Updated Specialist Housing Needs Evidence (Iceni, 2025) that expands on it, give a recent picture of the need for supported housing in Oxford.
- For market accommodation, it is expected that the market will respond by bringing forward specialist housing types.
- To be viable, specialist housing developments need to be of a reasonably large size, so that there are enough rooms to justify the on-site staff and facilities. Because of the lack of large sites in Oxford, there are limited opportunities to allocate parts of sites specifically for this use.
- People in this housing type may have limited mobility and it is important that they are in accessible locations so residents do not become isolated.

Policy implementation

- Provision of new extra-care and elderly persons' accommodation is generally supported by the policy approach.
- The criteria are intended to ensure that supported accommodation is well designed, with good access to local facilities, and that it is well integrated into a mixed community.

POLICY H12: OLDER PERSONS AND OTHER SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION

Planning permission for accommodation for older people and supported and specialist care 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, gardens and amenity space of appropriate size and quality for residents
- e) Provides affordable housing contributions where required in compliance with Policy H3.

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.

SELF BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING

Policy Context

- As required under section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, the City Council is required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to duties under sections 2 and 2A of that Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. Self and custom-build properties could provide market or affordable housing.
- Proposals for community-led housing will be supported because of the benefits they are expected to bring in terms of community cohesion, permanent affordability and sustainable development.
- 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. There are several organised groups with ambitions for providing community-led housing in Oxford.

Policy Implementation

- A percentage threshold has been included to help deliver a supply of sites for self-build and custom housebuilding
- The threshold only applies to sites of 100 or more homes in order to avoid potential adverse impacts on the design/layout of the site
- A time limit is specified so that if the plots don't sell they can still be brought forward with the rest of the site (and would need to comply with normal policies about affordable housing).
- This policy doesn't apply to certain types of development because delivery of self-build within these kinds of development is not likely to be feasible.

POLICY H13 SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING

Proposals for self-build and custom-build 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 six 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.

Community-led housing

Proposals for community-led housing will be supported because of the benefits they are expected to bring in terms of community cohesion, permanent affordability and sustainable development.

Community-led housing will not necessarily meet the requirements for self-build or custom build but has potential to if the community-led housing group have the primary input into the final design and layout.

BOARDING SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

Policy Context:

- There are many boarding schools in Oxford with children aged 18 and under. Most of these schools are campus-based, so that the children live in accommodation on the teaching campus.
- Because these types of developments are for children, they are not counted in calculations of housing need, or in monitoring of housing completions, but they do sometimes seek similar types of sites to residential developments.
- If boarding accommodation comes forward outside of the main school site, this could have a variety of negative implications such as:
 - Preventing 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
 - Potential negative impact on the amenity of surrounding residents, for example, if the new accommodation is a conversion of a property not designed for the purpose

Policy Implementation:

- The policy is aimed to minimise the conflicts and potential negative impacts and ensuring a good living environment for the children
- Proposals will only be accepted on campus or adjacent, to avoid competing with residential sites that help meet the wider housing need

POLICY H14: BOARDING SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for new or extended boarding school accommodation for children ages 18 and under will only be accepted where it is on or immediately adjacent to a main teaching campus of the school the children will attend, and it is in accordance with the other policies of the Development Plan.

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