

Vale of White Horse Affordable Housing Guidance



MARCH 2023

Vale of White Horse District Council

Affordable Housing Guidance

Introduction

Vale of White Horse District Council seeks the delivery of affordable housing to meet the housing needs of those whose needs are not met by the. As a council we have identified the need for affordable homes as a key priority within our [Corporate Plan](#).

Affordable housing is defined nationally through the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), and is key to addressing housing need in the district, where house prices and market rents are significantly higher than the national average.

Well-designed, high-quality affordable homes also play a very important role in the health and welfare of our communities, as well as contributing to carbon reduction.

The council's Local Plan seeks the delivery of affordable housing on new developments through specific policies. These are detailed in our adopted [Local Plan](#).

In addition to the policies and accompanying text within the Local Plan, we have also published additional guidance that is directly relevant to the delivery of affordable housing. This addresses matters such as design quality and layout.

Planning applications for residential developments are considered against the relevant policies in the Development Plan, including the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. This is taken into account alongside national planning policy, national planning guidance, and any relevant supplementary planning documents and guidance.

Delivering high quality affordable homes

We have published a number of documents that relate to the delivery of housing, including affordable housing, which aims to provide additional information and guidance on the delivery of new homes across the district. The links to these documents can be found within this guidance note. Together these documents set out the standards needed to enable a development proposal to be policy compliant.

Please note that the information provided in this document is not exhaustive in relation to the delivery of affordable housing. This document pulls out relevant planning policies for affordable housing, but the Local Plan should be read as a whole and other policies, together with those of Neighbourhood Plans, may be

relevant. As an on-line resource, this document will be updated on a regular basis in order to ensure that it remains up to date.

Existing Policies and Guidance

Local Plan 2031

The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 is divided into two parts. [Local Plan Part 1](#) was adopted at Full Council in December 2016 and covers strategic sites and policies. [Local Plan Part 2](#) was adopted by Full Council on 9 October 2019 and covers detailed policies and additional sites.

Local Plan Part 1:

Core Policy 22: Housing Mix

This policy seeks to ensure that the right mix of housing sizes, types and tenures are provided on all residential development sites. The mix of housing should have regard to the council's latest evidence and Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence for the relevant area.

Core Policy 24: Affordable Housing

Securing new affordable housing on-site as part of new developments is the most effective way to provide new affordable homes. The onsite provision of completed units by a developer is the council's preferred approach and it is expected that the vast majority of residential developments will be capable of delivering affordable housing on the same site. This policy principally addresses amount and tenure split.

Core Policy 25: Rural Exception Sites

The Rural Exception Site policy is aimed at providing homes for local people, who are unable to rent or buy a property on the open market in rural locations. Schemes should be supported in principle by the local community, as represented by the relevant parish council.

Core Policy 26: Accommodating Current and Future needs of the Aging Population

The district has an ageing population. The high level of growth in this age group demonstrates the importance of making sure that the current and future housing needs of older people are met. This policy sets out the requirements sought for older persons accommodation.

Local Plan Part 2:

Development Policy 1: Self and Custom build

We will support the provision of plots for sale to self and custom builders. Self and Custom-Build plots may contribute towards affordable housing provision and will need to comply with Core Policy 24: Affordable Housing.

Development Policy 2: Space Standards

This policy covers all tenures but includes specific requirements in relation to affordable homes. The [Nationally Described Space Standard](#) identifies standards for the space within new dwellings and are suitable for application across all tenures. In addition to setting out space standards this policy also sets out the requirement for accessible and adaptable, and wheelchair user dwellings.

Neighbourhood plans

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory Development Plan.

Any proposal within a Neighbourhood Plan area should be in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise. A full list of current and emerging neighbourhood plans, together with links to the individual plans themselves can be found on our [website](#).

Additional Guidance and documents

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

We can require developers (under what are called 'Section 106 Agreements') to contribute towards the infrastructure needed to mitigate the direct impact of their development and to meet planning policy requirements. This can be in the form of financial contributions, the provision of affordable housing, the provision of land or restriction of use of land or the direct delivery of facilities. The Council formally adopted its revised [Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document](#) on 1 October 2021. The SPD came into effect on 1 November 2021.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is money we get from housing developers as part of their permission to build new homes in our district. The money is used to fund community facilities, such as new schools, roads and healthcare facilities to support people moving into the area. Further information, together with the council's CIL Charging Schedule can be found on our [website](#).

Joint council guidance and documents

Some guidance is common to both Vale of White Horse District Council, and our neighbouring district of South Oxfordshire District Council. Where it may be applicable to the delivery of affordable homes, it is listed below.

Joint Design Guide

The [Joint Design Guide](#) is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners through all stages of the design and planning process to achieve high quality and sustainable development. The guide is not specific to the delivery of affordable housing, it is applicable across all tenures.

First Homes

First Homes is a low-cost home ownership tenure which was introduced by the government in 2021. It now forms part of the affordable housing tenure requirement on most new developments. As this requirement was introduced after the adoption of the Local Plan, we have published a [First Homes interim policy statement](#).

Housing Delivery Strategy

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse councils will soon be publishing a new Joint Housing Delivery Strategy. We will include a link to the document here once it is available on our websites.

Net Zero Carbon Tool Kit

The [Net-Zero Toolkit](#) (jointly produced by West Oxfordshire District Council, Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council) has been designed to assist in the planning, design and construction of both new build and retrofit housing projects and we consider this to be a useful guide when considering energy efficiency measures in development proposals. Though not specific to the delivery of affordable homes, it is a highly relevant document which should be taken into consideration.

Our Delivery Partners

We work with a range of partners to deliver new affordable homes in our district. Our Registered Provider partners (housing associations) play a key role in the delivery of new homes. Early engagement between prospective developers and Registered Providers can help significantly in bringing forward high-quality developments which contribute to the creation of mixed and balanced communities. We can provide you with a list of our Registered Provider partners currently active in the district by emailing the [Affordable Housing Team](#).

Summary

This guidance note brings together relevant policies and guidance associated with the delivery of affordable housing in the Vale of White Horse. We will keep this note under review and update it periodically, but please bear in mind it provides a snapshot in time of the relevant policies and guidance. It is intended to assist with the delivery of high-quality, policy compliant, affordable housing development. The policies and guidance listed are not exhaustive, and any planning application should ensure conformity with all appropriate national and locally published policy and guidance. Please [contact us](#) with any specific queries about the delivery of new affordable homes.

Alternative formats of this publication, a summary of its contents or specific sections, are available on request.

These include large print, Braille, audio, email, easy read and alternative languages.

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