



West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 – Potential Staged Housing Requirement

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I. Introduction

- 1.1 During the recent Local Plan hearing session on Matter 16 – Five Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Land held on 20 July 2017, there was some discussion about the possibility of adopting a ‘staged housing requirement’ whereby instead of the overall housing requirement applying in a uniform manner across the whole plan period (2011 – 2031) a lower requirement would be applied initially and be subsequently increased towards the end of the plan period.
- 1.2 The Council agreed during the hearings to consider this matter further and work up in more detail how it might apply.
- 1.3 In his post-hearings letter to the Council dated 25 July (IN027) the Inspector confirmed that the Council would be producing a detailed note on how a staged housing requirement could operate in order to assist his consideration of whether or not it is an appropriate way forward for the Local Plan.
- 1.4 This note has been prepared in response and has been provided to the Inspector as well as being made available as part of the examination library (EXAM023).

2. Background

- 2.1 As a result of discussions held during the Stage 2 Local Plan hearings in May 2017 (in particular Matter 6.6 relating to five year housing land supply) the Inspector asked the Council to produce a paper setting out its preferred approach/way forward for the Local Plan in the event that it was concluded that a deliverable 5-year supply of housing land could not be demonstrated.
- 2.2 The Council’s response ‘Additional Paper - Preferred Option in Absence of Five Year Land Supply’. (EXAM011) was published on 16 June 2017.
- 2.3 One of the options put forward by the Council was to adopt a staged housing requirement as described below:

‘One option would be to amend the approach to the overall housing requirement to reflect that the Local Plan allocates a significant number of large strategic sites and that, due to lead in times, many of the land allocations will not come forward until the latter part of the plan period. A staged or stepped approach to the housing requirement for the District as a whole would therefore be justified and appropriate. Under this approach the West Oxfordshire requirement would remain as 13,200 homes, but the annual requirement up to 2021 could for example be reduced to 600 dwellings per annum with a consequent increase in the annual requirement post 2021 to 720 dwellings per annum. This would complement the approach adopted for Oxford City’s unmet housing need, and also recognise that housing delivery in the early part of the plan period was significantly lower than now proposed in the Local Plan’.

- 2.4 The Council identified the adoption of a staged housing requirement such as this as its preferred approach if it were concluded that a significant shortfall in the 5-year housing land supply exists.

3. Proposed approach

- 3.1 There are clearly a number of ways in which a staged housing requirement could be applied however the table below sets out what the Council considers to be reasonable and achievable.

Year	West Oxfordshire's Needs	Oxford City's Needs	Combined Annual Requirement
2011 - 2017	550 per annum		550 per annum
2017 – 2018	550		550
2018 – 2019	550		550
2019 – 2020	550		550
2020 – 2021	550		550
2021 – 2022	525	275	800
2022 - 2023	525	275	800
2023 – 2024	700	275	975
2024 - 2025	850	275	1125
2025 – 2026	850	275	1125
2026 – 2027	850	275	1125
2027 – 2028	850	275	1125
2028 - 2029	850	275	1125
2029 – 2030	850	275	1125
2030 - 2031	850	275	1125
TOTALS	13,200	2,750	15,950

- 3.2 Thus during the first 6 years of the plan period (2011 – 2017) a housing requirement of 550 dwellings per annum (dpa) would apply. This would result in a past 'under-supply' of 1,318 dwellings in the period 2011 - 2017 (i.e. 6yrs x 550 = 3300 – 1,982 completions).
- 3.3 The requirement would remain at 550 dpa from 2017/18 to 2020/21 and thereafter the combined annual requirement would increase gradually up to 1,125 dpa which includes 275dpa from 2021 – 2031 to address unmet housing need from Oxford City.
- 3.4 The overall level of provision is 15,950 dwellings including 13,200 for West Oxfordshire's identified housing need and 2,750 dwellings for Oxford's unmet housing need.
- 3.5 Attached at Appendix 1 is a 'working draft' of the first part of Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes which sets out how this staged approach could be reflected in policy wording if it was considered to be an appropriate mechanism.
- 3.6 Existing text is shown as 'normal' text, new text is shown as underline text; deleted text is shown as ~~strikethrough~~ text.

4. Plan Review

- 4.1 If a staged housing requirement were to be introduced as outlined above it would need to be accompanied by a commitment to reviewing the Local Plan if, post adoption, housing delivery were to consistently fall below required levels, or if it became clear that the proposed spatial strategy was likely to fail to deliver the housing requirement across the plan period. This is also reflected in the draft policy wording attached at Appendix 1.

- 4.2 There would also be some other consequential amendments for example to Section 1 – Introduction which currently includes some reference to plan review.

Potential re-wording of first part of Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes (Note: this is a working draft and relates to the first part of Policy H2 only. Further proposed changes to the second part of Policy H2 will be made available in due course).

Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes

~~The Council will deliver~~ Provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031.

This will include 13,200 homes in the period 2011 – 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire’s housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 – 2031 to meet Oxford City’s housing needs.

The housing requirement will be phased over the plan period in accordance with the following table.

Year	West Oxfordshire’s Needs	Oxford City’s Needs	Combined Annual Requirement
2011 - 2017	550 per annum		550 per annum
2017 – 2018	550		550
2018 – 2019	550		550
2019 – 2020	550		550
2020 – 2021	550		550
2021 – 2022	525	275	800
2022 - 2023	525	275	800
2023 – 2024	700	275	975
2024 - 2025	850	275	1125
2025 – 2026	850	275	1125
2026 – 2027	850	275	1125
2027 – 2028	850	275	1125
2028 - 2029	850	275	1125
2029 – 2030	850	275	1125
2030 - 2031	850	275	1125
TOTALS	13,200	2750	15,950

~~With regard to 5 year housing land supply the Council will apply the residual (Liverpool) approach with any under-supply (backlog) of housing to be delivered over the remaining plan period to 2031. The 5 year housing land supply is to be calculated on the basis of the phased requirement set out in this table. The additional provision being made for requirement of 2,750 dwellings to meet Oxford City’s housing needs will be incorporated into housing delivery assumptions from 2021 onwards, is set out separately for illustrative purposes but delivery and supply will be assessed against the combined annual requirement.~~

When assessing the 5-year housing land supply the Council will apply the residual (Liverpool) approach with any under-supply (backlog) of housing to be delivered over the remaining plan period to 2031.

If, post adoption of the Local Plan, the phased housing requirement is consistently not delivered, or it becomes clear that this is likely to be the case during the remainder of the plan period, then the Council will undertake an early review of the plan. Such a review will consider up to date evidence on housing needs (including unmet needs from neighbouring authorities) and, if necessary, will allocate additional sites for housing.

The required level of housing delivery of at least 15,950 dwellings will be achieved through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, site allocations (strategic and non-strategic sites) and windfall development.

Neighbourhood Plans may also contribute towards additional housing provision over and above this indicative requirement.

Note that the supporting text to Policy H2 would need to be updated to reflect the policy changes outlined above. Wording along the following lines could be included to clarify the approach towards the staged housing requirement.

The staged requirement is necessary in order to enable sufficient time for large strategic sites to start delivering. It should not be seen as a target and over-delivery against these targets, particularly in the early years, will be encouraged.

Oxford's unmet needs are set out separately in the phased requirement table for illustrative purposes only. As the policy makes clear, housing supply and delivery will be assessed against the combined totals which will be derived from annual completions across the district. Thus, whilst it is anticipated that Oxford's unmet needs will be largely accommodated through delivery of the Eynsham Garden Village, the housing requirement is not disaggregated so that under or over supply at this location will not be treated separately when calculating the five year housing land supply.

The policy includes a requirement for an early review of the plan in circumstances where, post adoption of the Local Plan, the Council has consistently failed to delivery housing against the phased requirement or where it appears likely that this will be the case. For the purposes of this early review mechanism, the Council will have consistently failed to deliver against the phased requirement if it does not deliver the required housing number for 2 or more consecutive years or where it appears likely that this will be the case. Circumstances where such a failure might appear likely would include situations where the delivery of one or more strategic site is significantly delayed and this appears likely to result in a consistent under delivery against the phased requirement.