


Oxford Core Strategy Examination Statement of Oxford City Council		www.oxford.gov.uk  OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
C/M5/3	Matter 5 – Housing Issue 3 – A balanced mix of homes	

i) What is meant by a balanced mix of housing?

A balanced mix of housing is that considered to best meet the varied needs of Oxford’s present and future residents and promote vibrant and sustainable communities. This is considered to fit well with the requirement of PPS3 (CD11/3) to create mixed communities through a variety of housing for different types of household and the desire for “community cohesion” of PPS1 (CD11/1). This continues the thrust of Policy HS.8 in the Local Plan (CD7/6).

ii) What is the evidence that supports such an approach? Does it properly reflect the SHMA?

Policy H4 of the South East Plan (CD10/1) requires that Local Authorities should identify the full range of housing needs and should require an appropriate range and mix of housing opportunities.

The SHMA focuses on the need to analyse and define the current situation as per core output 2 of the 2007 HMA Guidance. However as current National Guidance, particularly in PPS1 and PPS3 makes clear, the approach must be to deliver sustainable, vibrant and cohesive communities - delivered through meeting people’s diverse needs, specifically by providing a mix of type and tenure of housing.

The City Council has gone further than what a SHMA might do, through the Balance of Dwellings Study (CD14/3). This identified the mix of the existing stock and demographic changes, as well as the supply of housing. The Balance of Dwellings Study fed directly into the development of the Balance of Dwellings SPD (CD/7/14). Further work on the mixes appropriate to particular strategic sites is provided in the current and forthcoming AAPs.

iii) Should the detail be left to an SPD?

The Balance of Dwellings SPD (CD7/14) was adopted in January 2008. Since then it has proved pleasingly robust, with 73% of Balance of Dwellings SPD based reasons for refusal being upheld by inspectors at appeal. Of course, it is envisaged that the most desirable mix of housing will change over time, and the opportunity to review an SPD provides a timely and appropriate tool by which to respond to changing

demographics, social trends and economic circumstances. The SPD also goes into considerable detail about the mixes appropriate to different parts of the city which would be too detailed for the Core Strategy.

iv) How should achieving a balanced mix be reflected in policy and practice?

As mentioned above, the SPD is expected to be kept up to date by timely review. It is also to be hoped that under the emerging development management approach, the actual use of the document by officers determining applications will facilitate this review process and result in a policy approach which provides both certainty and a level of flexibility.

v) Have all types of specialist housing been sufficiently considered? (e.g. Extra Care Housing)

All types of specialist housing have been considered, including market housing, affordable housing, student accommodation and accommodation for travelling communities. Extra Care Housing is self-contained housing which contributes to housing targets. There is no policy preventing its delivery on normal housing sites.

Indeed, Extra Care Housing has previously been delivered in Oxford without specific policy requirements. In the past, sites have been allocated in the Local Plan. Development Site 26 (DS.26) at the former Donnington School delivered 20 Extra Care Homes for older people despite only being an option in the policy rather than a requirement. We recognise that the County Council have an Extra Care Housing Strategy, and with this in mind, further consideration to these matters will be given in the Site Allocations DPD, potentially including sites currently used as residential care homes of which there are some in the SHLAA Update (CD15/1 pp24-25).