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SANDLEFORD PARK

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT

Bloor Homes and Sandleford Farm Partnership

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Affordable Housing Statement accompanies an outline planning application submitted on behalf of Bloor Homes and Sandleford Farm Partnership to bring forward development at the Sandleford Park Strategic Site; a site allocated for development in the adopted West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

1.2 The submitted application seeks planning permission for a residential-led, mixed-use development as follows:

Up to 1,000 new homes; 80 extra care housing units (Use Class C3) as part of the affordable housing provision; a new 2 form entry primary school (D1); expansion land for Park House Academy School; a local centre to comprise flexible commercial floorspace (A1-A5 up to 2,150 sq m, B1a up to 200 sq m) and D1 use (up to 500sq m); the formation of new means of access onto Monks Lane; new open space including the laying out of a new country park; drainage infrastructure; walking and cycling infrastructure and other associated infrastructure works.

1.3 Matters not reserved for subsequent approval relate to two points of access from Monks Lane.

1.4 As part of the proposed development, new affordable housing is to be provided pursuant to Core Strategy Policies CS3 Sandleford Park and CS6 Affordable Housing.

1.5 This Statement provides an overarching explanation of the affordable housing element of the scheme, the framework provided by relevant tiers of planning policy, and the scheme's compatibility with Development Plan policies and guidance in the Sandleford Park SPD. In terms of its structure, it comprises:

- Section 2: provides contextual information;
- Section 3: explains the Core Strategy policies relevant to Affordable Housing;
- Section 4: summarises guidance in the Sandleford Park Supplementary Planning Document;
- Section 5: describes the development proposals, including the proposed affordable housing provision; and
- Section 6: provides a summary.



2 Contextual Information

2.1 A long established planning principle is that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which may properly be taken into account in deciding planning applications.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in 2012 but has more recently been revised in 2019. Paragraphs 7 to 10 deal with the purpose of the planning system as a means of achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 8 identifies the three dimensions of sustainable development namely social, economic and environmental which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The social dimension is described in the following terms:

social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being

2.3 Paragraph 59 confirms that the Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes. To achieve this, it is important that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

2.4 Paragraph 61 states that:

...the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

2.5 Paragraph 62 states that:

Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

off-site provision or an appropriate financial in lieu can be robustly justified; and

the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

2.6 Paragraph 64 states that:

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. (Certain



other exemptions are also listed)

2.7 The Government's definition of affordable housing constitutes the following:

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- A) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) 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); and (c) 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 and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan- preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.*
- 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.*

2.8 Within this context, there exists an established affordable housing need in West Berkshire.



- 2.9 In terms of the Development Plan, paragraph 5.26 of the Core Strategy explains that it is an area of high property prices relative to the level of income and that many local people have difficulty gaining access to suitable housing on the open market.
- 2.10 Paragraph 5.27 further explains that the West Berkshire Housing Need Assessment undertaken in 2007 identified a shortfall of between 560 and 850 new affordable homes across the District per year to 2011. This is a level of need in excess of the housing requirement set out in Policy CS1 of an average of 525 new dwellings (both market and affordable) each year to 2026.
- 2.11 In 2012, an Update Report was published. It found, amongst other things, a shortfall of around 746 affordable homes each year within West Berkshire, based on a backlog of just under 4,000 households on the waiting list and taking into account estimates of newly arising need in the future.
- 2.12 Accordingly, Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy establishes the approach to provision of affordable housing on new residential schemes. This is described in the following Section.
- 2.13 West Berkshire Council, along with the other local authorities in Berkshire and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, commissioned consultants to carry out a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to inform its Local Plan. Its conclusions were published in 2016. For West Berkshire it indicates that the level of Objectively Assessed Housing is greater than that within this Core Strategy presently – 665 dwellings per annum compared with 525 in Policy CS1. In the SHMA, the net need for affordable housing is 189 dwellings per annum; this is comparable with the levels of affordable housing identified in the previous Assessment and which underpins the Core Strategy’s affordable housing policy. This further demonstrates the need both for the delivery of Sandleford Park as a matter of principle and the positive contribution it will make towards affordable housing provision.
- 2.14 The SHMA estimates the size of accommodation required by number of bedrooms (2013 to 2036) for the Affordable sector. Tables 108 and 140 are reproduced below for West Berkshire Local Authority Area and the Western Berkshire Housing Markey Area.

Table 1: Strategic Housing Market Assessment – affordable housing mix

		1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
West Berkshire	%	48.7%	32.7%	17.0%	1.6%
Western Berkshire HMA		30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%



3 West Berkshire Core Strategy Policies

3.1 There are two policies in the Core Strategy that relate to Affordable Housing provision at the application site.

3.2 Firstly, Core Policy CS3 relates to the Sandlesford Park allocation. This policy lists the Council's parameters for achieving a sustainable and high-quality mixed-use development.

3.3 As regards housing, the first criterion of the policy states:

- Phased delivery of up to 2,000 dwellings, of which at least 40% will be affordable and with an emphasis on family housing. At least half the housing is planned to be delivered by 2026.

3.4 Secondly, Core Policy CS6 specifically concerns the provision of affordable housing. It states:

In order to address the need for affordable housing in West Berkshire a proportion of affordable homes will be sought from residential development. The Council's priority and starting expectation will be for affordable housing to be provided on-site in line with Government policy (48).

Subject to the economics of provision, the following levels of affordable housing provision will be sought by negotiation:- On development sites of 15 dwellings or more (or 0.5 hectares or more) 30% provision will be sought on previously developed land, and 40% on greenfield land.

Proposed provision below the levels set out above should be fully justified by the applicant through clear evidence set out in a viability assessment (using an agreed toolkit) which will be used to help inform the negotiated process.

In determining residential applications the Council will assess the site size, suitability, and type of units to be delivered. The Council will seek a tenure split of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate affordable units, but will take into consideration the identified local need and the site specifics, including funding and the economics of provision.

The affordable units will be appropriately integrated within the development. The Council will expect units to remain affordable so as to meet the needs of both current and future occupiers. Where this is not relevant or possible, the subsidy will be recycled for the provision of future affordable housing.

3.5 These policies have informed discussions between the Applicants and West Berkshire Council's Housing Officer and the approach to affordable housing proposed as part of the development.



4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

4.1 In addition to Policies CS3 and CS6 in the Core Strategy, the Council also has Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) which are relevant to the provision of affordable housing:

- Sandleford Park SPD – March 2015
- Planning Obligations SPD Topic Paper 1 – December 2014

Sandleford Park SPD

4.2 This SPD supports the Core Strategy policies. It sets out more detailed guidance for future development and investment while acting as a framework for future planning applications at the site.

4.3 Principle F of the SPD provides the following guidance in respect of affordable housing provision within the scheme:

- Affordable housing will be delivered throughout the site in accordance with the provisions set out in Policy CS6 providing at least 40% affordable housing. Extra care housing and 'move on' accommodation could be provided as part of this requirement; and
- Pepper-potting of affordable housing is essential to ensure a sustainable tenure blind community. Delivery should, as far as possible, allow for equal amounts and tenure split of affordable housing in each phase/neighbourhood.

Planning Obligations SPD

4.4 Topic Paper 1 of this SPD is part of a suite of documents that set out the Council's approach to securing developer contributions towards local infrastructure, services and amenities. In its introduction, it defines the overall aim of the Council's affordable housing planning policies as:

- [delivering], as far as possible, balanced and integrated communities, and to ensure that those in housing need in West Berkshire, both now and in the future, have access to decent affordable homes. Ensuring that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing is one of the Council's corporate priorities.

4.5 The SPD sets out the following principles:

4.6 *Proportion of Affordable Housing to be sought:* Consistent with Policy CS6, on greenfield sites 40% affordable housing will be sought. The Council expect this to be provided on site in all but exceptional circumstances and without public subsidy.

4.7 *Tenure Split:* the expected tenure mix for affordable housing will be a 70:30 split in favour of social rented accommodation with other intermediate tenure options contributing the



remaining 30%.

- 4.8 *Integration:* New developments should provide integrated and mixed communities. Affordable housing should be fully integrated within the general market housing. The Council expects affordable housing to be 'pepper potted' throughout a development. Where practicable, this means that affordable housing should be in groups of not more than 5 dwellings at any single location within the development.
- 4.9 *Design:* To further reinforce integration, affordable housing will be of good quality and indistinguishable from general market housing. If the affordable housing is to qualify for grant funding, it must conform to the latest Design and Quality Standards published by the Homes and Communities Agency. Moreover, it should be constructed to a standard which accords with the approaches to energy and resource efficiency referred to in Core Strategy Policy CS15 (although the more recent Housing Standards published by the Government favours Building Regulations over the Code for Sustainable Homes).
- 4.10 *Accessibility:* All the affordable dwellings should be constructed to Lifetime Homes standards.
- 4.11 *Special Needs Housing:* Developers will be expected to consider the inclusion of special needs housing on appropriate sites. These will be part of the affordable housing provision.
- 4.12 *Phasing:* Whilst the Council will normally require all affordable housing to be in place before, as a maximum 80% of the market housing on the site has been completed, on larger sites such as the application scheme, phased delivery will be agreed on a site-by site basis.
- 4.13 The affordable housing proposals for the proposed development are identified in the following section.



5 Affordable Housing Proposals

- 5.1 The relevant policy documents that exist in West Berkshire which concern affordable housing provision have been summarized in the preceding Sections. They have informed the affordable housing element of the proposed development. Table 2 illustrates the affordable housing proposals by reference to principles listed in Section 4.

Table 2: Sandlesford Park Affordable Housing Proposals

West Berkshire Principle	Sandlesford Park Proposals
40% affordable housing	40% affordable housing is to be provided: on the basis that proposed development 432 affordable would provided of which 80 will be provided as Extra Care housing.
70:30 Tenure Split	This will be adhered to across the scheme as a whole and will be determined on a parcel by parcel basis.
Integration	Pockets of affordable housing, both shared ownership and social rent, will be pepper-potted across the development. Their positioning and layout will be carefully considered to ensure they are well integrated into the development, fronting on to key streets with easy access to the Country Park, open space and local facilities. Footpaths and cycle links will be provided to connect the affordable and market housing with adequate car parking. It is not proposed that there would be mixed tenure flatted blocks.
Design	All affordable homes will comply with the Homes and Community Agency Design and Quality Standards.
Accessibility	All affordable homes will comply with Building Regulations M4 Cat 2 (Lifetime Homes).
Special Needs Housing	An 80no Extra Care facility forms part of the development proposals which will contribute towards the affordable housing element of the scheme.

- 5.2 The Draft Planning Obligations identify an affordable housing scheme to be prepared in due course which is intended to include the following:



- (a) the residential mix within each Phase;
- (b) the tenure mix within each Phase;
- (c) the triggers for the delivery Affordable Housing Units or General Affordable Housing Units (as the case may be) based on the delivery of Market Housing Units;
- (d) the Intermediate Housing Scheme; and
- (e) the Intermediate Rent Scheme and/or Shared Equity Scheme (if applicable).

5.3 Development in each Phase will not be able to commence until the Affordable Housing Scheme has been approved by the Council.

Affordable Housing Mix

5.4 The Draft Section 106 Agreement identified a Target Housing Mix as follows: Table 1: Sandlesford Park Affordable Housing Proposals

	Affordable Housing (Exc Extra Care)
1 bed flat	35%
2 bed flat/maisonette	8%
2 bed house	27%
3 bed house	25%
4 bed house	5%

5.5 The Affordable Housing Units in each phase shall accord with the Target Housing Mix unless otherwise approved by the Council as part of the Affordable Housing Scheme.



6 Summary

- 6.1 This Affordable Housing Statement accompanies a planning application submitted by Bloor Homes (Southern) Limited to bring forward the Sandleford Park Strategic Site; a site allocated for development in the adopted West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).
- 6.2 A long established planning principle is that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which may properly be taken into account in deciding planning applications.
- 6.3 As part of the proposed development, new affordable housing is to be provided, pursuant to Core Strategy Policies CS3 Sandleford Park and CS6 Affordable Housing, which seek 40% provision. The Extra Care element of the scheme is to be part of the affordable housing provision. The mix of affordable homes reflects the conclusions of the 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 6.4 Principles established in the recently adopted Sandleford Park SPD for tenure split, integration, design, accessibility, and special needs housing have also been adhered to.
- 6.5 The applicants intend that the affordable housing element of the scheme will be secured by planning obligation.
- 6.6 It is evident that the affordable housing component of the scheme accords with established Development Plan policy and the relevant aspects of Supplementary Planning Documents. The scheme's contribution to meeting the need for affordable housing is a material benefit that should properly be afforded substantial weight in the determination of the submitted application.