

Emy Circuit

From: Matthew Harris [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 June 2025 17:05
To: Emy Circuit
Subject: South Wokingham phase 2b phasing (250496)

WARNING!

For the attention of
WBC, Optalis, WHL, BCSolutions and
Councillors

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Hi Emy

This note has been prepared by Nexus Planning on behalf of Miller Homes and Kier Properties (“the Consortium”) to justify the variation from the proposed market housing mix. Condition 3(iii) of the hybrid planning permission (ref. 191068) requires the details of the size and type of market dwellings to be in general accordance with the Wokingham Borough Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 Report of Findings (January 2020) or any policy or guidance that supersedes it.

The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2023) (“LHNA”) supersedes the 2019 Assessment and has been prepared as an evidence base document to support the Council’s Local Plan Update (2023-2040), which has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The LHNA assesses the Council’s needs for housing and makes recommendations on the type and sizes of homes needed over the Plan period. The submission Plan confirms that the LHNA has identified the overall need for different types of market and affordable homes, as a percentage, which should act as a starting point when bringing forward proposals for individual sites. Draft Policy H1 (which has not been rigorously examined at the time of writing) requires developments to provide an appropriate mix housing types, reflective and responsive to the identified housing needs and demands of up to date evidence, whilst optimising density, that makes efficient use of land and achieves high quality design responding to the size, location, opportunities and constraints of the site and is appropriate to the character and amenity of the area.

Table 7 of the Plan sets out the following indicative housing mix, as taken from the LHNA:

Table 7: Indicative housing mix

Number of bedrooms	Affordable Housing	Total Market Housing
1 bedroom	17%	5%
2 bedrooms	38%	13%
3 bedrooms	33%	47%
4+ bedrooms	12%	36%

The proposed development would meet the affordable housing mix as set out in the Section 106 Agreement and would provide the following market mix:

- 1-bed apartment – 9%
- 2-bed apartment – 11.1%
- 2-bed house – 11.4%
- 3-bed house – 55.3%
- 4+ bed house – 13.2%

It should be noted that this mix is based on the current position and may be subject to change over the construction period, which is shown to be circa 10 years. Various market signals or on-site constraints may lead to evolution and the need to revisit the mix at a later date. The Consortium will continue to monitor housing needs throughout each Reserved Matters Application.

The proposed housing mix does differ from the LHNA position, but it is strongly influenced by the requirement to provide smaller homes within the development through the Section 106 obligations to deliver 14% of the total number of dwellings across the development to be apartments. The submission Plan indicates that the mix of homes should react to changing circumstances and contribute to the mix of the wider area and the development, and there is a current demand for smaller 1 and 2 bedroom properties to be provided as a mix of housing and apartments. The proposed development proposes 25% of the development to be 1 and 2 bedroom apartments, of which 5% would be M4(2) standard homes.

The proposed housing mix would result in a shortfall of 4+ bedroom homes (13% vs 36%), however, at the time of writing, mortgage rates are high, which makes larger homes less affordable and less attractive to purchase. The existing housing stock comprises substantial percentage (80%) of homes that are

The Consortium is making a significant investment in South Wokingham, including the provision of a 2FE Primary School, a community building and 35% affordable homes. Therefore, costs and purchasing of homes need to be accounted for to ensure realistic delivery.

Additionally, the early reserved matters applications (Development Zones R10 and R11) both secure a proportion of 3 bedroom properties that also feature study rooms. These features are proving increasingly popular with families seeking flexible spaces to support home working, a trend which we have seen increase since Covid, where flexible working has now become the norm whilst maintaining affordability meeting family needs as a 3bed. Whilst not meeting the Nationally Described Technical Space Standards for 4-beds (but significantly exceeding for 3-beds), these homes could be occupied by larger families.

The LHNA has also indicated a substantial increase in the number of older people during the plan period, and it is envisaged that smaller homes, as proposed by the Consortium, would support the opportunity for downsizing. This would bring back larger homes, such as 4+bedrooms dwellings to the market.

The Consortium's overarching objective is to maximise the delivery of housing in line with the approved Hybrid Application, which outlines the provision of 1,434 new homes, including 502 much needed Affordable homes. It is important to note that the Phase 2b development presents unique challenges and is subject to a number of technical constraints that must be addressed through the design and layout of the development.

Phase 2b is guided by both approved parameter plans and a suite of detailed site-wide documents, including the Design Code, Landscape Strategy, and Masterplan. These documents establish parameters and a framework for creating a high-quality, co-ordinated sustainable development, and includes land use, building heights, densities, and broader design aspirations related to items such as built form, character areas, housing typologies, and green infrastructure. All future Reserved Matters Applications must come forward in accordance with these approved documents.

The Consortium is confident that the accommodation proposed within the Phasing Strategy seeks to optimise development within the scope of the Phase 2b consent whilst delivering a sustainable and diverse housing mix. The Phasing Strategy provides a range of unit types, from one bed apartments (including M4(2) standard homes) to four bed (plus) family homes, therefore catering to a wide variety of needs, and maintaining a sustainable and balanced housing mix across the Site.

Kind regards

Matt

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Associate

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