

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	252034
Site Address:	Bridge Farm, New Bath Road, Twyford
Expiry Date:	13/11/2025
Proposal: Application to modify a Section 106 Planning Obligation to allow amendments to the affordable housing tenure mix as set out in Schedule 1 (Affordable Housing) of the Section 106 Agreement dated 5th July 2023 relating to planning permission 212720.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB05 – Housing Mix
Other	Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Twyford Neighbourhood Plan

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
212720	Outline application (all matters reserved except access to the site) for the development of up to 200 dwellings, including 40% affordable housing and associated infrastructure, open space, biodiversity enhancements, landscaping and green infrastructure, following demolition of existing agricultural buildings. (Means of access into the site from New Bath Road to be considered.)	Approved 05/07/2023
243124	Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent 212720 for the erection of 200 dwellings with associated infrastructure, open space, biodiversity enhancements, landscaping and green infrastructure (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be considered).	Approved 20/06/2025

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal:
Economic Prosperity & Place (Housing): No objection

External:

Twyford Parish Council: Request that the following questions are clarified before any decision is taken:-

1. What reasons have been given as to why the level of affordable housing provision previously agreed is now being varied?
2. What evidence (e.g., viability assessment, market changes, or other exceptional circumstances) has been given to support these.
3. How the revised proposal remains consistent with both the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and wider planning policy objectives; and
4. What efforts have the developer made to identify a statutory provider for social housing on the Bridge Farm site?

Officer comment: The overall level of affordable housing is not being varied and will remain at 40% (80 units). The proposed change relates to varying the nature of the tenure mix, which includes increasing the % level of shared ownership units, reducing the % level of social rent units and introducing 6 units of affordable rent into the tenure mix. For the reasons set out in the body of the report below, the proposed amended mix is considered acceptable, given the issues currently being faced nationally in relation to securing Registered Providers to take on the affordable housing units on development sites. The applicant has secured a Registered Provider for the site, and the proposed amended tenure mix has been discussed between the Council's housing team and the proposed Registered Provider.

Charvil Parish Council: Object – due to there not being a justification to alter the number of affordable homes, and is contrary to Twyford Neighbourhood Plan policies

Neighbours:

Three letters of objection arising from the neighbour notifications have been received in relation to the proposals. The concerns raised are summarised as follows:

- Not clear if proposals are increasing or decreasing the affordable housing provision; objection made on the assumption it is a reduction proposed
- Original application proposed 80 units of affordable housing and proposal includes a reduction from 80 to 52 units;
- Proposal means that there are no 1 bed flats for purchase – the provision of 1 bed accommodation has been reduced by 50% from 16 to 8 and will only be provided on a social rent basis
- 2 bed accommodation is proposed to be reduced from 36 to 24 with only 12 being made for shared ownership
- Reduction will impact younger members of the local community wishing to stay in the areas and older members wishing to downsize

Officer comment: Refer to body of the report below for clarity over proposals and level of affordable housing

APPRAISAL**Site Description:**

The application site known as Bridge Farm is located approximately 0.5km to the northwest of the centre of Twyford. The site extends to approximately 12.2 hectares and comprises agricultural land, previously used for the grazing of cattle, and includes associated agricultural buildings and an agricultural track running through the site from north to south, known as Muddlers Lane.

Outline planning permission was granted in July 2023 (ref: 212720) for up to 200 dwellings (inc. 40% affordable housing), associated infrastructure, open space, biodiversity enhancements, landscaping and green infrastructure, following demolition of existing agricultural buildings. Access into the site from New Bath Road was considered in full at the outline application stage.

Reserved matters relating to the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for 200 dwellings were approved in June 2025 (ref: 243124).

The S106 agreement associated with the outline planning permission secured the provision of 80 on site affordable dwelling units (40%).

A request to modify a Section 106 Planning Obligation to allow amendments to Schedule 1 (Affordable Housing) of the Section 106 Agreement dated 5th July 2023 relating to planning permission 212720 has been submitted and seeks to formally modify the affordable housing provisions through a Deed of Variation to the original Section 106 agreement.

The changes proposed concern the affordable housing provisions only, more specifically the originally agreed tenure mix, as secured through the S106 agreement.

The below Table 1 sets out the mix as approved as part of the reserved matters, which was aligned with the originally agreed S106 affordable housing mix. Table 2 sets out the mix as proposed as part of this DoV request under consideration.

Table 1: Agreed tenure mix as secured through S106 and confirmed through Reserved Matters approval

As approved through RM 243124 – as indicated on drawing Tenure Layout DES-703-105 Rev 4					
Dwelling Type	First Homes	Shared Ownership	Social Rent	Total	%
1 bed	8		8	16	20%
2bed maisonette	12			12	15%
2bed house			24	24	32.5%
3bed house		3	13	16	17.5%
4+bed house		1	11	12	15%
Total	20 (25%)	4 (5%)	56 (70%)	80	100%

Table 2: Tenure mix as proposed through DoV request to Modify S106

As Proposed through DOV						
Dwelling Type	First Homes	Shared Ownership	Affordable Rent	Social Rent	Total	%
1 bed	8		6	2	16	20%
2bed maisonette	12				12	15%
2bed house		12		12	24	30%
3bed house		8		8	16	20%
4+bed house		6		6	12	15%
Total	20 (25%)	26 (32.5%)	6 (7.5%)	28 (35%)	80	100%

The difference between the currently approved mix versus that proposed relates to the increase in shared ownership units, a reduction in the number of social rented units and the introduction of 6 units of affordable rent tenure.

The documents submitted as part of the request did not clearly set out that the proposals are not seeking to reduce the overall level of affordable housing units, which remains at 80 dwellings (40%). As the First Homes element of the original agreement is not proposed to change, this was not referenced in the application documentation. However, reference to the First Homes provision has been pulled through within the DoV drafting, and the above table which sets out the proposed changes, is reflected in the DoV as drafted.

Comments were made within the consultation responses that the proposal appeared to be seeking a reduction in the level of affordable housing provision on the site. However, as indicated in Table 2 above, this is not the case, and the total number of affordable dwellings across the dwelling sizes will remain the same. Whilst the level of social rented dwellings will decrease, the level of shared ownership will increase, and the 6 units will be offered at affordable rent levels.

It is acknowledged that the amended mix being sought is a deviation from WBC's usual position in relation to a 70/30 split between social rent and shared ownership dwellings, given that the Borough's acute affordable housing need in the borough is within the social rented tenure. The proposed amended mix would also not wholly accord with the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan Policy TW11 affordable housing mix, although it would result in an increase in the originally agreed shared ownership provision from 4 to 26 units and would include the introduction of affordable rent tenure.

However, development sites across the borough (and nationally) are currently experiencing difficulty in securing registered providers for affordable housing delivery. This is largely due to national policy where providers are now consolidating their existing stock and focusing their resources on maintaining and improving existing stock, which has resulted in low or no bids for new schemes. This trend is not unique to the application site, the council is having discussions across the borough but it

reflects a wider market challenge affecting multiple developments. In this instance, only one Registered Provider made an offer on the affordable housing provision for the application site. Therefore, to avoid the risk of sites coming forward without any affordable housing provision or stalling completely, it is considered necessary at the current time to introduce some flexibility within the S106 agreement. This will facilitate viable delivery while maintaining an appropriate level of affordable housing contribution. Each application to amend affordable housing provisions are being considered on a case by case basis and in this instance, the proposed change to the tenure mix has been discussed and agreed with the Registered Provider and the Council's Housing team.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed modification is nonetheless considered to align with the objectives of local and national policy by ensuring that affordable housing continues to be delivered, even in challenging market conditions. Without this flexibility, there is a significant risk that sites will fail to secure a registered provider, potentially resulting in no affordable housing provision or a provision which does not contribute to addressing the local housing need. By allowing adjustments to the proposed tenure mix, the Council can safeguard affordable housing delivery while responding pragmatically to current market constraints. WBC's housing team consider that the proposed introduction of 6 affordable rent units could be offered for specialist housing, which would therefore serve to address a further example of affordable housing need.

It is therefore recommended that the application is approved to enable the required Deed of Variation to be completed to reflect the proposed modifications to the original S106.

Case Officer: Sophie Morris
Date: 15th December 2025

Recommendation Agreed by:



Position: Head of Strategic Development
Date: 15/12/2025