

Housing White Paper 2017

Joint response from organisations and individuals committed to the provision of affordable housing in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is frequently cited as one of the least affordable places to live in the UK. As such, the challenges here are huge but there are a large number of organisations and individuals committed to working to overcome these to provide genuinely affordable housing for local people in perpetuity.

We have come together to welcome jointly this opportunity to comment on the Government's Housing White Paper and to share our views on how the proposals will impact on the provision of affordable housing in Oxfordshire.

1. We welcome the Housing White Paper as a good start to approaching the issues of affordable housing. It begins to provide a better analysis of the problem and suggests some helpful changes to policy.
2. However, we are concerned that the proposed solutions will not be adequate for high land value and house price areas such as Oxfordshire. Our focus is on affordability and not just housing numbers and we consider there are few practical solutions which will address the housing crisis in Oxfordshire contained in the White Paper. Some which could include:
 - **Making land options transparent and time limited**
 - **Land value taxation to capture the uplift in value following planning permission for community uses**
 - **Urban exception sites which would deliver 100% affordable homes on small sites with protective designations in urban areas**
 - **Ensuring there is a way of distributing growth throughout the country** which would take pressure off some areas for example through a national spatial strategy.

The proposed definition of affordability should be changed to state that an individual or household's housing expenditure should not exceed 30% of their income. In addition all affordable housing should be affordable in perpetuity. The Housing White Paper makes affordable housing into a product in planning policy and does not make it a requirement that affordable housing should be affordable in perpetuity and should be within households' abilities to pay.

3. **There is a need for more financial and other support for local authorities to acquire land and to build.** This country has only built enough housing when local authorities were enabled to undertake

substantial house building. The White Paper needs to make positive proposals to ensure local authorities can build more homes.

4. **There needs to be more support for alternative housing delivery models such as community land trusts and community-led housing.** The recent fund is welcome but should go further and also cover all local authority areas.
5. **Charities should be exempt from the requirement to dispose of land at best consideration.** In Oxfordshire, universities, the church and other charities are significant land owners who should be enabled to use that land to deliver affordable housing.
6. **More emphasis needs to be placed on building communities people want to live in including standards and provisions for good quality homes.** One suggestion is for lifetime homes that are extendable and adaptable to change as a household goes through different phases.

We ask that the Government takes these views into account when considering how to take forward its proposals.

Dr Sue Brownill
Chairman, Oxfordshire Community Land Trust
www.oclt.org.uk

Helen Marshall
Director, CPRE Oxfordshire
www.cpreoxon.org.uk

Tom McCulloch
Director, Community First Oxfordshire
www.communityfirstoxon.org

Dr Helena Whall
Secretariat, Need not Greed Oxfordshire
www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk

Jayne Woodley
Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Community Foundation
www.oxfordshire.org

Adrian Arbib MSc
Dr Sietske Boeles
Elizabeth Wilson, Reader in Environmental Planning, Oxford Brookes University