

Note for Scrutiny Panel, March 2021

This note reflects an action to update Scrutiny Panel on developments relating to Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) within each locality. A summary is provided on behalf of each locality and submitted as part of the action log.

Cherwell District Council

- CDC Local Plan Policy ESD1: 'Mitigating and adapting to climate change' includes designing developments to reduce carbon emissions and promoting the use of low carbon energy.
- CDC Local Plan Policy ESD3: 'Sustainable Construction': All new residential development will be expected to incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development through a combination of fabric energy efficiency, carbon compliance and allowable solutions in line with Government policy.
- Policy Bicester 1: NW Bicester Ecotown, zero carbon mixed-use development including 6,000 homes.
- At NW Bicester all development is to incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development (subject to viability).
- Graven Hill design code is significantly higher than minimum standards.
- There have been several sites within delivery of the OAHF which are delivering low carbon units; including three Passivhaus wheelchair accessible bungalows in Cherwell, 15 units with high energy efficiency and eight zero carbon units as part of an exemplar development in Oxford were delivered in the first three years of the programme. Latterly 16 true zero carbon social rent units have been secured within the Elmsbrook Eco Town development. Units are future proofed against climate change and designed to prevent overheating based on 2050 weather set. They are designed to allow residents to reduce their carbon footprint and homes are built to Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 as well as achieving Bioregional One Planet Living Global Leader status (<https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living/one-planet-living-leaders/nw-bicester-one-planet-living-leader>).

Oxford City Council

- Oxford City Council strategy 2020-2024 commits to offering "enhanced planning support to developers, social landlords and community-led housing groups to encourage a faster rate of delivery of new homes, including use of factory-built housing and modular construction."
- MMC are referenced in the Northern Gateway AAP as a means "to minimise the environmental impacts associated with site activity and transport. Lightweight materials reduce the emissions associated with transportation to site and typically entail shorter construction times and less waste."
- Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL) has launched a procurement process for a modular construction framework. This is the first stage in establishing a £1bn modular construction framework for its new housing schemes. This will play a vital role in ensuring all new homes built in the city are zero carbon by 2030. The sustainable development framework involves the use of methods like timber frame and modular construction, which means creating large components of buildings offsite in a factory. Sections are then transported to site where they are assembled. Every stage of production is subject to stringent quality checks and

consistent standards are maintained. These methods use less energy than traditional builds and result in less waste to landfill. Another benefit is that prefabricated sections are easier to replace and disassemble. If a building has become obsolete or disused it can be relocated in sections to a different site. Modular parts can be saved so that they don't go to waste. Without the need for building material deliveries and noisy onsite machinery sites are also quieter, requiring fewer people to undertake construction. This means development sites are less disruptive to local communities.

- OCHL aims to transform the quality of new homes and new schemes entering the development pipeline will seek to achieve at least a 70 per cent carbon reduction.
- Procurement of off-site Manufacture will scope 70 per cent carbon reduction, Passivhaus and zero carbon.

South Oxfordshire DC

- The Council's Corporate plan includes the theme "Action on Climate emergency" and recognises that many homes built today are not fit for a low-carbon future.
- Minimising carbon emissions is a strategic objective of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2034.
- Local Plan policy DES8 requires "All new development ... should seek to minimise carbon and energy impacts in line with nationally adopted standards".
- The council is currently considering creating a housing delivery vehicle which would prioritise the delivery of low and zero carbon homes, including the possibility of MMC.
- Officers are considering the redevelopment of a council-owned site which may be used to provide a number of low, or zero carbon affordable homes with the possible use of MMC.
- Officers work with organisations involved in low and zero carbon housing, including partnership working with Registered Providers to deliver these homes as part of their delivery programme.
- South Oxfordshire's affordable housing grant funding framework supports low carbon initiatives including MMC.
- The Springfield Meadows development is a scheme of 25 climate positive (9 affordable and 16 private) homes located in Southmoor, Oxfordshire. The units are high-performance, low-carbon homes built using Greencore's Biond system. Biond is an off-site manufactured, closed panel timber frame construction, insulated with Lime-Hemp and natural fibre insulation. All 25 homes are built to the same Passivhaus standards. Springfield Meadows has been awarded One Planet Living Global Leader status by the leading environmental charity Bioregional (<https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living/one-planet-living-leaders/springfield-meadows-one-planet-living-global-leader>).

Vale of White Horse DC

- The Council's Corporate Plan, adopted in 2020, identifies "Tackling the climate emergency" as a priority with a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. It also pledges the council to encouraging lower-carbon construction and using Garden Villages and Towns as a mechanism to "introduce innovative housing to meet our need for high quality, low energy, zero-carbon homes".

- The council is currently considering the creation of a housing delivery vehicle which, if created, will prioritise the delivery of low and zero carbon homes, including the possibility of MMC.
- Officers work with a number of bodies and organisations involved in low and zero carbon housing, including partnership working with Registered Providers to deliver these types of homes as part of their overall delivery programme.
- Vale's affordable housing grant funding framework supports low carbon initiatives including MMC.
- Eight units at Deans Court, jointly funded by Vale of White Horse DC and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, will be built to near PassivHaus standard with a range of technologies and services for residents. The design seeks to achieve high levels of insulation in order to promote sustainability and minimise energy bills for residents.

West Oxfordshire District Council

- WODC has declared climate emergency and the Council Plan, 2020, identifies climate action as a corporate priority.
- West Oxfordshire District Council has collaborated with Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council to produce a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit. Funded through the Local Government Association (LGA) Housing Advisers Programme, the guide has been produced by leading technical experts from Etude, the Passivhaus Trust, Levitt Bernstein and Elementa Consulting (<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/how-to-achieve-net-zero-carbon-homes/>). This includes reference to off-site construction methods and various technologies.
- Revised Affordable Housing SPD (adopted 2021) updates housing approach to include net-zero carbon and MMC.
- AAP for Salt Cross Garden Village (large strategic development c. 1100 affordable homes), currently in examination, outlines a requirement for net-zero carbon development. This references MMC as a means to deliver homes more quickly and with a potential carbon reduction.
- There is limited WODC land for housing however, work is in progress to bring forward one site on WODC land using MMC. Scheme is at an early stage of design and options being considered include off-site construction, electric vehicle charging points and support for a car club.
- WODC continues to seek land/fund its own affordable housing developments focusing on MMC.
- Working with RPs to bring forward small all-affordable low carbon schemes.

Upcoming event

- Several localities and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership are involved in supporting and/or speaking at a forthcoming event: Making the future the present: delivering zero-carbon homes in Oxfordshire. This is organised by Oxfordshire Greentech and will take place on 30 March at The Perch, Eco Business Centre (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/making-the-future-the-present-delivering-zero-carbon-homes-in-oxfordshire-tickets-256862421417>).