

## Chapter 7: A Liveable City With Strong Communities and Opportunities for All

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter 7: A Liveable City With Strong Communities and Opportunities for All .....                | 1  |
| Policy C1: Town Centre Uses.....  | 3  |
| Policy C2: Maintaining vibrant centres .....  | 6  |
| Policy C3: Protection, alteration and provision of local community facilities .....               | 8  |
| Policy C4: Protection alteration and provision of learning and non-residential institutions ..... | 9  |
| Policy C5: Protection, alteration and provision of cultural venues and visitor attractions .....  | 11 |
| Policy C6 : Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Service and Delivery Plans .....              | 17 |
| Policy C7: Bicycle Parking Design Standards .....   | 18 |
| Policy C8: Motor Vehicle Parking Design Standards .....   | 21 |
| Policy C9: Electric Vehicle Charging .....  | 23 |

### Glossary

**Active travel** - Refers to modes of travel that involve a level of activity.

**Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP)** – This plan sets out the transport strategy for Oxford and travel connections between the city and Kidlington, Eynsham, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington and Wheatley.

**CLOCs (ensure that this has been included)** -

**Critical infrastructure** - Facilities, systems, sites, information, people, networks and processes, necessary for a country to function and upon which daily life depends.

**Cultural venues** -

**Frequent bus service** – Every 15/20 mins in both directions.

**Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP)** - The IDP assesses the potential risks of infrastructure not being delivered in a timely manner to support development.

**Liveable city** - where essential needs can be met locally such as food, open spaces, cultural activities, community needs.

**Liveable neighbourhoods** – a neighbourhood where local residents can reach facilities such as small shops, post office, primary school within a 15- 20 minute walk.

**Local centres** - Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not classified as local centres.

**Mobility hubs** - An area in which a variety of transport modes and community assets are co-located for seamless interchange. These facilities provide added benefit to communities and combined they make up an easy-to-use transport network.”

**Parking Standards for New Developments -**

**Sui Generis** - A term used to categorise buildings that do not fall within any particular use class for the purposes of planning permission. Such as petrol stations and cinemas.

**Traffic filters** – Cameras that are intended to reduce traffic levels in Oxford by managing the use of certain roads in the city by private cars.

**Transport assessment** - A thorough assessment of the transport implications of development.

**Transport statement** – A ‘lighter-touch’ evaluation to be used where this would be more proportionate to the potential impact of the development (i.e. in the case of developments with anticipated limited transport impacts).

**Working drivers** - Residents and drivers who are dependent on their vehicle more than 50% of their working day to earn a wage. Where the vehicle is required to undertake multiple journeys in the city (or wider) to deliver the service provided by the business. Examples include NHS community-based staff, carers working for private care companies, delivery drivers, plumbers, electricians and other trades, mobile hairdressers, dog grooming, food bank staff.

**Zero Emission Zone** – An area within Oxford that prevents vehicles that emit Carbon Dioxide for travelling through without an associated charge.

## **Introduction**

7.1 Oxford is a very liveable and accessible city which, owing to its compact nature, means that most people have access to a range of services to meet their daily needs within a 15–20-minute walk or by a short cycle ride. If the facilities that people need to reach are not accessible on foot or by bicycle, then a good network of public transport runs across the city and can be used to reach locations which are further away such as the hospitals, the city centre or one of the other district centres not in your neighbourhood.

7.2 The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted to us all the importance and value of having a variety of easily accessible facilities and their role in helping create strong communities and “liveable cities”. A range of policy tools can be used to help achieve, support and sustain liveable cities. These include, protecting certain facilities, maintaining the vibrancy of our centres, managing parking and requiring travel plans and transport assessments when new developments are proposed and implemented. This ensures traffic is well managed and that walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised, consistent with Oxfordshire County Council’s adopted [Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan](#) and the transport user hierarchy policy it promotes.

**Focusing town centre uses in our city centre and district centres**

Policy C1 sets out the hierarchy of centres. The city and district centres are areas that are highly accessible mobility hubs and that include a broad range of facilities including shops, hospitality, community and leisure facilities. They have an important role to play in creating liveable neighbourhoods. The centres are: the city centre; Cowley centre; Cowley Road; Summertown; Headington; Blackbird Leys. The mix of these town centre uses varies in each location and whilst retail is an important element it is not necessarily the focus of all the centres.

Town centre uses should be directed to the city centre, district, and local centres, then edge of centre locations and only outside of these where no alternatives are available, and the site is suitable.

In these centres, Use Class E (commercial, business and service uses including retail, cafes and restaurants, leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres), health centres, GPs and clinics, offices) are suitable and community facilities, student accommodation, visitor attractions (Sui Generis uses including cinemas, concert halls, dance halls), hotels are all suitable uses.

Local centres are: St Clement's; Walton Street and Little Clarendon Street; High Street east; Rose Hill; North Parade Avenue, New Marston and Underhill Circus. These are suitable for Class E (commercial) uses and local community facilities (Class F.2) but not student accommodation or hotels. Visitor and cultural attractions and institutional and educational uses may be suitable, depending on the existing character of the centre and the exact nature of the use proposed (see policy C4 and C5). The NPPF is clear that small parades of shops with a purely local function do not meet the definition of local centres, so most parades are not included in this category, but their local importance is still significant in terms of creating liveable cities.

## Policy C1: Town Centre Uses

**The city centre and district centres defined on the Policies Map are:**

- **City centre**
- **Cowley centre**
- **Cowley Road**
- **Summertown**
- **Headington**
- **Blackbird Leys**

**In the city and district centres, new Use Class E and other town centre uses will be permitted, which are:**

- **Retail, cafes and restaurants;**
- **Leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres);**
- **Health centres, GPs and clinics;**
- **Offices;**
- **Community facilities;**

- Residential including student accommodation (where compliant with the active frontages policy);
- Visitor attractions (Sui Generis uses including pubs, cinemas, live music venues, concert halls, dance halls);
- Hotels.

Local Centres are defined on the Policies Map are:

- St Clement's;
- Walton Street and Little Clarendon Street;
- High Street east;
- Rose Hill;
- North Parade Avenue;
- New Marston; and
- Underhill Circus.

In the Local Centres, new Use Class E uses will be permitted, including:

- Retail, cafes and restaurants;
- Leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres);
- Health centres, GPs and clinics
- Offices,
- Residential (except student accommodation)
- Community facilities

In the local centres, other uses will be considered on their merits and according to the relevant policies of the Plan.

A sequential approach should be taken for locating new town centre uses. Applicants must demonstrate how the sequential approach has been applied if town centre uses are proposed outside the city centre, district and local centres, looking at edge of centre areas first and only out-of-centre locations where no alternative sites are available and where this is not contrary to other policies of the Plan. Where the applicant demonstrates an out-of-centre location is justified, planning permission will only be granted where all the following criteria are met:

- It has good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- impacts on the road network can be mitigated; and
- That no unacceptable harm or loss of amenity will be caused to adjoining land uses.

Planning permission for retail and leisure proposals outside of a defined centre of greater than 350m<sup>2</sup> floorspace, will only be granted if a retail impact assessment is submitted that demonstrates that there will be no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the existing centres.

The city centre and each district centre have a distinct character, with a different mix of uses and different strengths and weaknesses. To maintain the strength of the centres, development should respond to and enhance the individual character of the centres. Policy C2 provides design principles for each centre, to guide future developments and ensure opportunities are taken to enhance and strengthen the character and attractiveness of the centres, helping maintain their robustness by encouraging people to visit and linger. This approach will help secure and support a liveable city.

Retaining active frontages in a centre is a key tool in achieving vibrancy, securing activity at ground floor level. Those streets where active frontage is to be retained are defined on the Policies Map for each centre. Within those defined active frontages a minimum threshold is set for the proportion of Class E (commercial, business and service uses) at ground floor level. The thresholds are set at a level that all centres are currently achieving so the focus of the policy is on retention. Blackbird Leys District Centre does not have a defined active frontage because the nature of that centre is as a vital community hub, with a wide range of important community functions, many of which are not Use Class E.

Any proposed new use, even when the overall frontage would remain above the threshold, will be expected to show how activity will be maintained. This can be done by demonstrating that it will attract footfall, retain an active window display, and not adversely affect the amenity, availability of services or appearance of the frontage.

## Policy C2: Maintaining vibrant centres

The densification and growth of district centres and the city centre is encouraged. High density development is generally expected in the city centre and district centres as set out in Policy HD8, and this should be low car.

Planning permission will be granted for new development within the district centres and city centre where it takes opportunities to deliver the following, where relevant:

- a. improved permeability and connectivity to existing development and wider transport links;
- b. intensification of development to create a high-density centre, including by more efficient use of land, by consolidating uses and through infill;
- c. more residential development, including on the upper floors of existing commercial premises;
- d. enhancement of existing buildings and improvement in their relationship to the street by creating active frontages;
- e. rationalisation of public car parking so it is well-located, limits surface-level parking and is reduced where possible, and makes better use of workplace surface-level car parking;
- f. public realm improvements for cyclists and pedestrians and public transport users and rebalancing of the space within streets from vehicles to pedestrians;
- g. improved pedestrian connections across the main roads through the centres;
- h. enhancement and new opportunities for public realm and landscaping such as tree planting, including incorporation of small green spaces where people can stop, dwell, socialise and play;
- i. better integration of the landscape setting and surrounding green spaces;
- j. enabling of the continued successful operation of any street markets;
- k. improvements to shopfronts and signage;
- l. enhance and better reveal heritage assets and their setting.

### Active frontages

Planning permission will be granted at ground floor level of the defined Active Frontages (as set out on the policy map) for town centre uses that promote the vitality of the centre, and where the proportion of units at ground floor level does not fall below the threshold percentages of Use Class E set out below. Proposals for any new use within the defined active frontages of the city, district and local centres, even when the overall frontage would remain above the threshold, will be expected to promote the vitality of the centre. Planning permission will be granted if it can be demonstrated how activity will be maintained by:

- m. attracting footfall; and
- n. creating and retaining an active window display; and
- o. not adversely affecting the amenity, availability of services or appearance of the frontage.

| Centre name                | Threshold % of Use Class E |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Headington District Centre | 80%                        |
| Summertown District Centre | 80%                        |

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Cowley Road District Centre</b>    | <b>75%</b> |
| <b>Cowley Centre District Centre</b>  | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>City Centre primary frontage</b>   | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>City Centre secondary frontage</b> | <b>70%</b> |

**Planning permission will only be granted for development of upper storeys of the Active Frontages for housing, student accommodation and other uses appropriate to a town centre, as long as the functioning of the ground floor unit(s) in the active frontage is not undermined.**

**Local Centres**

**Planning permission will only be granted at ground floor level within the Local Centre Active Frontages for town centre uses that promote the vitality of the centre and where the proportion of units in the Local Centre at ground floor level in Use Class E does not fall below 80% of the total number of units.**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development of upper storeys of units in the Local Centres for housing and other uses appropriate to the location.**

**The City Centre, District Centres, Local centres and Primary and Secondary Active Frontages and Local Centre Active Frontages are all defined on the Policies Map.**

**Community, institutional, social and cultural facilities and attractions**

7.3 It is important that our communities are supported by the appropriate infrastructure and community facilities. Providing and improving access to educational, health and community facilities greatly improves the quality of life for residents, builds strong communities and helps to address inequalities.

7.4 Cultural and community facilities can be very wide ranging and fall within different use classes. In seeking social inclusion and a high quality of life, the City Council's approach is to make accessible a diverse range of facilities, from performance venues to libraries. Sometimes co-locating multiple facilities on a single site can be an efficient way to improve accessibility and support the principles of a liveable city. Facilities important to local communities may include community centres, schools, children's centres, meeting venues for the public or voluntary organisations, public halls and places of worship, leisure and indoor sports centres, pavilions, stadiums, public houses, club premises or arts buildings that serve a local community. These are important in meeting social, economic, health, leisure, cultural and religious needs of Oxford's diverse communities.

**Protection, alteration and provision of new local community facilities**

The City Council will seek to protect existing local community facilities and will support

improvements and more intensive use of existing sites. Sometimes facilities might not be fit-for-purpose, or they may provide poor accessibility, so that improvements on site or nearby might be more sustainable. Co-locating multiple facilities on a single site can be an efficient way to improve both quality and accessibility.

Some local community facilities may have scope to provide some affordable workspace in accordance with Policy E3 to support small startup businesses whose location complements these local community uses.

Local community facilities fall into Use Class F.2 of the Use Classes Order. This includes a hall or meeting place mainly for the local community, indoor and outdoor pools, and skating rinks, and the policy applies to these. However, Policy C3 does not apply to places for outdoor sport and recreation (which are within the Use Class F.2), because these are dealt with in Policy G1.

Shops of no more than 280m<sup>2</sup> in size and 1km from a similar facility are classed as having a local community use within Use Class F.2. All other shops are Use Class E and can change freely to any commercial use. To protect these local community shops, their expansion to a size where they would fall outside of Use Class F.2 will not be permitted.

### **Policy C3: Protection, alteration and provision of local community facilities**

**Planning permission will be granted for new local community facilities, including those within schools and colleges, where opportunities are taken to secure community use and joint user agreements.**

**Planning permission will be granted for new local community facilities and the improvement and expansion of existing facilities where the City Council is satisfied that the following criteria are met:**

- a) the location is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; and**
- b) the proposal will not result in an unacceptable environmental impact or loss of amenity.**

**Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of such facilities unless:**

- **Suitable replacement can be provided on-site, or at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; or**
- **There are facilities nearby and within the neighbourhood that can be enhanced to ensure none of the local community function and accessibility is lost; or**
- **The proposal is for an alternative community facility for which there is greater need or demand.**

**Planning permission will not be granted for the expansion of shops that meet the definition of a local shop within Use Class F.2 if they would become large enough to become Use Class E rather than F.2.**



### **Protection and alteration of existing learning and non-residential institutions (including schools, libraries and places of worship)**

Schools, libraries and places of worship all play an important part in servicing the needs of Oxford's communities. As such they will be protected, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that they are no longer required to meet the community's needs. When a facility is to be redeveloped it must not conflict with existing uses but complement and enhance them. These facilities can attract large numbers of people, sometimes from quite a wide area, so it is important that new facilities are in accessible locations that minimise any potential traffic impacts and that there is no loss of amenity to existing surrounding uses. The City Council welcomes the opportunity to see the most effective use of buildings and supports the use of joint user/shared user agreements where possible.

The City Council has been working closely with partners including the County Council as the Local Education Authority to plan the educational needs of the city and will continue to work in partnership to ensure that new development is provided with access to school places, and that existing access is enhanced and improved when opportunities arise. Close partnership working will be essential to ensure that communities continue to have the best possible access to facilities.

### **Policy C4: Protection, alteration and provision of learning and non-residential institutions**

**Planning permission will be granted for new learning and non-residential institutions (use Class F.1) and redevelopments to make more intensive use of the site or extend capacity where the following criteria are met:**

- **The development will be accessible to those who will use it by walking, cycling and public transport and will not create unacceptable traffic impacts; and**
- **The proposal will meet local needs or an existing deficiency in provision or access, or the proposal will support regeneration or new development; and**
- **The proposal will not result in an unacceptable environmental or local amenity impact; and**
- **Where possible, joint user and shared user agreements are made.**

**Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F.1) where it can be demonstrated that:**

- **If there are any new uses to be introduced, these will not conflict with the existing use and any loss of floorspace of the existing use will not result in it not being able to function and meet needs;**
- **The development will be accessible to those who will use it by walking, cycling and public transport and will not create unacceptable traffic impacts; and**
- **The proposal will not result in an unacceptable environmental or local**

amenity impact; and

- Where possible, joint user and shared user agreements are made.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F.1) from a site unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer a need or foreseeable need, or there is overriding demand for an alternative use on the site that is of benefit to the local community; or
- Suitable replacement provision can be provided on-site, or within an alternative suitable location that would continue to be easily accessible to its users by walking, cycling or public transport; or
- It can be demonstrated that the use can no longer feasibly be provided in its location

### **Protection of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions**

Oxford has a wide range of cultural and visitor attractions and venues ranging from large places that attract people from far and wide to more local facilities important to local communities. These venues include theatres, cinemas, pubs, museums and music venues. These locations attract visitors from within the city and beyond including tourists. The events held at these places are the cultural lifeblood of the city for many people and as such should be celebrated and protected.

It is important that the city's social, cultural and visitor attractions are protected as they often add a unique vibrancy to the city. Many contribute to the evening economy while others bring social benefits and provide a meeting place for different groups of people as well as providing locations for events and for showcasing the work of different artists.

Most cultural venues and visitor attractions such as theatres, nightclubs, pubs, casinos and concert halls are classed in the planning system as 'Sui Generis', which means use cannot switch to or from them without planning permission and proposals can all be considered on their own merits. The criteria in Policy C5 provide a framework to determine applications for these cultural venues and visitor attractions against. In some instances, there may be scope to explore opportunities to improve the operation and management of the business and this need to be demonstrated that it has been fully explored as part of the marketing expectations as set out in Appendix 7.1.

## Policy C5: Protection, alteration and provision of cultural venues and visitor attractions

**Planning permission will be granted for new cultural, social and visitor attractions that add to the cultural and social scene of the city and district centres, provided that:**

- **the use is located in compliance with the sequential test in Policy C1 and is appropriate to the scale and function of the centre; and**
- **they are realistically and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport for most people travelling to the site; and**
- **they will not cause unacceptable traffic harm or adversely affect residential amenity; and**
- **there is no negative cumulative impact resulting from the proposed use in relation to the number, capacity and location of other similar uses (existing or committed) in the area; and**
- **they are well related to any existing or proposed tourist and leisure related areas.**

**Applications to increase capacity, improve access and make more intensive cultural/community use of existing sites will be supported. This may include diversification of pubs or similar through the provision of short stay accommodation on upper floors where it does not detract from the operating capabilities of the business and where it does not conflict with other policies of the Plan.**

**The City Council will seek to protect and retain existing cultural venues and visitor attractions. Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions, except in the following circumstances:**

- **A suitable new or improved cultural venue or visitor attraction meeting similar needs will be provided on the site or at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; or:**
- **Evidence is provided to support the application which demonstrates all the following criteria have been met:**
  - **There has not been wilful neglect that has resulted in the venue being unattractive to market; and**
  - **All reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for its existing use, or an alternative cultural or visitor attraction use that meets similar needs (according to Appendix X); and**
  - **it is demonstrated that suitable alternative facilities exist to meet the needs of the local community that may be met by the existing facility.**

## **Transport and movement in Oxford to help create a liveable city**

7.5 The transport and movement strategy of the Plan is based upon reducing the need to travel, the promotion of active travel and public transport, the support for and implementation of the [county council's core schemes](#), reduction in car parking yet ensuring the retention of appropriate level of disabled and servicing needs including taxi access, the support for car clubs, the support for well-designed electric vehicle charging provision and ensuring suitable levels of bicycle parking are provided in new development. During the Plan period it is anticipated that trial traffic filters will be introduced. These are predicted to have a transformational impact on congestion-reduction. This should lead to public transport and active travel options being more attractive to people for both accessing, passing through and getting to places across the city.

7.6 An effective transportation system is fundamental to the vitality and liveability of the urban area, yet movement of people and goods into and around Oxford continues to be a huge challenge. These policies are aimed at ensuring transport impacts of development are comprehensively assessed and mitigated in new development through transport measures, prioritising active travel and ensuring high quality public transport access for future occupants. As the sites around the edge of Oxford are built out it is essential that there is good connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and by public transport to and from these sites to ensure future residents have good access to destinations across the city.

7.7 Oxford City Council in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority has a key role to play in ensuring development is sustainable in both design and location. As such, it seeks to work with Oxfordshire County Council, the local highways authority, to ensure that new development incorporates the principles and encourages sustainable and active travel that offers joined up travel options. Local plan policies on density, design and the location of new development are drafted to support the implementation of sustainable city transport projects resulting in more sustainable travel across and into the city.

7.8 Due to the tight nature of the street structure there is limited potential to increase space on the roads (for example to provide bus priority or segregated cycleways) and so the space available must be managed carefully to optimise capacity whilst also enhancing the sense of place. The Plan will support the county council's measures set out in the [Local Transport Connectivity Plan](#) and [Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan](#). Local plan policies related to motor vehicular and bicycle parking, support for car clubs and EV charging infrastructure, combined with ensuring robust transport assessments, travel and servicing and delivery plans are submitted and complied with as part of a new development, all support and encourage the move away from private vehicle journeys where possible and seek to support active travel options of walking and cycling and public transport.

7.9 Oxford has an ongoing challenge to improve air quality and cut carbon emissions from the transport sector, as well as reducing the volume of traffic and the need for land being used for vehicular parking. An integrated approach is required to redress the balance in favour of space efficient, low emission transport modes across the area. Supporting people to shift away from a reliance on private vehicles will be essential to achieving this goal. Walking (or use of a mobility aid on the pavement) is almost universal, and therefore good access by walking is the number one priority. Cycling is also an active travel mode with a range of benefit. It provides health benefits, is without air quality impacts, and it enables people to travel further than walking

would. With the increasing development and popularity of e-bikes and cargo e-bikes the ability to travel further and carry packages is greatly extended. EV car clubs also provide an important role in shared transport solutions. Public transport use in Oxford is at a relatively high level and is already vital in Oxford, allowing people to access the city from outside and to move around the city to work and facilities more easily. . ocating city-wide or regional facilities on good public transport routes enables people from other parts of the city or county to reach them by sustainable modes.. eople would not generally expect to have facilities such as hospitals, theatres and cinemas within walking distance, but good bus access to them helps reduce the need to drive. Protecting facilities locally and at public mobility hubs, so that people can access them quickly and easily will help to achieve the objective of reducing car use and also promote healthy lifestyles and strong communities. Taxis also play an important role in inclusive transport and their need for road space and parking across the city, particularly at mobility hubs in the city and district centres is a key consideration when planning how street space is used and allocated.

### **Scheduled coaches and tourist coaches**

7.10 Coach travel is also important as a sustainable mode of travel. Oxford has several scheduled long-distance coach routes to the centre of London, and to Heathrow, Gatwick, Stanstead, Luton, and Birmingham airports, which provide a popular alternative to car travel. The council will support the county council in achieving the optimum routes within the city centre to reduce the negative impacts of these coaches on both the public realm and air quality, whilst ensuring good access to the service remains.

7.11 Tourist coaches continue to present a challenge to the city in terms of the numbers entering the city, particularly during the summer months. Coach parking facilities will continue to be at Redbridge Park and Ride site. Drop off points for coaches will continue to be needed to the north and south of the city (St Giles and St Aldates, south of Speedwell Street). Coaches will only drop off and pick up in these locations and must then leave the city centre and go to a long-stay parking area. To ensure coaches adhere to these arrangements enforcement is required to prevent the city from becoming an unauthorised coach parking area. Both councils will work together to strategically plan for coach parking in the city.

### **Rail network, reopening of the Cowley Branch Line (CBL)**

7.12 There is the potential to deliver several transformational railway projects within the Plan period. These range from the pan-regional East West Rail project which aims to reduce travel time and improve rail accessibility across the partnership area by introducing new train services connecting Oxford, Milton Keynes, and Cambridge. This is an ambitious project which aims to unlock the area's "potential to create jobs, grow the economy and attract investment for the entire country".<sup>1</sup>

7.13 A transformation of Oxford Railway Station is also required to facilitate the introduction of the rail infrastructure needed to introduce new train services (passenger and freight) connecting the key cities and economic areas across the country. The transformation of Oxford Station

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<sup>1</sup> East West Rail – Route Update Report (May 2023)

provides the opportunity to accommodate growing numbers of passengers and deliver local benefits such as public realm improvements to the area and an interchange that enhances first-last mile connectivity by sustainable modes. The delivery of a high-quality gateway to the city matches Oxford's international reputation for excellence and develops capabilities to bolster both the local and UK economy.

7.14 There is also the potential to deliver more localised railway improvements in the form of the re-introduction of passenger services on the Cowley Branch Line (CBL) linking Oxford Station with two new stations in the south of the city. The introduction of these two branch line stations will transform how people access jobs across the city and is likely to reduce traffic congestion as commuters have increased public transport accessibility to a wider range of jobs in this part of the city. The Cowley Branch Line and Littlemore Area of Focus Policy includes a fuller discussion of this issue.

### **Local Cycle Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

7.15 The Oxford LCWIP sets out a series of measures and programmes with the aim of promoting and increasing the level of walking and cycling in Oxford. The [Active Travel Strategy](#) focuses on active travel modes (walking, wheeling, and cycling). It sets out cycling targets, the Oxford target is that 450,000 cycle trips are made per week by 2031 (from the baseline of 300,000 – 50% increase).

Active travel has many benefits for both society and the individual which include health and fitness, reduced congestion on the road by private cars and in turn less car journeys means less pollution and hence improved air quality. Figure 7.1 shows the existing and proposed cycling and walking network in the city. This is key infrastructure that needs to be delivered over the Plan period if the target of modal shift away from the private car is to be realised.

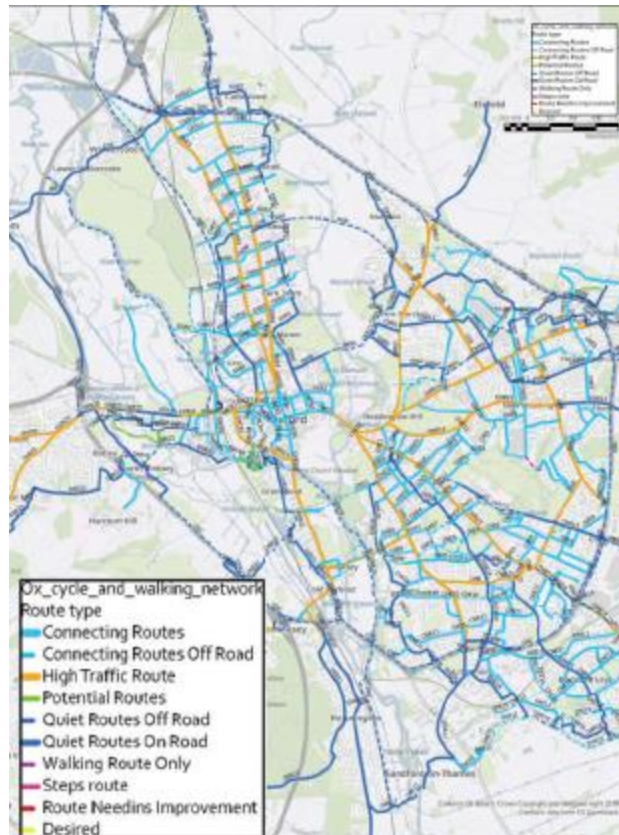


Figure 7.1 Oxford-Cycling and Walking Network from the Local Cycling and Walking (LCWIP)

### **Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Servicing and Delivery Plans**

It is important that new major development proposals seek to optimise active travel and public transport opportunities and aim to limit the increase in car journeys which would add to air pollution and congestion across the city.

Key tools used to appraise and determine the transport impacts of a development proposal are transport assessments (TA), transport statements and travel plans (TPs). The requirements for the transport assessment and travel plans are set out in the county council's document [Implementing Decide and Provide in Transport Assessments](#). New development proposals must all ensure the layout takes into consideration the principles set out in the county council's [Street Design Guide](#). All major applications must be accompanied by a transport assessment (TA) and a travel plan (TP).

A TA is a comprehensive and systematic process to ensure that the transport impacts of the development are properly considered and where appropriate includes measures to help mitigate development impact. A transport statement is a shorter version of a TA.

A TP is a package of measures tailored to the needs of an individual site and focused on reducing dependence upon the private car. TPs should demonstrate how the occupants



of the building are actively encouraged to establish use of sustainable modes of transport. TPs, to be effective, need monitoring, managing and where necessary enforcing. If the proposal is for employment uses, employers need to ensure that employees abide by the TP with appropriate sanctions for non-compliance. Developers must demonstrate in their TPs what incentives are being offered to facilitate the shift of travel mode from the private car. The TP will be reviewed, monitored and enforced as required (to be set out in a legal agreement). For some developments further assessments and/or plans may be required such as student accommodation plans or car parking plans.

The movement of goods and materials by road can have a significant impact on the quality of the environment and the health and wellbeing of residents, in terms of noise, congestion and air pollution. These impacts are severe in Oxford and the city centre in particular. If the [Zero Emission Zone](#) expands from beyond the pilot zone which was introduced in February 2022, some of these impacts would be reduced. However, commercial deliveries will always need to be made to Oxford and this should be done in the most sustainable way to reduce negative impacts.

Specific Delivery and Servicing Management Plans (DSPs) are required to be submitted for proposals that will affect the city centre or district centres and for sites near residential areas.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan ( CTMP ) must be submitted as part of the planning process and should incorporate the [CLOCS standard \(Construction, Logistics and Community Safety\)](#).

Consideration should be given to the County Council's Mobility Hub Strategy where appropriate in new development proposals. These requirements will be expected to relate to rail and bus stations, town and district centres, hospitals and university campuses and Category 1 employment sites.



## Policy C6: Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Service and Delivery Plans

Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals if the City Council is satisfied that adequate and appropriate transport-related measures will be put in place.

A Transport Assessment (TA) or Transport Statement (TS) must be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement, in accordance with the thresholds set out in Appendix 7.2.

Transport Assessments must assess the multi-modal impacts of development proposals and demonstrate the transport measures which would be used to mitigate the development impact to ensure:

- a) there is no impact on highway safety to be assessed on a case-by-case basis;
- b) there is no unacceptable residual cumulative impact on the road network;
- c) pedestrian and cycle movements are prioritised, both within the scheme and within neighbouring areas;
- d) access to high quality public transport is facilitated, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- e) the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport are addressed;
- f) the development helps to create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards as set out in the [Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guide](#);
- g) the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles is allowed for; and
- h) charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles is enabled in safe, accessible and convenient locations with designated bays and priority for car clubs

A Travel Plan, which has clear objectives, targets and a monitoring and review procedure, must be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement in accordance with the thresholds set out in Appendix 7.3. Travel Plans must support outcomes (a) to (h) set out above.

Where a Travel Plan is required under this policy and a substantial amount of the movement is likely to be in the form of delivery, service and dispatch vehicles, a Delivery and Service Management Plan will be required.

Small sites where servicing space is restricted will be required to submit a service and delivery plan.

Where a Delivery and Service Management Plan is provided this should set out how deliveries will be managed and demonstrate how impacts will be minimised including congestion, safety, noise and how zero or ultra-low emission and last mile opportunities will be considered.

**A Construction Traffic Management Plan must be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement during construction. This CTMP must incorporate the CLOCS standards where applicable (Construction, Logistics and Community Safety).**

### **Bicycle Parking and Powered Two Wheelers Parking**

If Oxford is to realise its ambition to become a world class cycling city where more people feel confident to cycle, it is essential that safe, secure bicycle parking is adequately provided in new developments.

Increasing the uptake of cycling further will be an important tool in helping Oxford to achieve its ambitions of improving air quality, reducing congestion, enhancing the public realm and encouraging healthy lifestyles. To encourage uptake of cycling it is important to ensure that those people who are cycling in Oxford are well provided for in terms of the provision of bicycle parking at both ends of their journey. Policy C7 sets out the requirements to ensure that bicycle parking in new development is well designed, secure and accessible.

It is anticipated that there will be a continued rise of ownership of E-bikes over the plan period. The need for secure bicycle parking to be provided in residential, employment areas and the city and district centres is an important consideration in the design of both the private and public realm.

Bicycle parking standards set out in the document [Parking Standards for New Developments](#) are minimum standards, which reflect the need for bicycle storage shown by research evidence –[Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards](#) - A guide for Developers, Planners and Engineers Summer 2017. Sufficient high-quality bicycle parking is especially important for developments which are seeking to reduce the amount of car parking as set out in Policy C8.

Appendix 7.4 sets out the parking standards for bicycles and powered two wheelers.

To encourage and support people who cycle to work appropriate facilities are needed in terms of changing rooms, showers and locker facilities in new non-residential/commercial developments. The standards are set out in Appendix 7.5.

### **Policy C7: Bicycle and Powered Two Wheelers Parking Design Standards**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development that complies with or exceeds the minimum bicycle parking provisions and the parking provision for powered two wheelers as set out in Appendix 7.4.**

**Provision of bicycle parking lower than the minimum standards may be acceptable for new student accommodation if it is:**

- a. located close to the institution where most of its occupants will be studying; and/or**
- b. where it is adequately demonstrated through a transport assessment that there is existing unused bicycle parking capacity available, in appropriate locations and of an appropriate design standard on site, to accommodate the increased number of bedrooms.**

**Bicycle parking should be well designed and well-located, convenient, secure, covered (where possible enclosed) and provide level, unobstructed external access to the street. Bicycle parking should be designed to accommodate an appropriate amount of parking for the needs of disabled people, bicycle trailers and cargo bicycles, as well as facilities for electric charging infrastructure to charge batteries for E bikes.**

**Changing room, showers and lockers should be provided at commercial/non-residential new development in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 7.5.**

### **Motor Vehicle Parking Design Standards**

Alongside the range of measures to reduce the need to travel and to encourage active travel modes, the policies in the Plan also seek to reduce the opportunities for parking across the city. Over time this will help to reduce car use leading to improvements in congestion, air quality and the environment for walking and cycling. In addition, with fewer private car trips on Oxford roads, public transport services can flow more freely further enhancing the attractiveness as an alternative to using a private car for journeys in and around the city.

The Council may refuse planning permission for development where additional parking pressure arising from the development would compromise highway safety and/or restrict the ability of existing residents to park. The County Council's Parking [Standards for New Development](#) should be referred to when considering parking levels in new development

The City and County Councils are working towards covering the whole city with [Controlled Parking Zones](#) (CPZs) during the plan period. A CPZ is an area where parking is only permitted in designed parking bays and the rest of the kerbside space is restricted by yellow lines. Any illegally parked cars are issued with a parking ticket. The introduction of CPZs across the city are mainly used to tackle the problems caused by commuter parking. Residents, their visitors and local businesses can park in designated bays when displaying a relevant parking permit for that zone which is acquired from the County Council. Some spaces are also available for short-term parking and blue badge holders can park without restriction.

### ***Motor vehicle parking in residential developments***

The level of car ownership is expected to decline in future generations with the expansion of car clubs and the emergence of new technologies such as automated cars which alongside public transport and walking and cycling should all see a reduction in the number of trips made by private car in the city.

There are many opportunities to deliver successful low car housing developments in Oxford because of the coverage of CPZs, the availability of quality walking and cycling routes and facilities, and the provision of reliable public transport options. For residential schemes located in the city centre or near district centres, low car developments are expected. Low car development means that no car parking spaces are provided within the site other than those reserved for blue badge holders, car clubs and for operational uses including spaces dedicated for working drivers for example NHS community staff and carers making home visits. The use of car clubs is actively encouraged by both councils as it is recognised that this shared transport solution gives people access to a vehicle as and when required without needing to own one.

On new residential schemes which are delivering 100 or more residential units it may not be appropriate to provide one parking space for each unit. As such the developer may wish to consider introducing a permit scheme to help prioritise who would be eligible for the parking spaces with higher priority given to residents who are essential vehicle users, who may require a vehicle for their work such as care workers, trades people etc.

Policy H9 Location of New Student Accommodation states that the City Council will secure an undertaking that students do not bring cars to Oxford. However, some limited blue badge holder and operational parking spaces should be provided for service and delivery vehicles, which should also be available, purely as a pick-up/drop off facility, for students and their families arriving and departing at the start and end of term.

### ***Parking and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)***

Some types of residential development may require the provision of parking spaces. The number of adult drivers, who own a car, occupying an HMO will often be higher than for a single household. The City Council will expect that where a Sui Generis HMO (6 or more occupants) is proposed outside CPZ areas, parking must be available to reflect the standard set out in the county council document Parking Standards for New Development. Where there is a realistic possibility of a CPZ coming forward during the plan period no off-street parking would be required. HMO developments are excluded from the permit scheme.

### ***Parking in non-residential developments and district centres***

Major development of non-residential sites is expected across Oxford during the Plan period. Many of these sites already have substantial amounts of parking. Additional parking will not be allowed in the event of the redevelopment of a site and the reduction of parking will be sought.

Any new developments for B1 use in the city centre and district centres do not require any

parking provision except operational need, because the centres have good access to public transport, cycling and walking routes.

### ***Public parking***

The Local Plan recognises the need for some on and off-street parking to meet the requirements of those using the city centre and district and local centres for both business and leisure. However, to achieve a modal shift in the way people travel into and around Oxford, away from the private car to public transport, cycling and walking, the Plan does not support a growth in either on or off-street public parking spaces in the city centre and district centres. As the County Council introduces changes to the movement of vehicles around the city with the introduction of three major transport proposals which are traffic filters, an expanded zero emission zone and work place parking levy, there is an expectation that on-street parking places in the city centre and along key transport corridors may be reduced in number and/or be reorganised to enable more efficient flow of vehicles and to reclaim road space for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians. Where retained or created, parking for blue badge holder vehicles must be accommodated in a way that does not detract from other functions of the street.

The City Council will continue to work with the County Council as the highways authority to facilitate measures such as the actions set out in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan, to maintain and enhance Oxford's overall accessibility to ensure people have realistic options other than to drive into the city and district centres.

## **Policy C8: Motor Vehicle Parking Design Standards**

### **Residential developments**

**Where the following circumstances apply, planning permission will only be granted for residential schemes\* that are low car:**

- a. in Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs); and**
- b. where the site is located within a 400m walk to frequent (15-20 minute) public transport services; and**
- c. within 800m walk to a local supermarket or equivalent facility with a minimum floor area of 130m<sup>2</sup> of retail space which sells essential items such as milk, bread, pasta and fruit and vegetables**  
**(measurements taken from the midpoint of the proposed development)**

**In low car residential developments, no car parking spaces allocated to a particular housing unit are to be provided, but only a small number of shared spaces and spaces for blue badge holders, servicing and delivery vehicles including, for working drivers, and for pooled cars/car club cars. The numbers of blue badge holder spaces and servicing spaces, pooled car/car club spaces required in all residential developments is set out in Appendix 7.6**

**On large residential schemes of 100+ units, car club or pooled cars should be made available according to the standards set out in Appendix 7.6.**

In all other locations planning permission will only be granted where the relevant maximum standards as set out in Appendix 7.6 are met.

Parking spaces should be located to minimise the circulation of vehicles around the site and so that they are well integrated into the landscaping scheme.

#### Non-residential developments

The parking requirements for all non-residential development, whether expansions of floorspaces on existing sites, the redevelopment of existing or cleared sites, or new non-residential development on new sites, will be determined in the light of the submitted Transport Assessment (TA) or Travel Plan (TP), which must take into account the objectives of this Plan to promote and achieve a shift towards sustainable modes of travel. The requirements for a TA and TP are set out in Appendices 7.2 and 7.3 of the Plan. The presumption will be that vehicle parking will be for blue badge and servicing only. Any additional provision being kept to the minimum necessary to ensure the successful functioning of the development, the need for which should be demonstrated through the submitted Transport Assessment/Travel Plan. This should set out measures introduced to maximise use of sustainable transport modes and that demonstrates there will not be unacceptable impacts on the transport network.

In the case of the redevelopment of an existing or previously cleared site, there should be no net increase in parking on the site from the previous level and the Council will seek a reduction where there is good accessibility to a range of facilities.

Where the proposal is for the expansion of an existing operation on an existing large site, a comprehensive Travel Plan should be submitted that looks at the development in the context of the whole site. The Travel Plan will be kept under review to ensure that future opportunities to encourage a shift towards public transport and active travel are taken.

*\* For the purposes of this policy, residential development includes C3 dwellings, C4 and Sui Generis, HMOs, and all C2 development (residential institutions).*

#### Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging



Part S of the Building Regulations (effective from June 2022) addresses the delivery of infrastructure for charging electric vehicles. Part S covers the provision of charging points in both residential and non-residential developments, with specific levels of requirements set out for uses. As such Policy C9 seeks to ensure that chargers are well located and designed for ease of use.

To ensure that electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVI) provision is future proofed and remains competitive it is important that city residents who cannot charge their car at their own property are within walking distance of a minimum of two EVI providers.

Considerations set out in Policy HD15 Bin and Bike Stores and External Servicing Features should be referred to when considering the location of EV charging points.

### Policy C9: Electric Vehicle Charging

**The location of charging points in development proposals should allow for easy and convenient access to the charge point from the parking space. Both the charge point and auxiliary electric infrastructure should be designed and located so that they can be maintained as required. To minimise negative impacts on the electricity grid, charge points and associated electric infrastructure must meet [PAS 1878/9 Smart, interoperable and flexible Energy Appliances](#) standards.**

**On new developments, planning permission will only be issued for installations that meet both the parking standards set out in Policy C8 and Appendix 7.6 as well as accessible charging PAS standards, currently [PAS 1899:2022 Electric vehicles – Accessible charging](#). Where passive only infrastructure is provided, handover documentation must specify compliant hardware to ensure that the above standards are fully met once charging bays are activated.**

**All new blue badge parking bays and all car club parking bays must be electrified.**

#### **New build residential development**

**All dwellings with a dedicated parking space must provide access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Where on street parking is proposed in the new residential development it should incorporate infrastructure to enable the charging of elective vehicles on the streets in accordance with the Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guidance.**

**New build non-residential development**

**In all non-residential development providing one or more car parking bays, access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure must be provided.**

**All new blue badge parking bays and all car club parking bays must be electrified.**