

# Supplement for

# Cabinet

On **Wednesday 14 September 2022** At **6.00 pm**

## Item 7 - Scrutiny Reports

### Contents

7.	<b>Scrutiny reports</b>	3 - 14
	Scrutiny Committee will meet on 6 September 2022. The following reports are expected and will be published as a supplement, together with any other recommendations from that meeting:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oxford Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Regulation 18 Consultation</li><li>• Future Workplace: Relocation from St Aldate's Chambers to Oxford Town Hall</li></ul>	

The agenda, reports and any additional supplements can be found together with this supplement on the committee meeting webpage.

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 14 September 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Oxford Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Regulation 18 Consultation Document

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Lizzy Diggins, Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chair
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 06 September 2022 to consider a report on the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Regulation 18 Consultation Document. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 14 September 2022, recommends that Cabinet approves the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options document for public consultation; and authorises the Planning Policy and Place Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the documents and the supporting evidence base prior to going out to consultation.

## Summary and recommendations

2. Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report. He reminded the Committee that a Local Plan was not intended to be an overarching plan for the Council but a specific example of strategic level planning.
3. Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager, and Amanda Ford, Team Leader – Planning Policy, summarised the extent to which the team was exploring ways to consult and reported that around 4,000 responses were received to the previous consultation on the Local Plan 2036. They explained that they hoped that even greater engagement would be achieved in relation to this consultation.
4. The Committee recognised the intention to consult widely in different formats as detailed in the Consultation and Engagement Plan at Appendix 2. However, the Committee was conscious that such a large document would be, to most people, difficult to navigate. Whilst a contents page of policy option sets existed, the Committee suggested that consideration should be given to a key to the document and, where it existed digitally, this should ensure ease of navigation.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council inserts a key to the document to ensure that navigation and integration are more accessible.***

5. The Committee noted the intention to make the consultation accessible to all of Oxford's residents and suggested that particular consideration should be given to ensuring those for whom English was a second or other language could engage with the process.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council gives consideration to how to engage most effectively with residents for whom English is a second or other language during the consultation process, including the provision of drop-in sessions.***

6. The Committee noted the intention to engage residents using social media, events, and various print and online publications. In order to increase accessibility and to encourage engagement, the Committee suggested that consideration should be given to producing audio summaries in the form of basic podcasts.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council explores options to produce basic podcasts summarising the document.***

7. The Committee recognised that the Local Plan would affect all those who visit or spend time in Oxford and not just those who live in the City. This was particularly the case for those who work in Oxford but do not live there, whether for reasons of affordability or otherwise. The Committee suggested that consideration should be given to consulting representative groups of those who work in the City, through trade unions and the royal colleges, so as to ensure their views were received.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council seeks to engage specifically with vocational groups (such as trade unions and royal colleges) to ensure that the voice of those who work in Oxford but do not live in the City is heard.***

8. The Committee recognised that the Local Plan would affect those who live in the City but are either vulnerably housed or sleeping rough. The Committee suggested that consideration should be given to consulting charities and organisations which support and represent people in those situations to ensure their views were received.

***Recommendation 5: That the Council seeks to engage specifically with organisations representing those with specific housing needs, such as Crisis and Acorn.***

9. The Committee noted that reference was made to a key principle being to “ensure good connectivity by foot and cycle and public transport across the area” and suggested that consideration should be given to clarifying what was meant by this. The Committee noted that there was limited reference to car free spaces and, whilst recognising that these were implicit given the National Model Design Code principles, suggested consideration should be given to explaining this in the document.

***Recommendation 6: That the Council clarifies the definition of ‘good connectivity’ within the document.***

***Recommendation 7: That the Council explains in the document that the National Model Design Code principles are applied when considering the location of car parking in relation to residential and shared amenity spaces.***

10. The Committee noted that sections 8.6 and 8.7 of the document set out a distinction between ‘site allocations’ and ‘areas of focus’. In order to enable greater engagement with the proposals set out in the document, the Committee suggested that consideration be given to explaining more fully the distinction between the two and the interaction between them.

***Recommendation 8: That the Council explains the distinction between ‘areas of focus’ and ‘site allocation policies’ and the interaction between them within the document.***

11. The Committee heard the Cabinet Member’s explanation of the challenges of including certain measures and intentions in terms of development principles because they were governed by other processes or included in other documents. Nonetheless, the Committee considered that a number of issues would benefit from explicit reference in the document. Where that was either forbidden by legislation, or was covered by a separate document, the Committee suggested that

consideration should be given to explaining that in the introduction to the Local Plan document.

***Recommendation 9: That the Council makes explicit reference to the importance of access to nature in housing developments within the document.***

***Recommendation 10: That the Council makes explicit reference to the importance of street trees within the document.***

***Recommendation 11: That the Council ensures in cases where explicit reference to a topic or area of policy is forbidden by legislation, or that topic or area of policy is covered in a separate document, that this is explained in the document introduction.***

12. The Committee noted that figure S3 of the document showed how the policy option sets sought to address the issue of climate change and that the narrative text described how the Council sought to do that. The Committee suggested that consideration should be given to citing international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and that the language of such agreements, such as 'loss and damage' should be reflected in the narrative section.

***Recommendation 12: That the Council makes explicit reference to the Paris Agreement within the document and that the language of international frameworks, such as 'loss and damage', be reflected in the narrative section.***

<b>Report author</b>	Richard Doney
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	07485 311341
e-mail	<a href="mailto:rdoney@oxford.gov.uk">rdoney@oxford.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix A

### Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 06 September 2022 concerning the **Oxford Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Regulation 18 Consultation Document**. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1) That the Council inserts a key to the document to ensure that navigation and integration are more accessible.	Yes	We will look to provide a supplementary key (alongside the document) which identifies new policy areas, those where policy options propose strengthening existing policies and those where another document or the NPPF provide the detail (see recommendation 11 below).
2) That the Council gives consideration to how to engage most effectively with residents for whom English is a second or other language during the consultation process, including the provision of drop-in sessions.	Yes	We will work with the communications and consultation colleagues to ensure that we offer a good service in line with the Council's procedures. We will encourage online engagement (including through a QR code) which will allow online translation to users as required.
3) That the Council explores options to produce basic podcasts summarising the document.	Yes	We already intend to produce video content, we will explore the potential for podcasts with communications and consultation colleagues.
4) That the Council seeks to engage specifically with vocational groups (such as trade unions and royal colleges) to ensure that the voice of those who work in Oxford but do not live in the City is heard.	Yes	We will identify local branches of trade unions and royal colleges and other trade/professional bodies and add them to our list of consultees who will be contacted.
5) That the Council seeks to engage specifically with organisations representing those with specific housing needs, such as Crisis and Acorn.	Yes	We will ensure that organisations working with those who have specific housing needs are added to the list of consultees who will be contacted.

6) That the Council clarifies the definition of 'good connectivity' within the document.	Yes	We will add the following in brackets after the 3 instances of this phrase in the development sites chapter:  “(e.g. with safe, attractive routes and considering 15 minute city aims)”
7) That the Council explains in the document that the National Model Design Code principles are applied when considering the location of car parking in relation to residential and shared amenity spaces	Yes	We will incorporate the principles set out in the Model Design Code as we draft our policies around parking and design in new development.
8) That the Council explains the distinction between 'areas of focus' and 'site allocation policies' and the interaction between them within the document.	Yes	Propose amendment to Paragraph 8.7:  <i>“<u>The Areas of Focus each include a number of specific site allocations.</u> The benefit of identifying <u>the broader</u> Areas of Focus <u>in addition</u> is that as development sites come forward, they can be determined against some key policy principles relevant to that area and thus can be considered in the wider context of the area and the other potential developments.”</i>
9) That the Council makes explicit reference to the importance of access to nature in housing developments within the document.	Yes	Proposed amendment proposed to paragraph 4.8:  <i>“Ensuring people have <u>doorstep</u> access to a network of green spaces is key objective for the new Local Plan and it is therefore crucial that we continue to protect these existing spaces in the city. The network can be broken down into a variety of typologies of open space, some of these, such as parks and amenity green spaces serve a wider variety of functions than other more specialised spaces, such as allotments and cemeteries. A potential green infrastructure network for the city like the existing network defined in the Local Plan 2036 has been proposed in the Green Infrastructure Study 2022; this is presented in</i>

		<p>the figure below. It is made up of a variety of open spaces and ecological designations, as well as green belt land.</p> <p><u>Key considerations are the quality and function of spaces, connectivity and ensuring doorstep access to green spaces for people across the city.</u> We will need to undertake further analysis and refinement to finalise the network that is to be subject to protection following the consultation; as such this is not finalised.”</p>
10) That the Council makes explicit reference to the importance of street trees within the document.	Yes	<p>Proposed amendment proposed to paragraph 4.10:</p> <p>“Local Plan policy can have a role in securing a range of new green infrastructure across different scales of development, from lines of <u>street</u> trees and hedges...”</p>
11) That the Council ensures in cases where explicit reference to a topic or area of policy is forbidden by legislation, or that topic or area of policy is covered in a separate document, that this is explained in the document introduction.	Yes	See answer to recommendation 1 above
12) That the Council makes explicit reference to the Paris Agreement within the document and that the language of international frameworks, such as ‘loss and damage’, be reflected in the narrative section.	Yes	We will ensure that the accompanying background paper on climate change which includes much more detail on the context and the international and national framework, includes explicit references as suggested.

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 14 September 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Lease of Council Office Accommodation at St Aldate's Chambers

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Lizzy Diggins, Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chair
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management and Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
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### **Introduction and overview**

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 06 September 2022 to consider a report on the Lease of Council Office Accommodation. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 14 September 2022, recommends that Cabinet resolves to approve the decision to relocate Council staff from St Aldate's Chambers (subject to any changes to terms and conditions of employment required), approve the reallocation of existing budget from the capital programme, recommend to Council the approval of a contingency budget of £300,000 and delegate authority to officers to enter into appropriate contracts and let the whole of St Aldate's Chambers.

## Summary and recommendations

2. Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services, introduced the report. He set out the rationale for the proposal and explained that extensive staff consultation had begun and would continue.
3. Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources), apologised that the discussion with the Leaders of all the political parties with representation on the Council, as well as the independent ward councillor, described in paragraph 19 of the report had not happened before the report was published.
4. The Executive Director (Corporate Resources) outlined the commitment to ensuring the move was a positive one that benefitted staff and the Head of Corporate Property outlined practical steps that would be taken to help ensure this.
5. The Committee raised a number of questions regarding accessibility and terms and conditions and was largely satisfied with the assurances provided.
6. The Committee recognised that, given the speed with which the move would take place, not everything would be ready within the timeframes but sought reassurance that adequate secure cycle storage would be available and recommended that consideration be given to providing this at the earliest possible opportunity. Members of the Committee shared positive experience of Spokesafe as a provider of such.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council ensures the provision of significant secure cycle storage at the Town Hall at the earliest possible opportunity.***

<b>Report author</b>	Richard Doney
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	07485 311341
e-mail	<a href="mailto:rdoney@oxford.gov.uk">rdoney@oxford.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix A

### Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 06 September 2022 concerning the **Lease of Council Office Accommodation at St Aldate's Chambers**. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
<b><i>1) That the Council ensures the provision of significant secure cycle storage at the Town Hall at the earliest possible opportunity.</i></b>	Yes	We plan to secure the same amount of storage as currently provided, although in a 2 storey racking system. As explained, if there is a need for further cycle storage after the move to the Town Hall this can be explored in the next phase of feasibility. It was further explained that there are significant constraints in land availability outside the Town Hall.

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