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Central Number: 01865 249811

12 November 2013

Dear Councillors

**CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD - WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2013 – OXPENS MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) – AGENDA ITEM 6**

In the process of publishing representations to the Oxpens SPD some submissions were duplicated. Subsequently the number of representations received, has been amended from 150 to 143.

Attached is an amended report to item 6 on the main agenda, along with all of the appendices detailed in the report including an amended appendix 4

Please bring these documents with you to the meeting as they replace those printed with the main agenda.

Yours sincerely

Mathew Metcalfe  
Democratic and Electoral Services Officer



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE



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**To: City Executive Board [subject to Scrutiny 5<sup>th</sup> November]**

**Date:** CEB 13th November 2013

**Report of:** Head of City Development

**Title of Report:** Oxpens Site Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document – Adoption

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To approve the Oxpens Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for adoption.

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Colin Cook

**Policy Framework:** The SPD will assist in the delivery of the planning policies of the Local Development Framework/Local Plan and West End Area Action Plan.

**Recommendation(s):** That City Executive Board:

1. Adopt the Oxpens Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document as modified in the form set out in Appendix 5.
2. Endorse the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Combined Screening and Scoping Report;
3. Authorises the Head of City Development to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to final publication, in consultation with the Board Member.

**Appendix 1** - Schedule of consultation changes

**Appendix 2** - Risk Assessment

**Appendix 3** - SEA Screening and Scoping Document

**Appendix 4** - Public Consultation Statement

**Appendix 5** - Oxpens Masterplan SPD

## Introduction

1. Following approval from CEB in June 2013 to formally consult on the Oxpens Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, City Executive Board is now asked to consider proposed changes to the document arising from public consultation and to agree to its adoption.
2. The City Council has an adopted Core Strategy (March 2011) and West End Area Action Plan (June 2008) that set the policy framework for development on the Oxpens site in Oxford's West End. The draft Oxpens Masterplan SPD will supplement existing plans by explaining how the policies can be interpreted. It will add a further degree of detail and set out the Council's aspirations for the area but will not introduce any new policies.
3. The Oxpens site represents one of the most significant development opportunities in Oxford City centre and has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the life and economy of the city. The site is identified for a new mixed use quarter, including housing, R&D space, offices, hotel, local facilities and public open space. The site is strategically located between the railway station and Westgate development. Some of the land may be used for temporary parking whilst the new Westgate centre is under construction.
4. Oxpens is also a key project in the Oxford City Deal proposal, accelerating economic growth and housing delivery with potential to deliver up to 300 new homes and support over 1000 jobs.
5. The major landowners are British Rail Residuary Board and the City Council. There are also assets in the ownership of Royal Mail, Greensquare Housing and Milton Investments plus others. Several key stakeholders including Members, SENDRA, the County and West End Steering Group were informally consulted in the preparation of the draft masterplan SPD and comments incorporated where applicable.
6. Formal Public consultation took place between 17th June and the 30th July 2013. The document was published, advertised and made available for public comment. In addition an exhibition was held in St Aldates Chambers for three weeks, 900 questionnaire leaflets were distributed to local residents and businesses, and a further 200 were distributed through the Customer Service Centre.
7. 143 representations were received during the consultation period and these have been carefully considered and where appropriate have informed revisions to the SPD. They are also reported in a Consultation Statement (at Appendix 4) which will be published on the website alongside a final version of the SPD.

8. The SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, supporting the policies of the adopted Core Strategy and the West End Area Action Plan in particular. The SPD does not set out any additional policy requirements, but instead provides clarity and advice on how the City Council's adopted planning policies should be implemented.
9. The purpose of the SPD is to set out the City Council's preferred approach for bringing forward development proposals by showing how policies can be interpreted, and most notably identify that the Council seeks:
  - Development proposals that consider the whole site
  - To secure an urban approach to development that reflects the site's city centre location
  - To secure proposals that respond to the urban grain and local heritage
  - To show how a mix of uses can maximise site and amenity value in a sustainable manner
10. The SPD will also help to ensure both the delivery of affordable housing and the provision of the necessary measures required to mitigate the impact of development of all types.

### **Content of the SPD**

11. In brief the main matters covered in the SPD are:

#### **Site Context, Constraints, Features and Opportunities**

- Identification of the site history, key land ownerships, features, flood risk, archaeology and land issues.
- Opportunities for Oxpens Meadow to enhance the setting of development, for improving connections across the river and into the city centre, for improving streets, delivering city centre housing, and generating investment and activity.

#### **Vision Statement**

Setting out that the development should :

- be planned in a comprehensive manner
- be of high quality architectural design, to attract investment and raise aspirations for the West End, and should protect, enhance and positively address Oxpens Meadow and the River Isis.
- address Oxpens Road and seek to enhance public realm quality for all
- provide a balance of family housing with gardens and apartments with outdoor amenity space
- accommodate space for business uses in the form of offices and R&D premises
- ensure complimentary land uses such as hotel, retail food and drink and professional services are located in the most visible locations on Oxpens Road and set around a new public square.

- Use a palette of materials that reflects the colours and materials in the city centre consistently across the site to establish a common identity and character.

### **Design Principles**

- Covering quality of development, maximising value and site potential, sustainability, addressing Oxpens Road, improving accessibility, public realm, Oxpens Meadow, riverside location, possible land use mixes, generating activity, and character areas responding to local heritage.

### **Masterplan**

- The SPD sets out a development framework comprising a series of flexible urban blocks with a distinct street hierarchy, and then articulates this in a detailed illustrative masterplan to show how the site could be developed, recognising that other detailed layouts are possible. The plan also indicates proposals for character zones, building heights, public realm, landscape, car and cycle parking.

### **Phasing and Delivery**

- Broad brush approach that allows for flexibility and ability to respond to market conditions.

## **Public Consultation**

12. Of the 143 representations received (from organisations and individuals) the vast majority were in favour of the proposed long term vision for Oxpens with only 20 individuals disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Upon interrogation of the negative responses it seems that those not in favour had concerns over flooding, traffic or transport matters, which are either already strategically assessed as part of the West End AAP or would be addressed through detailed scheme assessments as proposals come forward for planning in the future.
13. There were no objections from any of the statutory authorities, including the environment agency. In response to concerns from English Heritage, the heritage aspects of the document have been strengthened and more clearly articulated.
14. There were no objections to the SEA and generally positive support.
15. A very high majority of respondents supported all of the design principles set out in the document. (c.80%).
16. Key adjacent landholders support the mixed-use development, which is in full compliance with policy.
17. There was very high majority support for improvements to the public realm on Oxpens Road, locating the square next to Oxpens Road and access for all to the river with a bridge crossing.

18. Concerns were raised over lack of an integrated transport strategy and links with nearby developments at Westgate and the station masterplan, but these are in fact joined up; actions taken to address this perception have included changes to the website information and joint meetings between officers and Westgate Oxford Alliance with local residents.
19. One organisation questioned why the site was not all used for housing – this would be contrary to adopted policy WE20 of the AAP which requires all sites of 0.2 Ha or greater to incorporate more than one use and a fully residential scheme would not achieve the same employment and economic benefits. With the proposed mixed-use arrangement there would be no net loss of jobs.
20. The long term future of the ice-rink facility was a recurring question. Although the SPD sets out a long term arrangement for the whole site area, the Council is committed to retaining the ice-rink in its existing location.
21. There were some concerns over the potential loss of the petrol station, Royal Mail delivery office and coach park. The latter two of these facilities would be reprovided elsewhere. Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide a delivery office in the city. There are 7 petrol stations within 4 miles of the Oxpens site.
22. The provision for new local shops /services was welcomed by local residents.
23. Consultation responses are explained in greater detail in the Consultation Statement (Appendix 4). The proposed changes to the SPD are set out at Appendix 1.
24. The proposed changes following consultation do not materially affect the SPD document as drafted.

### **The next stages**

25. City Executive Board is asked to approve the SPD for formal adoption and also to authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Board Member, to make any minor editorial corrections necessary prior to publication. Following approval of the document for adoption, it will be published on the website along with the Consultation Statement.
26. SPDs are not subject to independent examination; therefore it is CEB that is asked to approve the Supplementary Planning Document for adoption.

### **Environmental impact**

13. Sustainability Appraisal is no longer required for SPDs under UK law, however to comply with European regulations, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Combined Screening and Scoping Report has been produced to identify whether the SPD would have any significant environmental impacts and is available here <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/spd>. This exercise screened in further work on flooding and transport, which has now been completed. The statutory consultees for the SEA (Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England) had no concerns with the Combined Screening and Scoping Report.

### **Equalities impact**

14. Consideration has been given to the public sector equality duty imposed by s149 of the Equality Act 2010. Having paid due regard to the need to meet the objectives of that duty and of the SPD the view is taken that the duty is met.

### **Financial implications**

15. The final production of the Supplementary Planning Document will be funded in part from the resources of the internal Partnerships and Regeneration Team, with expenditure on consultancy (estimated at £5,500) being met from the current resources of West End project, funded by CLG revenue grant.

### **Legal implications**

16. The SPD will assist in achieving environmental, social, design and economic objectives relevant to the development of this land provided for by the development plan.

### **Risk assessment**

17. A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached (Appendix 2). All risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level.

#### **Name and contact details of author:-**

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**List of background papers:** None.



Appendix 2 – Risk Register

Risk ID	Risk Category	Risk Title	Opportunity/Threat Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	Corporate Objective	Gross Risk	Residual Risk	Current Risk	Owner	Date Risk Reviewed	Proximity of Risk (Projects/Contracts Only)
	-000-Service Area Code			Any person with sufficient interest may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to adopt it. Applications should be made no later than 3 months after the date of adoption. They can be made after this time but it is unusual for a Court to allow a challenge after 3 months.	If successful the High Court would rule that the SPD be quashed, wholly or in part.	28.04.13	1 to 6	3	3	3	Michael Crofton Briggs	27 <sup>th</sup> Sept 13	
		Legal challenge	Threat	There is a risk of a legal challenge to the SPD once adopted				2	3	3			
Risk ID	Risk Title	Action Owner	Accept, Contingency, Transfer, Reduce or Avoid	Details of Action	Key Milestone	Milestone Delivery Date	%Action Complete	Date Reviewed					
001	Legal challenge	Michael Crofton Briggs	Reduce	Consultation carried out and SPD adjusted accordingly	Assess consultation results	Aug/Sept 13	100%	27 <sup>th</sup> Sept13					

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NOTE: Page numbers and references relate to the original draft SPD document.

Item No.	Page/Ref	Change	Driver/Reason for change	Requested	Details
1	pg 19, Fig 3.1	Amendment to boundary lines .	Correction	Milton Investments, WOA	Amend station masterplan boundary as per attached dwg. Amend Westgate boundary as per attached dwg.
2	pg 65, para 6.30	Text amend	Consultation- Emphasis on need to protect the retail core.	WOA. City Council	6.30 The Oxpens site is outside the Oxford City primary shopping frontage and therefore retail space will be restricted to smaller units <b>which should not be amalgamated to create larger units if this would undermine the retail core.</b>
3	pg36, Fig 3.1	Amendment to Boundary Key	Consultation	Milton Investments	4. Oxford Business Centre. <b>Consider for later phases in the development.</b>
4	Para. 7.47 Infrastructure requirements	Amend text to update and provide clarity	Update.	City Council	List of infrastructure requirements to serve <b>both</b> the proposed development <b>is set out below. Reference should also be made to the City Council's CIL Regulation 123 list.</b>
5	page 98 6.118 SUDS	Add note to text	Consultation	Environment Agency (EA)	Incorporation of Oxpens Meadow protected from development and retained as a green public open space, performing both flood mitigation and recreation facility functions. This area of open grass provides a large area for water infiltration, and drainage to the local watercourse. <b>However, SUDS features should not be incorporated into the flood mitigation area.</b>
6	pg 51 5.30 Bridge	Amend and add text	Consultation	EA, County Council	A New Footbridge crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably to the Grandpont Nature Reserve, and residential areas further up/down-stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan. <b>The exact location of the bridge is to be determined and the Environment Agency must be consulted on its design.</b>
7	pg 98 6.120 Ecological assets	Adjust text	Consultation, clarification	EA, City Council , County Council	Ecological assets, especially the landscape features in Oxpens Meadow, notably adjacent to the watercourse of the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should <b>where possible, be protected – be enhanced</b> The enhancements of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow will improve public access to these landscape assets <b>and improve the visual and ecological landscape assets. By improving existing, but also by adding new habitats, we can expect an increase in biodiversity in the area adding additional amenity value to the development.</b> Flood mitigation works will require some land re-profiling and landscape works but the reshaped Oxpens Meadow will be supplemented by new landscape features including new tree planting. <b>Enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow to access landscape features, such as the watercourses, should also be carefully located to avoid harm to high quality habitats and protected species along the watercourses. Disturbance could reduce biodiversity value of these areas and their function as corridors within Oxfordshire.</b>

8	pg 34 para 3.67 Contaminated Land	Add text	Consultation	EA	Identified historical and current activities within the Oxpens area may have resulted in contamination. Land remediation or mitigation measures may be required. Site contamination and ground condition surveys will be required to inform any detailed design proposals. Development of the Oxpens site has the potential to facilitate the clean up of any contamination which may have resulted from various contaminating activities and past industrial heritage. Providing long term benefits to the environment and protecting human health.
9	pg47 DP3 A Sustainable Scheme para 5.15	Add bullet point	Consultation	EA	Additional bullet point: Facilitating the remediation of any contaminated ground
10	pg 33 Utilities para. 3.61	Add word for clarity	Consultation	Thames Water	Any development should not be commenced until the applicant can demonstrate how and when the required water and waste water infrastructure requirements will be addressed and connected. Any required sewer network upgrades should be undertaken before or in line with the development to ensure there are no problems and that the water quality of the aquatic environment is protected. Thames Water should be contacted in relation to any development proposals to discuss available capacity.
11	pg 62 Framework Plan para. 6.5	Add text	Consultation/clarity	BRBR City Council	The Development Framework Plan illustrates core Masterplan design guidance for Oxpens that Oxford City Council strongly favour: all planning applications are expected to be in conformity with this plan. If flood mitigation measures are not needed in due course then the framework may evolve but the essential characteristics of the design approach must be retained – a series of urban blocks with riverside park area responding to the site's location and reflecting important heritage aspects of the city. There is flexibility in the framework and creative solutions for flooding that do not compromise the integrity of this approach are welcomed.
12	pg 29 Flood Mitigation para 3.47	Delete and adjust text	Update information and consultation	BRBR, City Council	It is recommended therefore, that a more detailed analysis of flood risk is undertaken for the site, subsequent to the publication of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD, as better information becomes available and prior to the progression of the site beyond masterplan stage. As at Autumn 2013 the Environment Agency are due to deliver an updated, and more representative, hydraulic model for the River Thames through Oxford during the summer of 2013, and this model will be used to identify development impacts and appropriate mitigation measures prior to the site being taken forward. The new model may impact on the available options for handling flood storage and mitigation on the site.
13	pg 104 para 5.44 DP8 Relationship to River	Adjust text	Consultation	BRBR City Council	<del>The flood mitigation scheme needs to be resolved and delivered prior to the development of built form to ensure flood protection is in place before new property is accommodated on the site.</del> A phasing plan for development and flood mitigation will need to be agreed by the City Council in consultation with the Environment Agency before commencement of development.
14	pg 64 para. 6.12 Possible Land Uses	Amend word	Consultation	BRBR	..This plan identifies where the land uses <del>should</del> could be located within the site -

15	pg 64 para. 6.18 Employment	Amend	Consultation	BRBR	The WEAAP identifies B1 <del>(a)</del> Offices as a potential appropriate land use for the Oxpens site. <del>It also encourages B1(b) Research and Development as a potential secondary land use for the Oxpens site and encourages Research and Development space.</del>
16	pg 100 para. 6.128 Economic Sustainability	Amend	Consultation, correction, clarification	BRBR City Council	The Oxpens site must <b>comprise more than one use and can</b> provide accommodation for new business opportunities including those listed below: Offices; Research and Development; Hotel and conference facilities; and Jobs in A1-A5 land uses (retail, eating/drinking, professional services).
17	pg 63 Figure 6.1	Minor amend	Consultation, correction,	County Council	<i>The southernmost blue arrow (minor access point) should be shown in a different colour to show that it is not for vehicular access.</i>
18	pg 91 Fig 6.14	Add note	Consultation	County Council, SENDRA, Others	INDICATIVE OXPENS MEADOW LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL (Note that designs for this area are not fixed and will be developed in consultation with Fields in Trust and the local community. The bridge location is also indicative at this stage.)
19	pg 78 Fig 6.8 OXPENS ROAD PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS	Add note	Consultation, clarity	County Council, City Council, SENDRA, Others	<i>Add note to Figure 6.8 middle left on drawing Note: Public realm treatment of Oxpens Road and Becket Street extension to be the same. Add note to Figure 6.8 bottom right on drawing: Note: Public realm and movement interfaces with Westgate junction to be considered.</i>
20	pg 78 Para 6.85	Amend text	Consultation	County Council	All proposed streets should include footways and ensure provision for pedestrian access, and cyclists may be accommodated within the carriageways <b>or by way of off-carriageway cycle facilities or "hybrid" cycle lanes.</b>
21	pg 78 para. 6.85 Main Route through Oxpens	Add sentence	Consultation	County Council	This route, its alignment and junctions have been analysed by Oxford City Council Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. <b>The route must be designed to cope with major flows but also safe pedestrian and cycle facilities.</b> Early pre-application discussion should be held with the County Council to discuss emerging street layout and design proposals for any planning application.
22	pg 68 para 6.51 Other land use considerations	Add sentence	Consultation, clarification	County Council, City Council	School- Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed that the site does not need to accommodate a school. Oxford City Council's Sites and Housing Plan allocates a site for a new school in New Hinksey at Bertie Place. It is expected that this would provide additional school capacity to allow the primary education needs of the Oxpens development to be met.
23	pg 47 DP3: A sustainable scheme	Add bullet point to list	Consultation	County Council	<b>Facilitating recycling and composting.</b>
24	pg 78 Footways, cucleways and leisure routes	Add bullet points	Consultation	Cyclox, public, City Council, Others	<b>Add bullets:</b> Facilities for cyclists should be considered including electric bike recharging and well spaced cycle stands. The needs of cyclists with trailers, tagalongs, electric batteries and three wheels should also be considered in street design. Consideration should be given to the different cycle parking needs of employees from shorter-stay users of the site. A safe route for cyclists should be provided through the site from Oxpens Meadow to connect with the station area.

25	pg 7 para 1.4	Amend text	Consultation, correction	Royal Mail	The site is currently in multiple-ownership: Oxford City Council, British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR), <del>and the</del> Milton Property Investments Ltd (the key landowner at the Oxford Business Centre), and Royal Mail each own part of the site, and there are ongoing uses including the Royal Mail <del>sorting office</del> Delivery Office and administrative functions, Oxford Ice Rink, a coach park, a petrol filling station, sheltered housing and a range of local businesses. The masterplanning work contained within this SPD has taken account of these factors”
26	pg 23 para 3.26 and 3.27	Amend text	Consulation , correction	Royal Mail	Change 'sorting office' to: 'delivery office and administrative offices'.
27	pg 23 Royal Mail	Add additional paragraph	Consulation, additional information	Royal Mail	Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide an efficient mail sorting and delivery service for Oxford Council’s administrative area. Relocation/reprovision of the Delivery Office to another suitable site in Oxford will be required before that site can be developed.
28	pg 64, para. 6.21	Amed text	Consultation, clarification,	Royal Mail, City Council	6.21 ....proposed new uses include new employment floorspace, retail, hotel and R&D uses, ensuring continued presence of employment activity. Although the existing employment space may be replaced in a different location, the objective is to have no net loss of employment <del>space</del> at Oxpens, some of which could be provided by non-B uses.
29	pg 105 para. 7.24	Add text	Consultation, clarification,	Royal Mail	Redevelopment of the Royal Mail site will be wholly dependent on the relocation / reprovision of the Delivery Offices so that it can comply with its statutory duties.
30	Appendix A	Remove	Simplification	City Council	Appendix 1 lists relevant policy documents. Instead these will be referenced by way of links on the website to current policies.
31	Apendix B	Remove	Simplification	City Council	Appendix B contains the accessibility study but the relevant drawing already forms part of the main document.
32	Appendix C	Remove	Simplification	City Council	Appendix C sets out 'other land uses that were discounted. Not needed- referenced in main document.
33	Appendix D	Remove	Simplification	City Council	Appendix D contains out-of-date information about planning applications for nearby sites. Therefore, not required.
34	pg 35 para 3.77	Add text		City Council Archeologist	The character, extent and state of presevation of any remains associated with Hart’s Civil War Sconce is currently poorly understood as the site has not previously been investigated. If remains are present and well preserved, they may be of national significance and, therefore, should be preserved in-situ within the development. This would require reconsideration of the location of flood mitigation measures. Archaeological evaluation will be required to demonstrate whether any remains of Osney Abbey are present within the development site. Should important remains be present then the development should aim, as far as is practical and in line with existing policy, to preserve these in situ by means of adaptive design. Should remains of lesser significance be indentified then it will be necessary to ensure these are appropriately investigated and recorded prior to the commencement of development.

35	page 35 para 3.78	Add text	Consultation, additional information	City Council Archeologist	<i>Add after 3.78.</i> A desk based assessment has identified the potential for the presence of archaeological remains associated with agricultural use of the area in the past including the potential for waterlogged remains associated with drainage ditches running across this low-lying area and including potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval period use of the area. Development will need to be preceded by further investigation of the area's archaeological potential to be guided by discussion with the City's archaeological advisor.
36	pg 45 DP1 A High quality Development para.5.8	Add text	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	The development should enhance views of Oxford from the railway line.
37	pg 49 para. 5.23 Street Trees	Add text	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	Given the wide scale of Oxpens Road large street trees should be specified to provide a foil to the large scale and massing of building frontages.
38	pg 49 DP 4 Addressing Oxpens Road	Add 3 new bullets	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	<i>Add bullets:</i> -Oxpens Road's frontage should be designed in accordance with the adopted Design Codes that form part of the AAP. Frontages could reflect the scale and massing of buildings on streets including Park End Street and South Parks Road, with a series of prestigious buildings designed to catch the eye through use of refined architectural detailing and using a similar palette of materials to provide a sense of unity. The choice of materials could reference those used on other streets of similar status within the city (c.f. Cooper's Marmalade Factory and the Cantay Depository on Park End Street). Within the frontage blocks defined in the masterplan, frontages should be broken up to provide a succession of buildings of a vertical proportion with the width being perceived as being less than the height of the building and active ground floor frontages to create an active and human-scale streetscene.
39	pg 53, DP6 High Quality Public Realm	Add paragraph	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	To soften the transition from the rural character space of Oxpens Meadow to the more built-up urban spaces of the new development, tree planting could include street trees and trees as part of landscaping for individual developments that provide foliage that spills through the building line into the streetscene. Examples of this effect are seen in many streets in Oxford, reflecting the presence of college gardens with mature planting. The West End Design Code provides further details of suitable species and factors to influence the choices of tree planting. Choices of architecture, materials and landscaping could seek to provide a natural city edge frontage overlooking green space. The Georgian and Victorian townhouse frontages of London Place, overlooking South Park, could be used as a precedent in the city to inspire design but this does not imply a restriction of architectural idiom to neo-vernacular design. The promotion of good contemporary architecture is established in the West End Area Action Plan.
40	pg 55 DP7: Enhancing Oxpens Meadow	Add Para.	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage, SENDRA, Others	Enhancement of public open space should include provision for measures to discourage the use of areas under the railway bridge for anti-social behaviour.

41	pg 59 DP11 Coherent Character	Add bullet to para. 5.53	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	This can be facilitated by: Using streets of similar function in adjoining character areas, to provide a precedent for the scale and role of buildings to create a legible hierarchy of streets forming coherent character areas.
42	pg 59 DP11 Coherent Character	Add bullet to para. 5.53	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	This can be facilitated by: The hierarchy of streets in the new development reflecting the variation in street patterns in St Thomas' in particular to benefit from the potential to create links with existing areas of high quality historic and modern townscape. Street design is covered in more detail in the West End Design Code.
43	pg 59 DP11 Coherent Character	Add bullet to para. 5.53	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	This can be facilitated by: Oxpens Road's character reflecting the broad width, strong enclosure and large building scale and pattern of Park End Street and Frideswide Square to which it is well connected with the buildings providing a series of landmark frontages to arrest the attention, allowing considerable potential for variety in detailing, but sharing a common scale. (Mixed-use main street in West End AAP)
44	pg 59 DP11 Coherent Character	Add bullet to para. 5.53	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	This can be facilitated by: Residential lower order streets reflecting a more organic character of space and building reflecting the character of St Thomas Street or the denser developments of residential streets that characterised the later expansion of Oxford in the 19th and 20th century. Using more muted architectural detail and a limited palette of materials so that buildings contribute as groups with occasional stand out buildings providing focal features would also help create a coherent character. Redevelopment at Littlegate Street provides suitable models of good practice.
45	pg 59 DP11 Coherent Character	Add bullet to para. 5.53	Consultation	City Council Heritage English Heritage	This can be facilitated by: Repeated use of roofline features to support the rhythm created in frontages. Variation in detailing between streets could be included to avoid creating a monotonous street scene, whilst occasional gaps in the frontage are necessary to allow greenery to spill through the street. The Christ Church Old Buildings at Osney Lane provide a precedent for adding detail to larger residential blocks.
46	pg 75 para 6.77	Add text	Consultation, Additional information	City Council, Oxford Preservation Trust	Views out from the City should also be considered. Additional Views Study work it is being undertaken and initial studies show that that the views from the west are 'kinetic', not static. This needs to be factored in to the consideration of development proposals for Oxpens as they come forward. Regard should also be had to the fact that new buildings at Oxpens will be in the middle/foreground of views from the west, which means that even if they are below the 18.2 metre threshold, careful consideration needs to be given to their form, design and materials in order to ensure that they do not detract from the view.
47	pg 75 para6.82	Amend text to fully reflect policy	Consultation, clarification	City Council, Oxford Preservation Trust	The Oxpens development should seek to <del>minimise its impact upon the Oxford skyline, to help ensure views of the city from the stated viewpoints are not unduly affected.</del> retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, and protect the green backcloth from any adverse impact.



48	pg 10 para 1.5	Amend text	Clarification	City Council	There are no current plans to redevelop the Ice Rink site, and the master plan allows for the retention of the Ice Rink <del>as a longer term fix</del> . The Ice Rink has been included within the Master Plan to allow comprehensive consideration of the whole of the Oxpens site, <del>including how the Ice Rink site could be redeveloped at an appropriate future time in relation to adjacent redevelopment</del> . Potential phased development of the site is set out in Chapter 7, <i>Phasing and Delivery</i> .
49	pg 72 para 5.57	Amedn text	Clarification	City Council	Development proposals for the Oxpens site should take account of the potential need to phase development in stages. <del>The site of the Oxford Ice Rink (sited on Oxford City Council land facing Oxpens Road) is an existing feature that is likely to remain in the medium to long term. Development may progress on the remainder of the site but the ice rink site may need to be delivered at a later stage.</del>
50	pg 72 para 5.58	Amend text	Clarification	City Council	The SPD Master Plan as presented in Chapter 6 presents a comprehensive development proposal for the site. The Master Plan illustrations show the site in fully developed form, but the arrangement of blocks, streets and spaces has been carefully considered to ensure that the <del>Ice Rink and Oxford Business Centre</del> sites could be delivered as separate phases. <del>with current uses retained in the interim</del> . The Oxford Business Centre site could be delivered alongside the core development area, but the master plan retains flexibility.
51	pg 126 para 7.33	Amend text	Clarification	City Council	7.33 <del>The site of the Oxford Ice Rink site has been identified by Oxford City Council as a longer term phasing consideration</del> . The master plan accommodates the potential to retain the Ice Rink whilst <del>ensuring that</del> the rest of Oxpens-site can be redeveloped.
52	pg 126 para 7.34	Amend text	Clarification	City Council	7.34 <del>To ensure this is possible it is important that</del> Redevelopment of the neighbouring land <del>provides should provide</del> a reasonable set back from the Ice Rink to ensure the facility can continue to function. In this respect the master plan and constraints mapping illustrates the functional site boundary of the Ice Rink, which not only includes the Ice Rink building but also immediately adjacent land that ensures sufficient space for the exposed external structural support of the building, access to the building, servicing access, fire escapes and easements.
53	pg 124 para 7.35	Amend text	clarification	City Council	7.35 The indicative phasing plan illustrates how the master plan can be delivered whilst retaining the Ice Rink as a longer term site feature. <del>The master plan design has established a clear urban block framework so that the Ice Rink site can be developed as the final phase of development to sensitively integrate with the surrounding redevelopment of the Oxpens</del>
54	pg 126 para 7.36	Amend text	clarification	City Council	<del>7.36 Should the Ice Rink site become available in the longer term the master plan has established a framework that would allow for redevelopment of the site.</del>

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**Strategic Environmental Assessment  
of the Oxpens Supplementary  
Planning Document**

**November 2013**



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## Non-Technical Summary

### Introduction

The purpose of Strategic Environmental Assessment is to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental considerations into the plan-making process.

This Non-technical summary provides a brief summary of the process and how the Strategic Environmental Assessment has impacted upon it. It also provides information about how to comment on the SEA Report.

### Contents and main objectives of the plan/ programme

The Oxpens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will set the framework for the development of the Oxpens site. The SPD will sit underneath the “parent” document – the West End Area Action Plan (AAP). As such it reflects, and is based on the policies within the West End AAP.

The Oxpens SPD provides an indicative masterplan that illustrates how development could look on the site, as well as a regulating plan to guide development and a series of design principles on which the masterplan has been based.

The design principles are set out below:

DP1	A High Quality Development
DP2	Maximising the value and potential of the site
DP3	A Sustainable Scheme
DP4	Addressing Oxpens Road
DP5	Improving Accessibility in the West End
DP6	High Quality Public Realm: Streets and Spaces
DP7	Enhancing Oxpens Meadow
DP8	Relationship to the Rive
DP9	Appropriate Land Use Mix
DP10	Generating Activity
DP11	Coherent Character
DP12	Phasing

Table NTS1: Design Principles on which the SPD masterplan is based

### Current State of the Environment and Environmental Characteristics of the area significantly affected

The site is in a prominent position within and bounds the edge of the West End area. It has good access to the rail network and is in walking distance of the city centre. The site has a variety of owners including the City Council and British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR). At present the main features of the site include a flood storage area, which is currently cleared, and a number of buildings in a variety of uses, and a car park.

The main existing environmental issue relevant to the development of the Oxpens SPD is flooding and flood risk. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was undertaken to support the AAP (Atkins, June 2007). The

SFRA provides detailed flood zone maps of the area. The SFRA flood zone map shows the Oxpens site to contain an area of flood storage/ functional floodplain which lies in Flood Zone 3b, as well as some parts of the site which lie in flood zones 3a and flood zone 2. As part of this work, an initial investigation was undertaken to see whether it would be possible to move the current flood storage area on the Oxpens site in order to create a more regularly shaped or larger area suitable for development.

The AAP states that *“potential ways of compensating for this flood storage were identified, and a feasibility study will be carried out to identify the best option as part of the master planning of the site”*. Other existing problems include, but are not limited to, the existing traffic and transport issues in the area; poor quality townscape character; and limited biodiversity opportunities.

### Alternatives

Two iterations of alternatives were looked at when developing the SPD. The first iteration considered whether or not an SPD should be undertaken, or whether another way to take the site forward may be more appropriate. The SEA found that an SPD was the most appropriate mechanism for taking the site forward at this stage in the process, particularly given the constraints around flooding.

The second set of alternatives looked at broad alternatives for how the site could be taken forward with respect of potential flooding issues on site. Two options were considered. One was informed by the flood mitigation scheme and the other was informed by the Environment Agency flood zones. There were further variants which varied the balance of housing and employment on site. These variants were all based on one of the two flooding-based options.

### Key findings of the SEA Process

This summary provides a brief summary on each of the topic areas that was screened into the assessment and provides a short overview of the type of mitigation measures considered.

### Flooding

As a result of this topic being included in the SEA, further technical work which was commissioned to examine how the site could be taken forward in relation to the flooding constraints. Two broad options were examined in this work. One option was based on the Environment Agency flood maps. The other involved remodelling of the site to increase the developable land area.

The technical work undertaken to support the SPD found that there are sufficient uncertainties associated with the current representation of flooding at Oxpens to cast doubt on the EA's Flood Map. This means that the impact of development upon water levels and flood risk is not fully understood. As such the likelihood or geographical scale of the effect, its significance, permanence or reversibility could not be predicted or evaluated.

The technical work concluded that the existing understanding of flood water and flood risk in the vicinity of the Oxpens site is rather rudimentary and on that basis, to either rule out the sketch Masterplan or definitely say that it is technically feasible would be wholly unsubstantiated.

The technical work suggested promoting the SPD on the understanding that there is a need for further and more detailed hydraulic modelling and understanding of flood risk to be completed as the Oxpens site is taken forward. The text of the SPD was amended to reflect this uncertainty.

### Biodiversity

At the early consultation stage, the Environment Agency noted that

*“The SEA findings should inform the master plan and design principles by identifying all features of ecological interest, within the site and incorporating wildlife, mitigation and enhancement into the development, in accordance with the LA duties under the NERC Act 2006.”*

As a result of these comments, which supported the inclusion of biodiversity being scoped into the assessment process, additions to various sections of the SPD were made including references to habitat enhancement and ecological sustainability.

### Cultural Heritage

A wide range of issues surrounding the historic environment were included in the SPD as a result of the SEA. Comments made by the Heritage Officer at the City Council led to additional work being carried out and also a number of changes in the SPD. Mitigation was mainly in the form of textual additions and included the following parts of the historic environment:

- Impact on the setting of both the city’s conservation areas – the Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area;
- Relationship with the former historic suburb of St. Ebbe’s;
- Visual impact of the development on the city’s sensitive historic skyline including the City Council’s protected view cones;
- Below-ground heritage;

### Transport

Further Transport modelling work was carried out as a result of the SEA process. This work looked at a number of options for a junction accessing the development from Oxpens Road, as well as ensuring that the roads within the development were sufficient to carry the type of vehicles expected. Three main options were considered for junctions accessing the development. These were a roundabout, signal controlled junction and a priority junction. As a result of the technical work and additional discussions with the County, a preferred option was taken forward. The SEA suggested that the SPD should be sufficiently purposeful in its textual amendments so that the mitigation measures suggested to make the scheme work would be carried forward.

### Climate Change

A number of additions have been made to the SPD as a result of the SEA process. The original draft SPD made no reference to the potential for an energy centre. The mitigation suggested as part of the SEA has been incorporated into the document and now references to the potential for an energy centre and renewable

energy are present. In terms of mitigating the impacts of climate change, this is a significant step forward. The SEA suggests further investigation of this topic as the development of the site moves forward as this could be a significant positive benefit for both the Oxpens site and the West End as a whole.

### Mitigation

A number of changes to the document itself were made particularly in the case of the historic environment/cultural heritage. Additions were also made in relation to flood risk and flooding, biodiversity and climate change and sustainability.

### Monitoring

Monitoring indicators have been provided for each of the constituent parts of the environment that the SPD looks at. Indicators include the following:

SEA Objective	Indicator
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	Permissions granted in Flood Zone 3b Applications in areas of flood risk (or over 1ha) submitted with an FRA Number of approvals for development incorporating sustainable drainage systems
SEA Objective 9: Biodiversity	Improvements made to green spaces and waterside environments
SEA Objective 10: Heritage	Number of schemes that have considered heritage in their design and access statement
SEA Objective 11: Transport	New links created Improvements made to the street environment Road congestion and Average Daily Motor Vehicle Flows
SEA Objective 13:	Number of schemes approved that meet the requirements of the NRIA SPD (and/or Sites and Housing Plan where relevant)

### Summary

In summary the SEA process has added considerable value to the Oxpens SPD. Environmental effects have been considered and key issues of flooding and flood risk are being scrutinised in detail. Transport modelling has been undertaken; the historic and natural environment has been given due consideration; and how the SPD will approach climate change particularly in terms of energy efficiency and renewable energy has been included in the SPD.



How to comment on the report

The consultation period for the SEA report corresponds with that of the Oxpens SPD. If you wish to make comments on the SEA Report, please make comments in writing. Either, email your comments to [planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk)

Or write to:

Planning Policy,  
City Development,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, St. Aldate's Chamber,  
109-113 St. Aldate's,  
Oxford,  
OX1 1DS

## Background

### Purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.1 The purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is “to provide for a high level of protection for the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development” Article 1 of the SEA Directive<sup>1</sup>.

1.2 The purpose of this Strategic Environmental Assessment is to assess the likely significant effects that the Oxpens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will have on the environment. It is worth noting that that the effects assessed as part of this SEA are considered in the context of previous work that was carried out in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the West End Area Action Plan (WEAAP).

### Objectives of the Plan or Programme

1.3 The Oxpens SPD has a set of design principles which have been developed along the same lines as plan objectives. As such it is prudent to use them.

1.4 There are twelve Design Principles set out in the Oxpens SPD. These are listed below:

DP1	A High Quality Development
DP2	Maximising the value and potential of the site
DP3	A Sustainable Scheme
DP4	Addressing Oxpens Road
DP5	Improving Accessibility in the West End
DP6	High Quality Public Realm: Streets and Spaces
DP7	Enhancing Oxpens Meadow
DP8	Relationship to the River
DP9	Appropriate Land Use Mix
DP10	Generating Activity
DP11	Coherent Character
DP12	Phasing

**Table 1:** Design Principles (Plan Objectives) for the Oxpens SPD

1.5 The Design Principles for the Oxpens SPD reflect and expand upon the design principles set out in the West End AAP.

<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (June 2001) implemented in to UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

## Links to other international, national, regional, local plans and programmes, and relevant environmental objectives including how these have been taken into account

### National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the National Planning Policy for England. When identifying other plans and programmes it is clearly relevant. The NPPF provides policy on when and how to use SPDs at para.153:

*Supplementary planning documents should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens of development.*

- 2.2 The glossary of the NPPF provides a definition of Supplementary Planning Documents:

*Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.*

### Local Planning Policy

- 2.3 Oxford's planning policies are found in a suite of planning documents which together form Oxford's Local Plan or as it is also known, the Local Development Framework.
- 2.4 The Core Strategy provides the strategic planning framework for Oxford. It allocates large strategic sites for housing and employment uses and includes a suite of core policies on housing; employment; responding to climate change; transport; townscape and the historic environment; and the natural environment.
- 2.5 The Adopted Local Plan 2001-2016 contains "saved policies" on a range of different topics including urban design, the historic environment, shopping frontages, and many more. Some of the policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2001-2016 have been updated through a variety of Development Plan Documents including the Core Strategy and the Sites and Housing Plan.
- 2.6 The Adopted Local Plan 2001-2016 made commitments to produce a number of SPDs. These included SPDs on Planning Obligations, Parking Standards, Affordable Housing and the Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) SPD. The Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD are currently being revised to take account of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It is also worth noting that the NRIA SPD includes a long-standing requirement for large developments (10 or more residential units or 2,000m<sup>2</sup> non-residential floorspace) to provide 20% of their energy requirements from renewable or low-carbon technologies.

- 2.7 The West End is a key location and represents the south-west quarter of the city centre. As well as being within the city centre, the West End is also the gateway to Oxford for those who arrive by train or reach the city from the west. The West End forms a significant area of land and includes key city landmarks and facilities such as the railway station; the Westgate Shopping Centre; the Castle site; Gloucester Green; and Oxford Town Hall. However this area does not currently match Oxford's worldwide reputation or live up to its potential as a city centre area of the highest quality (Oxford Core Strategy, 2011)
- 2.8 One of the strategic sites allocated in the Core Strategy is the West End. The Core Strategy Policy on the West End, Policy CS5 states:

## Policy CS5

### West End

The West End is allocated as a strategic location which will deliver a mixed-use development. Planning permission will be granted for development that includes:

- Significant housing provision (approximately 700-800 dwellings)
- Retail floorspace (at least 37,000m<sup>2</sup>)
- Office space (15,000m<sup>2</sup> for the private sector and 20,000m<sup>2</sup> for the public sector)
- New leisure and cultural attractions;
- A high quality network of streets and public spaces; and
- A new 1-form entry Primary School to serve the area

- 2.9 An Area Action Plan (AAP) was produced for the West End. The West End AAP sits underneath the Core Strategy in the hierarchy of development plan documents for Oxford City. The West End AAP does not specifically allocate development sites but instead proposes a range of indicative land uses appropriate for the area and suggests potential sites for particular uses giving certain uses priority on certain sites. The West End AAP forms part of the development plan and contains a suite of policies to guide development within the West End Area.

### Sustainability Appraisal of the West End Area Action Plan

- 2.10 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was carried out alongside the production of the West End AAP. The SA for the WEAAP dealt with a range of issues focussing on many aspects of the West End Area. The Guidance<sup>2</sup> for undertaking SEA discusses at Paragraphs 2.22-2.25 the level of detail in SEA.

- 2.11 Paragraph 2.22 states:

*An SEA need to be done in any more detail, or using any more resources than is useful for its purpose.*

- 2.12 Paragraph 2.25 states:

<sup>2</sup> ODPM, (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

*Where proposals need to be assessed more than once, e.g. at different stages of a plan or programme, information from earlier assessments can be used subject to updating or extra detail which may be necessary. This can help avoid duplication of assessment.*

- 2.13 Because the SA for the West End has covered a number of issues already, there is no need for duplication of the assessment as many aspects have already been assessed. Table 2 (taken from the Combined Screening and Scoping Report) documents the review of the Sustainability Appraisal for the West End AAP. The Table includes an additional column for additional information where relevant.

<b>SEA Directive Topics. (The environment is defined by Schedule 2 paragraph 6 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)</b>	<b>Summary of previous SA findings or undertaken as part of the West End AAP.</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna	Potential loss of an area of scrub on the Oxpens site. The AAP will ensure that a linear park is to be created along the length of the castle mill stream to mitigate this.	The HRA Screening concluded, and Natural England agreed, that the West End AAP would not be likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the Oxford Meadows SAC.
Population	Development will bring more residents and workers to the West End.	n/a
Human Health	AAP will improve health by providing more affordable housing which will reduce the number of people in inadequate accommodation. Potential for a new health centre in the West End	n/a
Soil	Depending on flood remediation measures this may need to be addressed at a later date.	n/a
Water	Further investigations required in relation to the provision of flood storage capacity on Oxpens Site.	The AAP makes a commitment to carry out a feasibility study to identify the best option as part of the master-planning of the site. Further modelling work is being commissioned and will be undertaken to examine this issue part of the SPD.
Air	SA suggests that there are not likely to be any significant improvements in air quality.	The whole of Oxford City is now an Air Quality Management Area.
Climatic factors	The West End provides one of the	If this commitment is not fully

	few opportunities for providing a district-wide heating system for Oxford and as such the AAP commits to providing such a system. The Oxpens site was identified by a study by ARUP as a key site to delivering the system in the West End.	considered on the Oxpens site, there may be no further opportunities for its development in the West End
Material Assets	Depending on the detail of the development proposal this may have an impact on material assets.	n/a
Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Potential impact on below ground remains of Osney Abbey and the Civil War defences. The SPD will ensure that heritage assets are dealt with in line with national and local policy in order to ensure that there are no significant effects on the environment.	n/a
Landscape	Current policies exist in the Core Strategy and West End AAP which will ensure that these matters are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.	n/a
Inter-relationships between the above issues	SA suggests that vehicle movements associated with the AAP should have a modest impact on the strategic road network	Some transport issues are unresolved with regards to the Oxpens site. For instance, visitor coaches currently use the site, and there are also proposed changes to the bus routes. The City Centre Stage 1 Transport Strategy has been completed. This provides some information about what is proposed for the routing of buses around Oxpens. There is also the issue that as part of the Westgate redevelopment, the car park on Oxpens was an option to use as a temporary car park while building works are undertaken.

2.14 Table 3 (also taken from the Combined Screening and Scoping Report) shows the links between the AAP and the SPD. As is seen below, the AAP provides a comprehensive framework for development and renaissance in the West End; and that the SPD is broadly consistent with what the AAP proposes. It will be for the SPD to provide further guidance for development of the Oxpens site.

SPD Contents		Existing Policies	Additional requirements sought by the SPD
<b>Vision</b>		Core Strategy and West End AAP	None. Vision consistent with existing Local Plan documents
<b>DP1: A HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	High quality architecture	WE12; WEDC section E; CS18; HP9	None. DP1 consistent with existing policies and the Street Scene Manual.
	Palette of materials	Street Scene Manual for public realm materials	
<b>DP2: MAXIMISING THE VALUE AND POTENTIAL OF THE SITE</b>	Maximum number of units / floorspace	CS22 (“at least...”); HP9a (“efficient use of land”); WE20	None. DP2 consistent with existing policies
	Balance of land uses	CS23; WE15; WE20	
<b>DP3: A SUSTAINABLE SCHEME</b>	Water and flood risk	CS11; WE14	DP3 consistent with existing policies in all aspects except that the commitment to a district heating scheme is not referred to and flooding matters are not fully addressed.
	Improving connections	CS13; CS14; WE2; WE3;	
	Sustainable building design	CS9; WE12; WE13; HP11	
	SUDS	CS11; WE14	
	City centre housing	CS22; WE15; WE19	
	Integrating movement options	CS13; CS14; WE2; WE3; AAP Appendix 4	
	Creating employment opportunities	CS27; WE21	
	Supporting viability of the wider West End and City Centre	CS5; WEAAP vision	
<b>DP4: ADDRESSING OXPENS ROAD</b>	Building line/ set back	WEDC type 1 streets	None. DP4 consistent with existing policies
	Floor to ceiling heights	WEDC type 1 streets	
	Public realm	WE1 and supporting text; WE3 and supporting text; WE5(Oxpens Square); Street Scene Manual	
	Pedestrian movement	WE2	
	Street trees	WEDC type 1 streets	
<b>DP5: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE</b>	Network of connected streets	WE1; WE2; WE3; WE5; WE7; WE8; WE9; WEDC;	None. DP5 consistent with existing policies in all

<b>OXFORD WEST END</b>		CS13(1st bullet); CS5(5 <sup>th</sup> bullet)	aspects except that the SPD does not resolve the identified transport issues.
	Thames, Castle Mill Stream, Oxpens Meadow	WE2; WE7; WE8; WE9	
	Public transport	WE3 and supporting text	
	Foot/cycle bridge	WE2	
	Enhancement to Oxpens Road	WE1 and supporting text; WE3 and supporting text; WE5(Oxpens Square); Street Scene Manual	
<b>DP6: HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM: STREETS AND SPACES</b>	Palette of materials	CS18; Street Scene Manual for public realm materials	None. DP6 consistent with existing policies
	Oxpens Square	WE5 and supporting text	
<b>DP7: ENHANCING OXPENS MEADOW</b>	Using meadow more	WE8	None. DP7 consistent with existing policies
	Flood mitigation	CS11; WE14	
	landscaping	WE7; WE8;	
<b>DP8: RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIVER</b>	Flood mitigation	CS11; WE14	None. DP8 consistent with existing policies
	Orientated towards river	WE9	
<b>DP9: APPROPRIATE LAND USE MIX</b>	Mix of uses and residential types	CS23; WE15; WE20; AAP Appendix 2	None. DP9 consistent with existing policies
	Mix of business opportunities	WE21; WESection5.3; WE22; WE24; WE26; WE27; WE28; AAP Appendix 2	
	hotel	WE26; CS32(WE specifically mentioned); AAP Appendix 2	
	Student accommodation	CS25; WE18; HP5	
	Complimentary land uses	WE19; WE20; WE24; WE27; WE28; AAP Appendix 2	
<b>DP10: GENERATING ACTIVITY</b>	Balance of land uses	CS23; WE15; WE20	None. DP10 consistent with existing policies
	On street activity	WE20 and supporting text; WEDC section B3 and 4	
	Flexible ground floor uses	WE20; CS18 (bullet 4)	
<b>DP11: COHERENT CHARACTER</b>	Palette of materials	Street Scene Manual for public realm materials	None. DP11 consistent with existing policies



<b>DP12: PHASING</b>	Retention of ice rink in medium to long term	WE28;	None. DP12 consistent with existing policies
<b>Regulating Masterplan</b>	Main junction with Oxpens Road has moved A couple of streets have swapped places in the hierarchy.	West End AAP	None. Regulating Masterplan consistent existing policies.
<b>Uses</b>	Residential (Houses and apartments) Employment: Offices, R&D Hotel A-Class Uses Student Accommodation Retirement Accommodation Café (Oxpens Meadow Attraction)	Houses (P) Flats (M) Public Space (P) Community Energy (P) Amenities for housing (S) Offices (S) Public Offices (P) Food and Drink (M) Museums (S) Hotel (P) Conference (P) Leisure (P)  Where P = Primary S = Secondary M = Minor	Draft SPD introduces student accommodation and possible education use.  Draft SPD omits Community Energy, Museums, Conference and Leisure.
<b>Illustrative Masterplan</b>	Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how site can be designed in detail.  Includes proposed distribution of uses across the site.	No equivalent diagram in AAP.  AAP contains illustrations of building heights, streets and spaces and street sections, parking standards.	None. Illustrative Masterplan consistent with existing policies.
<b>Phasing and Delivery</b>	SPD provides indicative phasing strategy, infrastructure list and funding options.	See Appendices 8 and 9 of the West End AAP.	None. The Draft SPD is consistent with existing policies.  Draft SPD provides updated information on funding sources.

2.15 Other environmental protection objectives include Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). An HRA Screening was undertaken to support the West End AAP. The HRA screening considered that,

development within the West End is unlikely to have an impact on the integrity of the SAC. Natural England supported this screening opinion. An HRA was also undertaken to support the Core Strategy. The HRA for the Core Strategy also concluded that development within the West End would be unlikely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. The HRA Screening can be found at Appendix 1.

## Description of baseline characteristics

- 2.16 A number of studies were undertaken to support the AAP including a community energy feasibility study; Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; pre-feasibility flood mitigation study; transport work which examined the impact of the AAP on the strategic road network; a conference centre study; a hotel and short stay accommodation study; and others.
- 2.17 The WEAAP makes several commitments to further studies and future work that is needed. Further studies to support the AAP include flood mitigation work; updated transport modelling; and a review of the historic environment carried out by specialist officers in the City Council's Heritage Team.
- 2.18 The Combined SEA Screening and Scoping Report includes information about the baseline environment. The entire report is found at Appendix 2.

## Environmental Issues and Problems

- 2.19 The LDF Scoping Report identifies environmental problems (or sustainability issues) for the city. A complete list of sustainability issues can be found at Appendix 3. It is worth noting that these sustainability issues have been consulted upon and agreed. Those that are relevant to the Oxpens site are noted below (only environmental problems are included):

**Flooding:** Climate change is a growing concern due to increased storm events which may lead to increased flood risk

**Flooding:** Pressure for development is likely to push new development into higher risk areas and also contribute to higher risk of flooding through increased run-off

**Flooding:** Increasing levels of development may have an adverse impact on water quality due to increased run-off

**Housing:** High house prices and continued increases pose significant barriers to first-time buyers. Housing has become unaffordable for many first-time buyers.

**Biodiversity:** Some of the species mentioned are to be found on unprotected sites and are therefore at risk

**Historic Environment and Heritage Assets:** On-going development pressure threatens the city's cultural and archaeological heritage. Development pressure in certain areas of the city could threaten heritage assets more than others for instance inside the City Centre Archaeological Area.

**Transport and Air Quality:** Pollution in the city centre related to buses is likely to decrease as a result of the Low Emission Zone

**Transport and Air Quality:** Car Traffic is not yet affected by the Low Emission Zone. Pressure at major junctions and congestion on arterial roads that can lead to high pollution is likely to increase as a result of continuing development pressure both inside and outside the city. It will be important to minimise car traffic and its impacts

**Transport and Air Quality:** Poor air quality can result in poor health. It is important that monitoring continues and that steps are taken to manage air quality and ensure that the air quality in the area does not become poor

**Climate Change:** Rising demand for energy will put pressure on energy suppliers

**Climate Change:** Cost of providing renewable energy still a barrier to more widespread production

- 2.20 The main existing environmental problem relevant to development of the Oxpens SPD is flooding and flood risk. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was undertaken to support the Area Action Plan (Atkins, June 2007). The SFRA provides detailed flood zone maps of the area. The SFRA flood zone map shows the Oxpens site to contain an area of flood storage/ functional floodplain which lies in flood zone 3b, as well as some parts of the site, which lie in flood zones 3a, and flood zone 2. As part of this work, an initial investigation was also undertaken to see whether it might be possible to move the current flood storage area on the Oxpens site to create a more regularly shaped or larger area suitable for development. (The SEA combined Screening and Scoping Report (April 2013) – Appendix 2)
- 2.21 The AAP states that *“potential ways of compensating for this flood storage were identified, and a feasibility study will be carried out to identify the best option as part of the master planning of the site”*.
- 2.22 Other existing problems include, but are not limited to, the existing traffic and transport issues in the area; and poor quality townscape character and limited biodiversity opportunities.
- 2.23 It is worth noting that the whole of the administrative area of the city has been declared an Air Quality Management Area.

## SEA Objectives, targets and indicators

### Developing the SEA Objectives

2.24 Sustainability Appraisal objectives were developed for Oxford's LDF/ Local Plan Scoping Report. These objectives directly relate to the topics in the SEA Directive and their links are shown in the SA Scoping Report. The full list of Sustainability Objectives is set out at Appendix 3.

2.25 Table 4 below is taken from the Combined SEA Screening and Scoping Report. The table clearly demonstrates that there are a limited number of key areas where additional assessment may be required.

Directive Topic	Probability, Duration, Frequency & Reversibility of the effects
Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna	An additional report which looks at on-site biodiversity has been produced since the publication of the AAP. The findings of the additional information found in this report will be considered as part of the SEA process.
Water	Different land uses are appropriate in different areas of flood risk. This is set out nationally (in the NPPF and the associated technical guidance) and locally (in the Core Strategy (Policy CS11) and the West End AAP (Policy WE14)). The Oxpens site contains an area of flood storage (flood zone 3b). The SA and the AAP make a commitment to undertake further investigations to inform the master-planning of the Oxpens site. At present information is not known about the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects. As such it has not been possible to assess whether or not there will be likely significant effects on the environment. Therefore an SEA is needed with regard to this particular SEA Topic. It is worth noting that SEA is proportionate to the level of detail that is required. This topic is therefore screened into the assessment.
Climatic Factors	The Oxpens site has been ear-marked through the evidence base as a site which is integral in delivering the West End Community Energy scheme. The City Council invested in a series of reports to deliver a community energy scheme. The report concludes that an area of 20m x 30m could serve the longer term energy needs of the whole of the West End. As a site that is within the control of the city, siting an energy centre on the Oxpens site would enable a significant benefit to the city. There is no information about the probability duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of either including or not including the energy centre for the community energy scheme on this site. As such this topic is screened into the assessment.
Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	There are some uncertainties particularly around how the development will impact the historic environment in particular townscape character, landscape and below-ground heritage. Oxford City Council's Heritage Team has been consulted regarding the historic environment and townscape character and their response will feed into the SEA Report.
Inter-relationships (Transport)	There are some unresolved transport issues in relation to the Oxpens site. Despite being in a highly sustainable location, the number of residential units proposed has increased from the time of the assessment undertaken for the AAP. This new level of housing proposed on the Oxpens site has not been assessed in terms of its potential additional transport and traffic impacts. Issues such as the environmental impact of removing and

	relocating visitor coaches off the site would need to be addressed. As there is no additional information available other than that produced to support the AAP, transport impacts are screened into the assessment.
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2.26 Table 5 links the SEA Objectives from the LDF Scoping Report to the SEA Directive topics that have been scoped into the assessment.

SEA Directive Topics	Relevant SEA Objectives
Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna	<b>Objective 9:</b> To conserve and enhance Oxford’s biodiversity <b>(Biodiversity)</b>
Water	<b>Objective 1:</b> To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment <b>(Flooding)</b>  <b>Objective 12:</b> Maintain and improve soil and water quality. Manage water resources <b>(Water and Soil)</b>
Climatic Factors	<b>Objective 13:</b> Increase energy and resource efficiency (including minimising waste) and renewable energy, with the aim of mitigating climate change <b>(Climate change)</b>
Cultural Heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	<b>Objective 10:</b> Protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets <b>(Heritage)</b>
Inter-relationships (Transport)	<b>Objective 11:</b> Reduce traffic congestion and associated air pollution by improving travel choice, shortening length and duration of journeys and reducing the need to travel by car/ lorry <b>(Traffic and Air Quality)</b>

**Testing the plan or programme against the SEA Objectives**

2.27 The following matrix looks at the internal compatibility of the SEA Objectives. This is an important step as it is important to assess the SEA Objectives for compatibility with each other as it is important to record if there are competing interests in sustainability terms.

2.28 The following compatibility matrix represents an analysis of the SEA Objectives to highlight if there are any potential conflicts.

1. Flooding					✓ = compatible
9. Biodiversity	✓/X				X = incompatible
10. Heritage	✓/X	✓/X			Blank = no links
11. Transport			✓/X		
13. Climate Change			✓/X		
SEA Objective	1. Flooding	9. Biodiversity	10. Heritage	11. Transport	13. Climate Change

**Table 6:** Compatibility Matrix of SEA objectives vs SEA objectives

2.29 The main conflicts between the SEA objectives are outlined in the table 7 below:

**Table 7:** Potential conflicts between the SEA Objectives

Objective	Objective(s) potentially in conflict with	Description of potential conflict
<b>Objective 1:</b> To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment	<b>Objective 9:</b> To conserve and enhance Oxford’s biodiversity  <b>Objective 10:</b> Protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets	Many areas of countryside around Oxford are wetland areas that require some flooding to maintain their nature conservation value and biodiversity. An increase in flooding could damage areas of countryside and biodiversity and some flood protection would be required to maintain their value.

<p><b>Objective 9:</b> To conserve and enhance Oxford’s biodiversity</p>	<p><b>Objective 10:</b> Protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets</p>	<p>Protecting the historic environment is often seen in the same light as the protection of the natural environment and increasing biodiversity. Care needs to be taken that one is not seen to be more important than the other and conserved to the detriment of the other.</p>
<p><b>Objective 10:</b> Protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets</p>	<p><b>Objective 13:</b> Increase energy and resource efficiency (including minimising waste) and renewable energy, with the aim of mitigating climate change</p>	<p>There are often conflicts in terms of visual impacts of increasing energy efficiency on the historic environment and heritage assets. Care should be taken that to increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy does not have a detrimental impact on the historic environment. There is the potential for conflict between these objectives.</p>

2.30 The following Plan Objectives were used in the Oxpens SPD. As discussed previously the Plan Objectives for the Oxpens SPD are described within the document as “Design Principles”. Table details the list of “Design Principles”/ Plan Objectives.

<p><b>Table 8: Design Principles/ Plan Objectives</b></p>	
DP1	A High Quality Development
DP2	Maximising the Value and Potential of the Site
DP3	A Sustainable Scheme
DP4	Addressing Oxpens Road
DP5	Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End
DP6	High Quality Public Realm: Streets and Spaces
DP7	Enhancing Oxpens Meadow
DP8	Relationship to the River
DP9	Appropriate Land Use Mix
DP10	Generating Activity
DP11	Coherent Character
DP12	Phasing

2.31 The next step of the SEA process is to assess the Plan Objectives against the relevant SEA Objectives

Oxpens SPD Plan Objectives	SEA Objectives				
	1. Flooding	9. Biodiversity	10. Heritage	11. Transport	13. Climate Change
1. High Quality Development			✓/X		
2. Maximising Site Value and Potential	X	X			X
3. Sustainability	✓				✓
4. Oxpens Road					
5. Accessibility	X			✓	
6. Streets and Spaces				✓	
7. Oxpens Meadow		✓			
8. Relationship to the river	✓	✓			
9. Land Use	X	X	X	✓/X	X
10. Activity					
11. Character			✓		
12. Phasing					

Key:

✓ = compatible      X = incompatible      Blank = no links

Table 10: Compatibility Matrix

2.32 Table 11 provides more details regarding the potential conflicts between the SEA Objectives and the Plan Objectives.



<b>Table 11: Possible conflicting interactions between the SPD objectives and the SEA Framework</b>		
<b>Conflict Number</b>	<b>Objectives in conflict</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>SPD1</b>	SEA Objective 1 vs. Plan Objectives 2, 5 & 9	<p>Increased levels of hard surfacing associated with new housing, business premises and other development will require special drainage measures to manage the run-off and reduce the risk of flooding. It will also be necessary to ensure that new development is provided with the appropriate standard of flood-defence.</p> <p>Careful consideration will be required in relation to the excavations and drainage required to provide new roads and footways in order to manage run-off and reduce the risk of flooding.</p>
<b>SPD2</b>	SEA Objective 9 vs. Plan Objectives 2 & 9	<p>Care should be taken when seeking to maximise the value and site potential that other important environmental aspects are not overlooked and are given an equal weighting. There is a risk that maximising site value and potential could outweigh other considerations and be the driving force behind decision-making.</p> <p>The design and location of development must be carefully considered so as not to compromise existing biodiversity but rather to create further opportunities for its enhancement.</p>
<b>SPD3</b>	SEA Objective 10 vs. Plan Objective 1	<p>This plan objective could have a positive or negative impact on the historic environment and heritage. High quality development does not always respect its historic context and it will be important that the historic context of the surrounding area is fully understood.</p> <p>Careful planning will be required to ensure that the provision of a mix of uses and land allocations and building typologies does not compromise the existing open spaces and historic features but rather works with them and enhances them.</p>
<b>SPD4</b>	SEA Objective 11 vs. Plan Objective 9	<p>Providing more development could potentially lead to increases in road congestion and associated air pollution impacts. Car parking should be kept to a minimum and more sustainable patterns of travel are to be encouraged.</p> <p>Attracting more tourists into the area could potentially lead to increases in road congestion and associated air pollution impacts if more sustainable patterns of travel are not provided or encouraged</p>
<b>SPD5</b>	SEA Objective 13 vs. Plan Objective 2 & 9	<p>New development will only lead to an increase in energy efficiency and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources if these features are incorporated into the design of the development either at building or site scale.</p> <p>Care should be taken when seeking to maximise the value and site potential that other important environmental aspects such are not overlooked and are given an equal weighting. There is a risk that maximising site value and potential could outweigh other considerations and be the driving force behind decision-making.</p>

## Plan/ Programme Issues and Alternatives

### Developing the Main Strategic Alternatives (Task B2)

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations<sup>3</sup> requires that the Responsible Authority must appraise the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme and any reasonable alternatives (Regulation 12).
- 3.2 The SEA Guidance<sup>4</sup> states that is normal practice when developing a plan or programme, to propose different ways of fulfilling objectives. These are known as options. Each alternative can then be tested against the SEA Objectives, with positive as well as negative effects being considered, and uncertainties.
- 3.3 The SEA Guidance sets out some options that should be looked at in all cases. These are the “No Plan” option and “Business as usual” option. “No Plan” means what would happen if no plan or programme was introduced. “Business as usual” means a continuation of an existing plan or programme, as an alternative to preparing a new one. In the case of the preparation of the Oxpens SPD, these two options result in the same outcome.
- 3.4 The development of the “strategic” options was straightforward in this case. Option 1 is the “No Plan”/ “Business as usual” approach (the No SPD option) and Option 2 is the option to produce an SPD to set the framework for the development of the site.

### Comparison of the alternatives

- 3.5 Table 12 is suggested in the SEA Guidance as a mechanism for the comparison of alternatives.

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<sup>3</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, SI No. 1633

<sup>4</sup> ODPM (2005), A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

Comparison of alternatives: Table 12

		Option 1 (Business as usual/ No plan)				Option 2 (Produce an SPD to set the framework for development for the site)			
SEA Objective	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Comments/ Explanation	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Comments/ Explanation	
<b>Objective 1:</b> Flooding	+/-	+/-	+/-	Portion of land on-site is currently a flood storage area.  Without the SPD this area is likely to remain as such until the planning application stage.	+	+	+	In producing an SPD to be adopted for the site, additional work on flood mitigation has been commissioned.  The results of this work will feed into the assessment process. (See sections on prediction and evaluation of effects)	
<b>Objective 9:</b> Biodiversity	0	0	0	Site cleared following ecological survey. Survey detailed best time to clear the site and this guidance was followed.  If biodiversity matters left to planning application stage then opportunities for enhancement may be lost.	?/+	?/+	?/+	Part of site cleared following ecological survey. Survey detailed optimum time to clear the site and this guidance was followed.  Biodiversity improvements to be considered through SPD process	
<b>Objective 10:</b> Heritage	0/-	0/-	0/-	Existing planning policy including Local Plan, Core strategy and the design code in the West End AAP provides support for protection and enhancement of historic environment. Early evaluation of areas with high archaeological potential should inform the detailed design.	+	+	+	Masterplan produced as part of SPD to give an indication of how the site could look.  Given strong suite of existing policy protection for the historic environment, the SPD is likely to provide a minor positive impact as any discussions regarding the likely impacts on the historic environment will be brought forward at an early stage in the process and are likely to be resolved in a satisfactory manner.	
<b>Objective 11:</b> Transport	-/?	-/?	-/?	It was not appropriate for the existing policy framework as set out in the AAP to provide	+	+	+	Given the need to make further decisions regarding transport, the production of an SPD	

<p><b>Objective 13:</b> Climate Change</p>	-	-	-	<p>answers to all of the issues surrounding transport. As such several decisions are needed “down-the-line”.</p> <p>Without the production of the SPD these decisions would inevitably be left until the planning application stage, which may not be the most appropriate stage to be considering potential secondary impacts.</p> <p>The West End AAP included a policy on resource efficiency. This policy made a commitment to deliver a community energy scheme in the West End. A number of technical reports were produced to support the AAP and subsequently after its adoption. These reports were progressed on the basis that the Oxpens site would be the site of the energy centre. Without an SPD in place, the location of the energy centre on the Oxpens site could be lost to more profitable uses such as housing</p>	+	+	+	<p>would be likely to provide an appropriate vehicle to do this.</p> <p>By considering potential secondary impacts of transport decisions at the SPD stage, it provides more certainty at the application stage.</p> <p>With the production of an SPD that provides a masterplan for the site, it is likely that discussions around the location of the energy centre will happen early in the process. If discussions happen early in the process then it is more likely that the energy centre will receive a small footprint of land on the Oxpens site. This will have a positive impact in relation to mitigating the impacts of climate change.</p>
<p><b>Key:</b> + positive - negative 0 neutral ? uncertain +/- minor ++/-- major</p>								
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The comparison assessment of the strategic options shows that producing an SPD can be seen overall to have a positive impact. This mainly relates to addressing key environmental issues at a sufficiently early stage such that they can be discussed and resolved in ample time and prior to the submission of a planning application. As discussed above, the key issues are flood risk, the inclusion of an energy centre as part of the masterplan, opportunities for biodiversity on site, and ensuring that opportunities for protection and enhancement of Oxford’s historic environment are maximised.</p>								

3.6 Once the need for an SPD had been determined, several options for taking forward the SPD considered. The two main options were informed by the pre-feasibility flooding study. These were compared against the “No Plan”/ “Business as usual” option in order to determine what, if any significant environmental effects on the environment would be likely from the Oxpens SPD.

3.7 Below are the two “Illustrative masterplans” showing how the two strategic options “could” look. Clearly the developable area of option 1 is more as this option would involve re-profiling of the flood storage area which is shown as a green swathe through the site in Option 2. Each of the options has positive as well as negative implications, not all of which will be caught through this SEA process. It is worth noting that these diagrams show the redevelopment after the potential final phase (as set out in the draft SPD) –in which the Ice Rink is no longer present on site. The section on Phasing in the SPD discusses this as the final element in the long-term redevelopment of the site.



**Option 1:** Development boundary informed by flood mitigation scheme

**Option 2:** Development informed by EA flood zones

3.8 Table 13 examines the two different options and compares them with the “No Plan”/ “Business as usual” option.

3.9 These two options were developed from the Atkins’ (2007) report on possible concepts for flood mitigation, which comprised four distinct options. These are listed below:

1. Designing within the existing flood envelope
2. Left bank flood storage (on land within the study area)
3. Right bank storage (on land outside the study area)
4. A combination of the above options

3.10 The first two options were considered during the formulation of the SPD as they did not rely on space outside the study area and it was considered that they had a more likely success of being delivered.

- 3.11 The Environment Agency (EA) has been consulted during the production of the SPD. The EA was consulted on masterplans that responded to the alternative approaches. The EA did not discount either approach (in principle), subject to further technical work being carried out on the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and technical work.
- 3.12 The options for the available land were based broadly around these two main options, which have been reviewed in the SEA. The masterplan options were prepared on the basis of development which was informed by a flood mitigation scheme (Option 1) and development informed by the EA flood zones (Option 2).
- 3.13 Further variants were examined that considered different amounts and types of land-uses on-site. The options varied the balance of housing and employment on the site but were all based around one of the two options assessed in the SEA.

Table 13: Examination of alternatives

SEA Objective	Option 1 – Development boundary informed by flood mitigation scheme	Option 2 – Development boundary informed by EA flood zones	Option 3 - ‘No SPD’/ ‘Business as usual’	Comments
1 Flooding	?	?	New baseline created by revising how the floodplains in the model around the development were represented. This resulted in lower water levels, but no real change to flood extents due to the shape of the floodplain.	<p>Technical work was undertaken to support the AAP and further technical work has been undertaken to support the SPD.</p> <p>There are sufficient uncertainties associated with the current representation of flooding at Oxpens to cast doubt on the EA’s Flood Map. This means that the impact of development upon water levels and flood risk is not fully understood. As such the likelihood or geographical scale of the effect, its significance, permanence or reversibility cannot be reliably predicted or evaluated.</p> <p>However, regarding the certainty, the technical work concludes that the existing understanding of flood water and flood risk in the vicinity of the Oxpens site is rather rudimentary and on that basis, to either rule out the sketch Masterplan or definitely say that it is technically feasible would be wholly unjustified.</p> <p>The Technical work goes on to suggest promoting the SPD on the understanding that there is a need for further and more detailed hydraulic modelling and understanding of flood risk to be completed as the Oxpens site is taken forward.</p>
9 Biodiversity	- This option	+ This option		Results of ecological survey used to determine the optimum time to clear part of the site.

SEA Objective	Option 1 – Development boundary informed by flood mitigation scheme	Option 2 – Development boundary informed by EA flood zones	Option 3 - ‘No SPD’/ ‘Business as usual’	Comments
	provides less scope for habitat creation on-site	would provide better opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation on site.		Opportunities exist through the redevelopment of the site to enhance biodiversity opportunities on-site through habitat creation.
10 Heritage	Potential constraint posed by Harts Sconce in Meadow	Potential constraint posed by Harts Sconce in Oxpens Meadow	Existing policies in AAP, Core Strategy and Local Plan provide context for historic environment. The evidence base for the city’s historic environment – the Heritage Plan provides detailed evidence to support policies and policy development including view cones, conservation area appraisals, archaeological assessments and more.	In evaluating the impact of the masterplan on heritage, a number of issues will need to be addressed individually. Impacts and opportunities on the following areas have been evaluated in terms of heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact on the setting of both the city’s conservation areas – the Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area;</li> <li>- Relationship with the former historic suburb of St. Ebbe’s;</li> <li>- Visual impact of the development on the city’s sensitive historic skyline including the City Council’s protected view cones;</li> <li>- Below-ground heritage;</li> <li>- Character of the development including on-site features; and</li> <li>- Impact on trees.</li> </ul>
11 Transport	?/- More development on site could mean	?/- Less development on	?/- Effects would depend on implementation.	Transport modelling was undertaken. The transport options examined did not inform the development of the strategic options for the site.



SEA Objective	Option 1 – Development boundary informed by flood mitigation scheme	Option 2 – Development boundary informed by EA flood zones	Option 3 - ‘No SPD’/ ‘Business as usual’	Comments
13 Climate Change	<p>more traffic, although it is anticipated that the development will be low-car so this is unlikely to be a significant issue (see transport modelling work for qualitative results)</p>	<p>site could mean less-traffic although it is anticipated to be a low-car development so unlikely to be too much of an issue (see transport modelling work for quantitative results )</p>	<p>The West End AAP includes a commitment to provide a community energy scheme in the West End.</p>	<p>Not including energy centre on the Oxpens site has potential secondary implications for the future of the West End Community Energy scheme. This is more likely to worsen in the long-term.</p> <p>Suggest inclusion of an energy centre within the Oxpens site in order to achieve vision for the West End and key corporate challenge of a low-carbon Oxford.</p> <p>It is unclear how the existing policy requirements as set out in the NRIA SPD and Sites and Housing Plan would be met. These requirements are for 20% of the energy on site to be provided from renewable or low carbon technologies.</p>
Summary				

SEA Objective	Option 1 – Development boundary informed by flood mitigation scheme	Option 2 – Development boundary informed by EA flood zones	Option 3 - ‘No SPD’/ ‘Business as usual’	Comments
				<p>In environmental sustainability terms, Option 2 scores slightly better than Option 1 as there is more scope for the creation of habitats and more green space on site. In terms of flooding, the technical work was inconclusive and further work is needed once the EA flood model has been revised. In terms of cultural heritage, the general comments received were broadly sympathetic to both schemes. Concerns were raised regarding views into and out of the site, particularly the view cones and these have been addressed in the mitigation section. Option 1 would have a slightly worse impact in terms of transport than option 2 just by the fact that there would be more development so more people would be travelling to the site. There are unlikely to be significant transport impacts however, and the technical work has indicated that with mitigation, the impact of Option 1 (which would be higher than Option 2) can be mitigated to a satisfactory level.</p> <p>Finally in terms of climate change – there needs to be a firm commitment to how the City Council’s own plans and programmes will be adhered to, particularly the Natural Resources Impact Analysis SPD (and the Sites and Housing Plan) which requires 20% of the energy requirements to be generate through on-site renewable or low carbon technologies.</p>

**Prediction of effects (Task B3)**

Table 14: Prediction of effects

SEA Objective	Effects over time	Comments	Further research that may be required
1.	Flooding ?	<p>Technical work was undertaken to support the AAP and further technical work has been undertaken to support the SPD.</p> <p>There are sufficient uncertainties associated with the current representation of flooding at Oxpens to cast doubt on the EA’s Flood Map. This means that the impact of development upon water levels and flood risk is not fully understood. As such the likelihood, or geographical scale of the effect, its significance, permanence or reversibility cannot be predicted or evaluated.</p> <p>With regards to this uncertainty, the technical work concludes that the existing understanding of flood water and flood risk in the vicinity of the Oxpens site is rather rudimentary. On that basis, to either rule out the sketch Masterplan or definitely say that it is technically feasible would be wholly unjustified</p>	<p>Further and more detailed hydraulic modelling and understanding of flood risk is to be commissioned and completed as the Oxpens site is taken forward.</p>
9.	Biodiversity -	<p>Part of the site cleared following ecological report. Advice in report followed as to the optimum time to clear the site with minimum disturbance to existing flora and fauna.</p> <p>Opportunities for new habitats are to be investigated as part of SPD and planning application process. Oxpens field provides an important green space within the city. This will be maintained and opportunities for enhancement should be investigated.</p>	<p>Further work could be undertaken to explore how best to maximise opportunities for biodiversity on-site.</p>
10.	Heritage (including “vision”) +/-	<p>Oxford’s unique historic environment and visual relationship to the surrounding countryside are vital to maintain the city’s character.</p>	<p>Additional assessment of</p>

			<p>The City Council Heritage Officers comments regarding the scheme were received. As a result of these comments, additional assessments were made including looking at Oxford's skyline through the view cones, archaeological comments including the location of civil war defences have also been noted.</p>	<p>Oxford's skyline from the perspective of the view cones undertaken.</p>
11.	Transport			<p>Further transport modelling and work undertaken to support SPD.</p>
13.	Climate Change	-	<p>The policy review (chapter 2 of the SPD) does not mention the City Councils adopted Natural Resources Impact Analysis SPD which requires 20% of the energy requirements of a site to be provided by on-site renewable or low carbon technologies. The first draft SPD did not include a mention of renewable energy or how the 20% on-site renewable energy target will be met.</p> <p>In the first draft SPD there was no indication or commitment to reducing the demand for energy. There was no indication or commitment demonstrating how the proposed development would reduce carbon emissions or reduce waste generation.</p> <p>One of the design principles is a sustainable scheme. In one of the early iterations of the SPD, it was unclear how this section went further than the existing building regulations in terms of reducing energy, carbon etc.</p>	<p>Suggest viability testing includes figures for how to meet the 20% on-site renewable low-carbon energy requirements</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>As the Masterplan is indicative it is subject to change. Any positive aspects of the scheme are therefore subject to change. The same is true, of course of any negative aspects. The illustrative nature of the masterplan is therefore both positive and negative. It creates flexibility over the block structure, layout, and how the scheme is taken forward. This is often seen as a positive aspect of development. However, with this flexibility brings uncertainty about what exactly will be delivered. Overall it is difficult to score the indicative masterplan as anything other than +/- . The reason for this is, as stated above, there is both flexibility and uncertainty around what is proposed.</p>				

**Evaluation of Effects (Task B4)**

Table 15: Evaluation of effects

SEA Objective	Main predicted effects (Task B3)	Probability/ Frequency	Duration/ Reversibility	Secondary/ cumulative/ synergistic effects	Comment/ Overall effects
1. Flooding	New baseline created by revising how the floodplains in the model around the development were represented. This resulted in lower water levels, but no real change to flood extents due to the shape of the floodplain.	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	There are sufficient uncertainties associated with the current representation of flooding at Oxpens to cast doubt on the EA's Flood Map. This means that the impact of development upon water levels and flood risk is not fully understood.  Further work is required to support the detailed planning application.
9. Biodiversity	Opportunities to enhance biodiversity on site	If mention is made in the SPD then it is likely that biodiversity improvements and opportunities will be maximised on site	Biodiversity improvements will be long-lasting and have positive effects	Improvements to biodiversity resource can have secondary function of acting as a wildlife corridor. Improvements could include creating an	Enhancing biodiversity features on site is likely to be positive particularly as competing land uses within the city mean that biodiversity

SEA Objective	Main predicted effects (Task B3)	Probability/ Frequency	Duration/ Reversibility	Secondary/ cumulative/ synergistic effects	Comment/ Overall effects
10. Heritage	See commentary below at *	?	?	avenue or boulevard of trees to increase potential for movement of biodiversity across the site.	improvements and enhancement is often seen as an optional extra.
11. Transport	See commentary below at **	?	?	?	*see below for details of evaluation ** see below for details of evaluation
13. Climate change	See commentary below at ***				*** see below for details of evaluation

### \*Evaluation of Heritage Impacts

3.14 In evaluating the impact of the masterplan on heritage, there are a number of issues which need to be addressed individually. Impacts and opportunities on the following areas have been evaluated in terms of heritage:

- Impact on the setting of both the city's conservation areas – the Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area;
- Relationship with the former historic suburb of St. Ebbe's;
- Visual impact of the development on the city's sensitive historic skyline including the City Council's protected view cones;
- Below-ground heritage;
- Character of the development including on-site features; and
- Impact on trees.

### Conservation Areas

3.15 The site forms part of the settings of both the city's Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area, notably in longer range views of the city and views from Osney Cemetery.

3.16 The impact of development in the Conservation Areas' settings will be a material consideration in determining planning applications, which, given the illustrative nature of the masterplan should be highlighted as both a constraint and an opportunity in the SPD document.

### Historic suburb of St. Ebbe's

3.17 The site lies on the edge of the former historic suburb of St. Ebbes, whilst elements of St Thomas's suburb lie between it and the city centre. These areas are characterised by a complex pattern of narrow streets and red brick terraced houses, interspersed with larger buildings associated with former industrial use set around courtyards and with large frontage blocks. This might help inform the design approach adopted.

### Visual impacts (including view cones)

3.18 The illustrative bird's eye images of development, showing large, flat roofed blocks need to be carefully considered given the sensitivity of the city's skyline. Whilst these may be intended to support consideration of the position, use and composition of blocks of development, these illustrations may be misleading to developers and create problems when considering planning applications if such roof profiles are not considered to protect these features of the city.

3.19 Building heights, and the forms, extents and materials of rooflines will receive detailed consideration within the determination of planning applications and will need to be carefully considered during the preparation of proposals.

3.20 The prominence of this site in views of the City Centre from the western hills, and in the City Council's protected view cones in particular needs to be explored and should be referenced in this document as a consideration, with more detailed consideration in the technical appendixes. The loss of trees that currently contribute to the character of these views will be a particular impact of this development. Measures to minimise and, where necessary mitigate this impact should be outlined in the masterplan.

### Below ground heritage

- 3.21 There are some key historical features of the area that will need to be considered by developers. These include the potential for medieval remains of Osney Abbey and the potential remains of the city's Civil War defences.
- 3.22 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake further archaeological evaluation is recognised. The results of the evaluation could subsequently result in the redesign of the flood area or requirements for further archaeological recording and therefore could delay implementation of proposals if not factored in to the overall plan for development of the site.

### Character of the development

- 3.23 The suggestion of character areas to be created appears to be based principally on land use. We would suggest that a larger number of small character areas defined by use, architectural character, and spatial character, would help to complement the intricate and complex character of townscape elsewhere in West Oxford. We would disagree with the assertion at 5.9 that the whole development must read as one. This could result in a monotonous townscape. Several separate character areas can be incorporated within a development of this scale, whilst the long frontage of Oxpens Road needs to be broken up by buildings of varied form, style and materials to create a more attractive townscape.

### Existing on-site heritage

- 3.24 There has been no assessment of current upstanding heritage on site. Such buildings should be identified at an early stage as they can be retained to help sustain a sense of connection to the past as well as adding detail and interest.

### Impact on Trees

- 3.25 The loss of trees that currently contribute to the character of these views will be a particular impact of this development. Measures to minimise and, where necessary, mitigate this impact, should be outlined in the masterplan.

### Summary

- 3.26 Given the indicative and illustrative nature of the masterplan, impacts on heritage will need to be reconsidered again and more fully at the planning application stage. As a result of this evaluation of the impacts on heritage, additional work has been carried out examining the impacts of the development on the historic environment. This includes an examination of the impact of views into and out of the site.
- 3.27 With regard to assessing the effects of the proposed masterplan, because it is flexible, a lot of the effects will be uncertain, for instance, currently the frontage along Oxpens Road is illustrated as being uniform. This, as the assessment notes, could result in a monotonous townscape. "[T]he long frontage of Oxpens Road needs to be broken up by buildings of varied form, style and materials to create a more attractive townscape".
- 3.28 Given the flexibility of the masterplan, this aspect could be incorporated at the planning application stage and the SPD should put sufficient measures in place to ensure that this and all the points above are



addressed in an appropriate manner in order to ensure that a development comes forward which both preserves and enhances the historic character of the city of Oxford. The mitigation measures are discussed in the following section.

### \*\*Evaluation of Transport Impacts

3.29 There were three options for accessing the development that were tested in the transport modelling.

#### Roundabout:

3.30 The roundabout option provides sufficient capacity in the PM peak but in the AM Peak the junction would operate at capacity. This would result in queues on the approach from Oxpens Road South. The queues form as a result of pedestrian demand within the modelled junction, which results in reduction in entry capacity.

3.31 The Technical work stated that:

*“Consideration should be given as to whether the pedestrian demand could be encouraged to use the northern arm of the junction instead of the southern arm. The southern arm is demonstrated as being critical to the operation of the junction and the location of a zebra crossing proves detrimental to capacity”*

3.32 A mini-roundabout option was also considered but this was rejected as it would be unlikely to have sufficient capacity at this location when pedestrian crossings are provided.

#### Traffic signals:

3.33 With traffic signals, the analysis shows the junction reaching practical capacity as some arms of the junction have degrees of saturation near to 90%. Although this indicates that the junction has some spare capacity at other times. Delays of up to 80 seconds in the PM peak and 61 seconds in the AM peak are associated with the signal option.

#### Priority junction:

3.34 A priority junction has also been designed for the junction of the site access/ Oxpens Road. The analysis indicates that the junction design would result in capacity issues for traffic accessing Oxpens Road from the development access road.

#### Preferred Option:

3.35 The technical work undertaken by Halcrow suggested that in terms of capacity, the signal solution best accommodates traffic demand and provides a safer option for pedestrians and cyclists in negotiating and leaving the junction. However the signal option does have a marginally higher level of delay over that of the roundabout.

3.36 The final option selected was the roundabout but with one of the crossing points removed. After careful consideration with the County Council, the roundabout’s southern zebra crossing was removed, as it was considered that this could increase capacity at the junction. The roundabout option would also reduce visual clutter from the street-scene.

3.37 Given the indicative and illustrative nature of the masterplan, it is important that these changes are highlighted in the text as fundamental to this option being carried forward otherwise there may be capacity issues at the roundabout.

\*\*\*Evaluation of Climate Change effects

3.38 The SPD includes a Design Principles (DP3) entitled “A Sustainable Scheme” and a section on “Integrating Sustainability” which discussed Physical, Social and Economic Sustainability. A notable omission from this section is “Environmental Sustainability”. Although a range of positive factors are included in this section, including sections on Sustainable Building Design; and a Sustainable Location for Development, the actual sustainability credentials appear to be statutory in nature.

3.39 It is encouraging to see statements such as “Proposals should seek to maximise sustainable building design to provide a flagship precedent scheme for future developments in the Oxford West End to learn from”, however it is unclear how this will be achieved given what the sustainable building design should incorporate. For instance, to simply “explore the potential for integration of micro-generation” is unlikely to result in the kind of flagship scheme that Design Principle 3 – A Sustainable Scheme – aspires to. The illustrative and indicative nature of the masterplan provides both flexibility in terms of future development coming forward and uncertainty. This makes any evaluation of effects highly subjective as they are not firm proposals. Mitigation measures put forward as a result of the SEA are documented in the following section.

3.40 The option that was carried forward in the SPD was the option 1, although the indicative layout was illustrated differently in the final document than it was shown above.

3.41 Option 1 was considered to have several benefits over option 2 including, making more efficient use of land, and providing a greater developable land area. The option was also considered to meet more of the design principles.

## Proposed Mitigation Measures (Task B5)

- 3.42 Measures to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects of the plan or programme are known as 'mitigation measures'. Mitigation measures include pro-active avoidance of adverse effects as well as actions taken after effects are noticed.
- 3.43 A number of additional studies were commissioned as mitigation measures after seeing the first draft of the SPD. A technical study on flooding was produced, which went on to inform the SPD (see prediction and evaluation of effects above). As a result the flooding study that was commissioned, text changes were made to the SPD itself. These are documented in Table 16 below.
- 3.44 Further transport work was also commissioned. This work, like the flooding work, fed into the SPD and resulted in a number of changes to the figures in the SPD itself, as well as several text changes, all of which are documented below.
- 3.45 Comments on the Scoping Report were received from English Heritage and the Oxford Preservation Trust. As a result of the comments made from Oxford Preservation Trust and the findings of the SEA Combined Screening and Scoping Report, additional work was undertaken and text added to the SPD in relation to the historic views and vision into and out of the site. The text changes are linked to the SEA objective heritage.
- 3.46 Table 16 below shows the mitigation measures that were incorporated into the document as a result of the studies and further work. However, the SEA recommends a couple of additional mitigation measures to be taken forward in light, in particular of the climate change SEA objective. Investigation into the potential for an energy centre should be continued as the site is moved forward as this could be a significant positive benefit for both the Oxpens site and the West End as a whole.

3.47 Table 16 showing mitigation measures added to document by SEA topic

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	3.53 – 3.55 added	<p>3.53 As part of the development of the Oxpens Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), all reasonable efforts have been made to fully understand flood risk issues to the Oxpens site, likely impacts to flood risk subsequent to development and, the potential need for flood risk mitigation. The flood risk analysis undertaken was based upon the best available information at the time of writing, as used by the Environment Agency to produce the published Flood Map.</p> <p>3.54 It was identified that there are inherent uncertainties associated with current understanding of flood risk and it is not possible, therefore, to definitively report on the extent or severity of flood risk and, whether there would indeed be a need for mitigation and if so, the scale of that mitigation. A short technical note was produced to support this analysis and circulated between project partners.</p> <p>3.55 It is recommended therefore, that a more detailed analysis of flood risk is undertaken for the site, subsequent to the publication of the Oxpens Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as better information becomes available and prior to the progression of the site beyond this master plan stage. The Environment Agency are due to deliver an updated, and more representative, hydraulic model for the River Thames through Oxford during the summer of 2013, this model will be used to identify development impacts and appropriate mitigation measures prior to the site being taken forward.</p>
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	Additions made to 3.56-3.57	<p><b>Identification of a flood mitigation zone to inform the master plan:</b></p> <p>3.56 Oxford City Council has considered a range of flood mitigation schemes during a high level scoping exercise undertaken by Atkins. The key reference document for flood mitigation schemes is the <i>Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility Study</i>. This study was commissioned by Oxford City Council and prepared by Atkins in June 2007. It was agreed with the Environment Agency that further investigations would be undertaken as plans for the site progress.</p> <p>3.57 The study considered three potential options for flood storage / mitigation worthy of further investigation to manage flood risk at the Oxpens site. These options included options on both banks of the River Thames (Isis):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option on the left bank only;</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Option on the right bank only;</i> and</li> <li>• <i>Option considering both left and right banks.</i></li> </ul>
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	Figure 3.6 added	Flood Mitigation (left bank) diagram included from pre-feasibility work
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	3.79 – 3.81 added	<p><b><u>Change in Levels on boundary between BRBR &amp; OCC land</u></b></p> <p>3.79 As stated under in Flood Risk / Mitigation in this chapter the southern half of the BRBR land includes an area that is at a lower level than adjacent land. The neighbouring site of the Oxford coach station and car park is at a higher level and the boundary between the BRBR land and OCC land holding, at the rear of the coach / car park is marked by a retaining wall and notable change in levels.</p> <p>3.80 The change in levels will need to be addressed with earth works to ensure the two areas can be unified to ensure delivery of a connected comprehensive development scheme.</p> <p>3.81 <b>Figure 3.8 Site Features Plan</b> illustrates the lower area of land in the BRBR land ownership, the dashed line to the east of the lower land area notes the location of retaining wall and most notable step change in levels between the BRBR and OCC land holdings.</p>
SEA Objective 1:	Part of 5.42 added	<p>5.42 The need to incorporate a flood mitigation solution to enable the development of the Oxpens site provides the opportunity to reshape the form of Oxpens Meadow to create an attractive public open space that can accommodate a range of activities including outdoor events and performances. The landform can provide scope for sitting and overlooking performance areas. This idea promotes the concept of Oxpens Meadow as a multi-function space. Other solutions may be possible and Oxpens Meadow provides an exciting opportunity to engage with local stakeholders to consider a range of uses and create a multi-functional space that serves the needs of the wider community, of both existing and future local residents.</p>
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	7.10 – 7.12 amended and added	<p><b>Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow – Flood mitigation and landscape scheme</b></p> <p>7.10 A detailed scheme for flood mitigation and a landscape scheme for Oxpens Meadow should be approved, by the Environment Agency, and implemented prior to the occupation of any development which would be at risk of flooding.</p> <p>7.11 Whilst undertaking the landform works a landscape scheme for Oxpens Meadow should be constructed in line</p>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
		<p>with the landscape design proposal, so that the changes in level required for flood mitigation can be formed to create the appropriate setting for other landscape features proposed.</p> <p>7.12 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording could delay implementation of development proposals if not factored into the overall development plan.</p>
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	7.15 and 7.17 added	<p>7.15 The development plots will provide the 'enabling development' to generate the capital required to ensure viability contributing to the funding of the flood mitigation and landscaping scheme at Oxpens Meadow.</p> <p>7.17 Whilst redevelopment and construction work could progress in parallel to the flood mitigation and landscape scheme, no occupation of the area of redevelopment would be permitted until the flood mitigation scheme has been completed, to protect the Oxpens site from more extreme flood events.</p>
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	7.22 added	<p>7.22 An important consideration for this area is the change in levels within the BRBR land, particularly the change in levels between the (lower) BRBR land and the (higher) OCC land. The master plan assumes a comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the whole of Oxpens with ground levels being aligned to create a level development platform. Should this area be phased at a different time to the land identified in phase 3 the change in levels will need particular attention to develop solutions for the ground levels.</p>
SEA Objective: 9 Biodiversity	3.83-3.87 added	<p><b>Ecological Features</b></p> <p>3.83 Oxpens Meadow is the greatest existing landscape feature, mostly comprising open, short mown grassland with trees and other vegetation along the waterside edges to the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream.</p> <p>3.84 Aerial photography including Figure 1.1 has trees shown within the central section of the site, within the BRBR land ownership area. The majority of these trees and vegetation have been cleared since the aerial photographs were taken, creating a predominantly vacant development plot on the BRBR land.</p> <p>3.85 Smaller areas of tree planting exist along some site boundaries including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The eastern edge of the Oxford Business Centre, screening the site from adjacent sites;</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
SEA Objective: 9 Biodiversity	5.16 bullet point added	<p>o Some and trees adjacent to Oxpens Road, at the northern end of Oxpens Meadow;</p> <p>o Both long edges of the Oxford Ice Rink plot – screening to the current coach &amp; public parking area on one side and a more formal row of trees along the edge adjacent to Oxpens Meadow open space.</p> <p>3.86 Where possible the existing trees to the edge of Oxpens Road and the edge of the Ice Rink addressing Oxpens Meadow should be retained. Trees and vegetation along the waterside edges to the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should also be retained where possible, although this will be subject to detailed design considerations in the re-profiling of Oxpens Meadow to accommodate flood mitigation.</p> <p>3.87 Further details regarding ecological features in the Oxford West End are presented in ecological studies and previous SEA for the WEAAP.</p> <p>5.16 Oxpens should showcase best practice in sustainable development. Sustainability should be integrated throughout the development proposals, not bolted on as an optional extra. Sustainability embraces the physical development, social interactions and economic opportunities. Sustainable design should include reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Managing water and flood risk;</li> <li>● Improving connections;</li> <li>● Sustainable building design;</li> <li>● Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS);</li> <li>● Sustainable energy – potential accommodation of a CHP Energy Centre;</li> <li>● <b>Promoting bio-diversity, particularly by protecting and enhancing ecological assets in Oxpens Meadow;</b></li> <li>● Sustaining the significance of the city’s renowned historic environment;</li> <li>● Providing city centre housing;</li> <li>● Integrating movement options (car clubs, cycle facilities);</li> <li>● Creating employment opportunities; <i>and</i></li> <li>● Supporting the vitality of the wider Oxford West End and City Centre.</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
SEA Objective: 9 Biodiversity	6.113-6.115 added	<p><b>Physical Sustainability: Ecological Assets</b></p> <p>6.113 Ecological assets, especially the landscape features in Oxpens Meadow, notably adjacent to the watercourses of the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should, where possible, be protected. The enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow will improve public access to these landscape assets. Flood mitigation works will require some land reprofiling and landscaping works but the reshaped Oxpens Meadow will be supplemented by new landscape features including new tree planting.</p> <p>6.114 The West End Area Action Plan provides further details of ecological considerations in the Oxford West End.</p> <p>6.115 Further information is also provided in the <i>Ecological Constraints Report (Atkins, September 2011)</i> that BRBR commissioned for their land holding within the Oxpens site.</p>
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	3.39 added	<p>3.39 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording could delay implementation of development proposals if not factored into the overall development plan.</p>
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	3.43-3.46 added	<p><b>Historic precedent issues</b></p> <p>3.43 The site lies on the edge of the former historic suburb of St. Ebbes, whilst elements of the St Thomas's suburb lie between it and the city centre. These areas are characterised by a complex pattern of narrow streets and red brick terraced houses, interspersed with larger buildings associated with former industrial uses set around courtyards and with large frontage blocks. This form may help inform the design approach adopted. Further information on this issue is noted in Chapter 6, Master Plan.</p> <p><b>West Oxford Historic Context Study</b></p> <p>3.44 Further information on the historic pattern of development in the Oxford West End can be found in the <b>West Oxford Historic Context Study (March 2012, Oxford Archaeology)</b>. References of interest to the Oxpens site contained within the Context Study report relate to how districts around Oxpens have evolved. References of interest include:</p> <p><b>West Oxford Historical Overview:</b></p> <p>3.2,28 <i>"The areas of older housing just outside the city centre were subject to sporadic clearance from the 1930s. St. Thomas's lost a large part of its population as a result of slum clearance combined with commercial development: the castle mill was demolished in</i></p>



SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
		<p>1930, and Paradise Street, Tidmarsh Lane, Park End Street, and Hythe Bridge Street were given over to offices, warehouses, and garages. Beginning in the 1960s a long period of change has seen the disappearance of older housing cleared away as slum dwellings in both St Thomas' and St Ebbe's, the re-alignment of roads (particularly Oxpens Road) the proliferation of car-parks, the erosion of evidence for the earlier industrial and commercial activity in the area..."</p> <p>3.45 The above extract from the <i>Historical Overview</i> identifies how land uses have changed with the loss of finer grain uses, replaced by car parks and highways engineering. The extract shows the historic precedent for mixed use development with heritage of finer grain residential streets and larger plots for commercial enterprise which the Oxpens master plan could seek to replicate in a contemporary form.</p> <p><b>Greyfriars and Paradise Areas of West Oxford, assessment of significance:</b></p> <p>5.5.2 <b>Community Significance:</b> <i>This area contains a number of residents in houses and apartments, in isolated islands and split from other main residential and recreational areas by the very busy Oxpens Road and large land unit car parks. Apart from Paradise Square the modern housing bears little relation to the pre-Victorian topography and the large-scale developments (plot size and mass) have overwhelmed the remaining historic features. The significance of the area is currently reduced by the delayed development and associated blight although recent redevelopment along St Ebbes has markedly improved this streetscene. Roads, car-parking, the Westgate Centre and College (OCVC) also make this a familiar area for workers. For the tourist/visitor arriving via the car parks or main coach park (Oxpens), who will mostly be unaware of the heritage of the area, the initial experience of the historic city is dismal in particular the sign-posted route to the city beneath the multi-storey car park. Approached from this low-lying area, the historic city is largely hidden from view and the road system and poor signage add to the confusion and bleakness of this major gateway to the city for many visitors. Sparse greenery is provided by churchyards/college gardens –with the exception of Paradise Square which has mature trees but with its air of neglect and reputation for anti-social use is little visited. Castle Mill Stream is screened from Oxpens Road and has an air of neglect. Oxford Preservation Trust buildings, Littlegate House and the buildings in Paradise Square offer a rare and much appreciated tangible reminder of the former character of the area the redevelopment of which was a key event in the modern history of the city. Its lost schools, pubs, work places, and shops still hold important memories and associations for many local families now living elsewhere in the city.</i></p> <p>3.46 The above extract regarding <i>Community Significance</i> further identifies a rich mixture of community land uses have largely been lost, replaced by car parks, highways engineering and island blocks of more recent residential infill development. This extract clearly states how the current Oxpens Road area presents a poor image for visitors, with a</p>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
		lack of clear connection to the historic city. Improving the appearance of the area with high quality urban design, architecture and public realm is an objective of the Oxpens master plan, improving connections and links to the historic city is also an important objective.
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	Fig 3.8 amended in conjunction with Para. 3.47	Paragraph 3.47 amended to include the following features of the historic environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conservation area</li> <li>- Archaeological considerations</li> <li>- Heritage assets</li> </ul>
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	3.82 added	<b>Conservation Areas</b> 3.82 The Oxpens site forms part of the settings of both the city's Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area, notably in longer range views of the city and views from Osney Cemetery. The impact of development in the Conservation Areas' settings will be a material consideration in determining planning applications, which is both a constraint and an opportunity for development proposals to consider.
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	3.88-3.90 added	<b>Archaeological Considerations</b> 3.88 The site does have some potential for archaeological remains of the medieval abbey and Civil War defensive works (including Hart's Sconce), which are likely to be of 'at least' local significance, but possibly of greater significance depending on their nature, condition and extent. Development proposals that will affect these should be informed by the results of archaeological evaluation undertaken to a brief agreed by the City's Archaeologist prior to the submission of a planning application.  3.89 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording could delay implementation of development proposals if not factored into the overall development plan.  <b>Heritage Assets</b> 3.90 Heritage Officers have not yet undertaken an assessment of what up-standing heritage remains within the site. Whilst much of the railway sidings landscape has been cleared of historic features, any small structures that survive and illustrate previous land uses could be retained within large development to help to retain a sense of connection with the past as well as adding detail and interest. Such buildings should be identified at an early stage in developing

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	5.16	development proposals and consideration given to how they may be put to beneficial use within the new development. Sustaining the significance of the city's renowned historic environment; added to bullet point list
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	6.8 - 6.10 added	<b>Urban Blocks and Urban Grain:</b> 6.8 Informed by the issues listed above the Development Framework establishes a clear network of urban blocks that are proportioned to have flexibility to accommodate a range of potential appropriate land uses. 6.9 The urban grain varies with slightly larger urban blocks on the main street frontages to Oxpens Road and Osney Lane, with a finer grain of streets and development blocks within the central core of the Oxpens site. 6.10 This approach has local precedent in the historic urban morphology of St. Ebbes and St Thomas's that have presented patterns of narrow streets of housing, interspersed with larger buildings associated with non-residential uses, as noted in Site Features.
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	6.72-6.78 added	6.72 Further detail in relation to the roofscape design is noted under Oxford skyline and view cone issues, as follows. <b>6.73 Oxford Skyline: Key View Cone Points</b> 6.74 Oxford has protected view cones, of long-distance views into the city from sites on the outskirts of the city. The view cone policy (Policy HE10) protects the distinctive skyline of Oxford, the city of 'Dreaming Spires'. 6.75 The prominence of this site in views of the City Centre from the western hills, and in the City Council's protected view cones in particular has been explored as Oxford City Council officers, including the Heritage Officer have undertaken site visits to consider the potential impact of the Oxpens site. 6.76 The site visits informed the Officers conclusion that the three most important view points from which development at Oxpens is visible are Port Meadow; Raleigh Park; and Boars Hill. These are official view cone points and will be used by Officers in determining the impact of new development at the Oxpens site on the spires and historic landscape.

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
		<p>6.77 Another important location for views is Hinksey Golf Course. Although this is not an official view cone location (when the viewcones were developed it was private land that wasn't accessible to the public), now that it is a golf course, members of the golf course may view Oxford from this location.</p> <p>6.78 Photography of the views from the three key view cone points is presented in <b>Figure 6.5, Oxford Skyline: Photography from View Cone Points.</b></p>
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	6.79 added	<p><b>View cone points design considerations:</b></p> <p>6.79 The Oxpens development should seek to minimise its impact upon the Oxford skyline, to help ensure views of the city from the stated view cones are not unduly affected. Key design features to reduce impact up skyline and view cones include the following points that need to be considered in design proposals for Oxpens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Broken building lines</b> are encouraged to prevent a flat building mass;</li> <li>• <b>Variation in roof lines</b> is desirable, particularly on frontages to key streets – notably Oxpens Road;</li> <li>• <b>Roofscape materials</b> need to be selected so that they do not appear stark against the landscape and blend with the overall palette of the city although there is always the possibility for a special form to perhaps use copper, as many of the spires do;</li> <li>• The loss of <b>trees</b> that currently contribute to the character of these views will be a particular impact of this development. Where possible existing trees should be retained within Oxpens Meadow; <i>and</i></li> <li>• <b>New trees</b> should be incorporated where possible in the public and private realm. Oxpens Road and routes within the site are identified as key locations for street tree planting. Street trees and trees within private gardens and communal courtyards will contribute to the green feel and appearance of the Oxpens site. The Development Framework Plan illustrates the location of key tree lined streets.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pictures from the view cones added</b></p>
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	Fig 6.5	
SEA Objective: 10 Cultural Heritage	7.12 added	<p>7.12 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording could delay implementation of development proposals if not factored into the overall development plan.</p>
SEA Objective: 11	5.22 added	<p>5.22 A comprehensive scheme of public realm improvements is required to enhance the quality of Oxpens Road,</p>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
Transport		improving the physical form and function of the street, and improving access and experience for pedestrians and cyclists. This should be agreed with Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority. The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the <i>Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual</i> .
SEA Objective: 11 Transport	5.25 added	5.25 The proposed Becket Street extension will create an alternative route for traffic reducing vehicular flow on Oxpens Road, which in turn should help improve conditions for pedestrian and cyclist crossing and links to the wider Oxford West End. The proposal to create a 'through route' running through the Oxpens site, connecting Oxpens Road to Becket Street will provide an alternative route. This proposal is reliant upon a solution for the existing Becket Street. Proposals for Becket Street are yet to be confirmed but are likely to include the creation of a two-way vehicular route with current on-street parking potentially to be relocated from Becket Street to Osney Lane.
SEA Objective: 11 Transport	5.33 – 5.34 added	5.33 A key connection to improve is the route for pedestrians and cyclists from the riverside (and potential bridge crossing), across Oxpens Meadow, across Oxpens Road, connecting north through the wider Oxford West End to link to the City Centre.  5.34 Walking and cycling links through to the wider Oxford West End will be enhanced by improved crossing points along Oxpens Road, improving access between Oxpens and important local features including the Westgate Centre, the Castle, Castle Mill Stream, and proposed attractions including the Magnet. The Becket Street extension proposals (as referenced in DP4) are intended to help reduce vehicular traffic on Oxpens Road and enhance the potential for crossing of Oxpens Road.
SEA Objective 13: Climate Change	Add new 3.103 re: district heating	<b>Suggest the following at 3.103 A range of complimentary land uses that has the potential to ensure activity is generated at different times of the day provides a good potential for a base-load for a community energy system</b>
	5.16 bullet point added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable energy – potential accommodation of a CHP Energy Centre;</li> </ul>
	5.56 added	5.56 The site may be able to accommodate an Energy Centre, subject to detailed design considerations. The site was identified in the Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study (Stage 3 report, December 2008, Arup on behalf of Oxford City Council) as having the potential to accommodate an Energy Centre with associated district heating network.
	6.7 bullet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential locations for an Energy Centre, other suitable locations may also exist, all subject to detailed design</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
	point added	testing.
	6.13 bullet point added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A potential Energy Centre.</li> </ul>
	6.43 – 6.46 added	<p><b>Energy Centre</b></p> <p>6.43 The site may be able to accommodate an energy centre, subject to detailed design considerations.</p> <p>6.44 Policy WE13 in the Oxford West End Area Action Plan requires a community energy scheme to be developed within the Oxford West End. The Oxpens site was identified in the <i>Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study</i> (Stage 3 report, December 2008, Arup on behalf of Oxford City Council) as having the potential to accommodate an Energy Centre with associated district heating network.</p> <p>6.45 Potential locations for an energy centre are identified on the Development Framework Plan and illustrative Master Plan. Other locations may also exist. All are subject to detailed design testing.</p> <p>6.46 Incorporating an energy centre into the site will require a sensitive design approach with due consideration of neighbouring adjacent land uses. Any proposal for an energy centre and/ or related infrastructure will require consideration of issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Size of plot:</b> The <i>Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study</i> includes illustration of CHP energy centre buildings in two scenarios including a 30m x 20m building footprint and a 20m x 20m building footprint. The size of plot may be larger than these dimensions as external site area may be required for access, servicing, deliveries, parking and landscaping.</li> <li>• <b>Access:</b> Energy Centre plant would require access for servicing. The plot may need to accommodate space for vehicle turning.</li> <li>• <b>Deliveries:</b> An indication of the frequency and scale of deliveries would be beneficial to inform location. Timings of deliveries may need control.</li> </ul>

SEA Objective	Paragraph	Mitigation proposed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Design:</b> Any Energy Centre plant would need a high standard of architectural design to ensure it integrates with the adjacent development.</li> <li>• <b>Location:</b> An Energy Centre should be located to minimise visual impact on and from the public realm. Such a facility should not be located on main routes or frontages, preferably should be positioned within a block on 'back' streets to minimise visual impact.</li> </ul>

## **Proposed Measures to Monitor the Significant Effects of Implementing the SPD**

3.48 Monitoring is a fundamental activity that allows us to assess the level of implementation of the plan or programme and also perceive the impacts and effects of the SPD.

3.49 The City Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which documents the progress of Oxford's Local Plan.

3.50 The AMR includes indicators measuring and assessing the sustainability effects of implementing a number of policy documents.

3.51 Table 17 below shows possible indicators to monitor implementation of the Oxpens SPD.



SEA Objective	Indicator	Target	Where Monitored?
SEA Objective 1: Flooding	<p>Permissions granted in Flood Zone 3b</p> <p>Applications in areas of flood risk (or over 1 hectare) submitted with a FRA</p> <p>Number of approvals for development incorporating sustainable drainage systems</p>	<p>Only water compatible uses and essential infrastructure permitted</p> <p>100% of such applications to be submitted with an FRA</p> <p>All schemes where practicable</p>	<p>West End AAP</p> <p>Core Strategy</p>
SEA Objective 9: Biodiversity	<p>Improvements made to green spaces and waterside environments</p>	<p>Enhancement of Castle Mill Stream to create a streamside park</p> <p>Enhancement of Oxpens Field</p>	<p>West End AAP</p>
SEA Objective 10: Heritage	<p>Number of schemes that have considered the issue in their Design and Access Statement</p>	<p>100% of schemes granted planning permission demonstrate consideration of historic environment in Design and Access Statement</p>	<p>West End AAP</p>
SEA Objective 11: Transport	<p>New links created</p> <p>Improvements made to the street environment</p> <p>Road congestion and Average Daily Motor Vehicle Flows</p>	<p>Provision of new links as set out in the AAP</p> <p>Improvements as set out in the AAP</p> <p>Reduce</p>	<p>West End AAP</p>
SEA Objective 13: Climate Change	<p>Number of schemes approved that meet the requirements of the NRA SPD (and/or Sites and Housing Plan where relevant)</p>	<p>100% of schemes approved comply with the requirements of the NRA SPD (and/or Sites and Housing Plan where relevant)</p>	<p>Core Strategy CS9</p> <p>Sites and Housing Plan HP11</p>

## Consultation

### Task D1: Consulting on the Draft Plan or programme and Environmental Report

3.52 The Consultation Bodies were consulted at the Scoping Stage. Table 18 summarises the comments received in relation to the SEA Combined Screening and Scoping Report.

Comments Received at Scoping Stage and Actions Taken		
Agency	Comment	Actions
English Heritage	<p>We note that the Council concludes that it is not able to rule out that the SPD would give rise to any significant environmental effects, including potentially on the historic environment. Accordingly, it considers that a SEA is required in relation to a number of topics, including cultural heritage.</p> <p>Our records indicate that the Oxpens site does not include any designated heritage assets. Nevertheless, you have rightly identified potential impacts of development on the site on townscape character and below-ground heritage. We are pleased to note that you have consulted your Council's Heritage Team on these matters.</p> <p>English Heritage finds no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusions and, in the light of its conclusion regarding the historic environment, is pleased to see that cultural heritage has been scoped in. However, we would be happy to defer to the views of your Heritage Team, should they be different to ours.</p> <p>If cultural heritage remains scoped in, you might find the English Heritage guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessments, Sustainability Appraisals and the Historic Environment of use. This identifies sources of information for the baseline, sustainability objectives and decision-making criteria. It can be found using the following link:</p> <p><a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/">http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/</a></p>	<p>Heritage Team consulted regarding above and below ground heritage.</p> <p>Detailed comments regarding indicative masterplan were received and taken account of in drafting the SPD.</p>
Oxford Preservation Trust	<p>The Trust agrees with the report's conclusion that SEA is required. The Trust's comments are limited to the references in the report at Table 3 and Table 4 to Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>The Trust notes that in Table 3 against "cultural heritage..." it states that "current policies exist in the Core Strategy and the West End AAP which will ensure that these matters are unlikely to have</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

	<p>significant effects on the environment.” The Trust’s short point in this regard is that there should also be a reference to/an acknowledgement of the relevant ‘saved’ Local Plan Heritage Policies i.e. Policies HE.9 (High Building Area) and Policy HE.10 (View Cones).</p> <p>This point then follows through in to Table 4 where there the Trust would like to see an additional ‘vision’ item; namely, protecting views of the skyline of Oxford’ historic centre. The relevant policies in this regard are ‘saved’ Local Plan Policies HE.9 &amp; HE.10 and Core Strategy Policy CS18.</p>	<p>Additional “vision” item not explicitly added but potential impacts on the historic skyline of the city have been considered. References added to the document at sections 3.43-3.46 (historic context) and 6.72-6.79 (views/ vision). Figure 6.5 added (views/ vision)</p>
<p>SENDRA</p>	<p><b>SA / SEA:</b> Welcome decision for this assessment to be undertaken, and along with other stakeholders wish to be consulted on the scope, preparation and conclusions of SA/SEA.</p> <p><b>SA/SEA:</b> Consider the scope of the SA/SEA should include: managing water &amp; flood risk; improving connections; building design; housing; integrated movement; employment opportunities; vitality of West End; noise management; air pollution; road safety; biodiversity and school provision.</p>	<p>SEA limited to those elements of the SPD that go further than what was appraised at the time of the West End AAP SA. See combined screening/ scoping report April 2013 for further details.</p>
<p>Environment Agency</p>	<p>The SEA findings should inform the master plan and design principles by identifying all features of ecological interest, within the site and incorporating wildlife, mitigation and enhancement into the development, in accordance with the LA duties under the NERC Act 2006.</p> <p>The EA responded to the Screening/ Scoping Consultation as follows:</p> <p><i>The SEA screening and scoping report recognises the need to fully assess and where necessary provide mitigation for works which could impact on the function of the floodplain. To support any planning application, a detailed Flood Risk Assessment will need to be undertaken in line with the requirements of the NPPF.</i></p> <p><i>We welcome the commitment in Table 5 to scope in both Flood Risk and Biodiversity into the SEA and are pleased to see that it recognises that additional work will be required to allow development at this location.</i></p>	<p>SEA includes biodiversity as an indicator. An assessment of the SPD has been made in the context of this SEA objective. Amendments have been made to the SPD with regard to biodiversity enhancement opportunities.</p> <p>The comments in respect of the SEA Screening and Scoping have been noted. We will continue to work with the EA to ensure</p>

	<p><i>At this stage in the planning process, i.e. at the SPD/Master Planning stage, we consider that flood risk is a significant enough constraint to require technical assessment to support the development proposals and as such have requested that this work is carried out by Oxford City Council. An initial assessment based on the current best available information has been completed in support of the SPD document.</i></p> <p><i>We would welcome continued consultation on this development as the planning process progresses.</i></p>	<p>that flood risk is dealt with in an appropriate manner as the development moves forward.</p>
<p>Natural England</p>	<p>Natural England sent an email stating the following:</p> <p><i>Natural England has no comments to make with respect to the above consultation, other than to concur with the conclusions as set out in section 5.</i></p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>

The following organisations responded to the consultation on the draft Environmental Report which was consulted on between 17 June to 31 July 2013.

Respondent	SEA Topic	Comments	Actions
Oxford Civic Society & SENDRA*	Transport	The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) notes that transport modelling work has been carried out and this work looked at a number of options for a junction accessing the Oxpens development from Oxpens Road, as well as ensuring that the roads within the development were sufficient to carry the type of vehicles expected. This implies that it was the internal transportation arrangements which were modelled. Our concern is that the Westgate development and the role of Oxford as a key entrepôt in the growth of the sub region's Knowledge Economy (see City Deal documentation) will generate significantly greater demand for transportation to/ from the area and the sub region. What is needed is modelling of the West End area taking into account the implications of many more journeys and modal shifts. Without such modelling we believe that the plans are unsound.	<p>Noted. Ensure all relevant transport modelling is undertaken to support the planning application for the Oxpens development.</p> <p>Modelling of the West End area was undertaken to support the AAP which was found sound in 2008.</p> <p>No change required.</p>
Oxford Civic Society & SENDRA*	Flood Risk	<p>It is understood that the purpose of the SEA is to assess the likely significant effects that the Draft Oxpens SPD will have on the environment and it builds on work that was carried out in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the West End Area Action Plan (WEAAP).</p> <p>The main existing environmental issue relevant to the development of the Draft Oxpens SPD is flooding and flood risk. It is understood that as flooding was included in the scope of the SEA, further technical work was commissioned to examine how site development could be taken forward in relation to the flooding constraints. The technical work undertaken found that there are "sufficient uncertainties" associated with the current representation of flooding at Oxpens to cast doubt on the Environment Agency's (EAs) Flood Map. This means that the impact of the Draft Oxpens SPD on water levels and flood risk is not fully understood. As such the likelihood or geographical scale of any effect of the Draft Oxpens SDP, its significance, permanence or reversibility cannot be predicted or evaluated.</p> <p>In other words (as also express in the SEA) it was considered that as the existing understanding of flood water and flood risk in the vicinity of the Oxpens site is</p>	<p>Noted. Once the EA flood maps have been updated these maps will provide the most up-to-date information on river flooding. As such this information will be used to inform the site specific flood risk assessments.</p> <p>No change required.</p>

		<p>rather rudimentary it was not possible to assess the implications of the draft SPD, but it was considered that the draft SPD could go forward on the understanding that there is a need for further and more detailed hydraulic modelling and understanding of flood risk to be completed as development of the Oxpens site proceeds. The text of the draft SPD was amended to reflect this uncertainty.</p> <p>It was recommended that a more detailed analysis of flood risk is undertaken for the site, subsequent to the publication of the Draft Oxpens SPD, as better information becomes available and prior to the progression of the site beyond this draft stage. The Environment Agency are due to deliver an updated, and more representative, hydraulic model for the River Thames through Oxford during the summer of 2013, and this model will be used to identify development impacts and appropriate mitigation measures prior to the site being taken forward.</p> <p>At the same time we understand that the Westgate Alliance has confirmed in preliminary studies that their redevelopment will have an impact on the drainage system and that a more detailed analysis is necessary of the drainage / flood risk implications of the Westgate redevelopment and especially the provision of the underground car park and diversion of Trill Mill stream. We also understand that the Westgate Alliance takes the view that flooding of the underground car park will be necessary at times of high flood risk.</p> <p><u>Our request is that consideration of the Draft Oxpens SPD and the Outline Application for the Westgate Centre redevelopment should not precede the Environmental Agency update / modelling. We have been advised that the Environmental Agency may now be ready by September/ October 2013.</u></p>	
<p>Natural England</p>	<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.</p> <p>Natural England is satisfied with the contents of the SPD and with the scope and conclusions of the SEA of the document. We note the reference to the HRA screening for the West End Area Action Plan which concluded that the plan would</p>	<p>Comment noted. No change required.</p>

		<p>not have a likely significant effect upon Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As such we have no objections to the draft masterplan SPD in relation to the SAC.</p> <p>Natural England pleased to note plans included in the SPD to include sustainable drainage systems and other measures to counteract flood risk. Measures such as this provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of the area and can contribute to the green infrastructure resources of the development site. In addition, the retention of the Oxpens meadow area offers potential for biodiversity gain and sensitive management of habitats adjacent to the river. We would advise that measures to improve the value of the site for biodiversity should be implemented at the detailed planning stage.</p> <p>The comments we have made in this response are based on the information provided by you, and for the avoidance of doubt does not affect our obligation to advise on, and potentially object to any specific development proposal which may subsequently arise from this or later versions of the plan or program which is the subject of this consultation, and which may have adverse effects on the environment.</p>
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## Section D2: Appraising Significant Changes

Table D2.1 details all of the changes made to the SPD after the public consultation and prior to its adoption. Each change was assessed see if it was a significant change and could potentially require further appraisal and assessment. There were no significant changes to the Oxpens SPD as a result of the changes made between consultation and adoption.

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
1.	Pg. 19/ Fig 3.1	Correction	Amend station masterplan boundary as per attached dwg. Amend Westgate boundary as per attached dwg.	No – factual correction. Not a significant change.
2.	Pg. 65/ Para 6.30	Consultation	6.30 The Oxpens site is outside the Oxford City primary shopping frontage and therefore retail space will be restricted to smaller units which should not be amalgamated to create larger units if this would undermine the retail core.	No – factual clarification. Not a significant change
3.	Pg. 36/ Fig. 3.1	Consultation	4. Oxford Business Centre. <del>Consider for later phases in the development.</del>	No – deletion of text – not a significant change
4.	Para 7.47 Infrastructure requirements	Update	List of infrastructure requirements to serve <del>both</del> the proposed development is set out below. Reference should also be made to the City Council's CIL Regulation 123 list.	No – factual amendment – not a significant change
5.	Page 98/ Para 6.118 SUDS	Consultation	Incorporation of Oxpens Meadow protected from development and retained as a green public open space, performing both flood mitigation and recreation facility functions. This area of open grass provides a large area for water infiltration, and drainage to the local watercourse. However, SUDS features should not be incorporated into the flood mitigation area.	No – additional text added to clarify where SUDS features are best placed. Not a significant change
6.	Page 51/ Para. 5.30 Bridge	Consultation	A New Footbridge crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably to the Grandpont Nature Reserve, and residential areas further	No – additional text added for clarification. Not a significant change.



Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
7.	Page 98/ Para 6.120 Ecological Assets	Consultation	<p><i>up/down-stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan. The exact location of the bridge is yet to be determined and the Environment Agency must be consulted on its design.</i></p> <p><i>Ecological assets, especially the landscape features in Oxpens Meadow, notably adjacent to the watercourse of the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should <del>where possible, be protected</del>— be enhanced</i></p> <p><i>The enhancements of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow will improve public access to these landscape assets and improve the visual and ecological landscape assets. By improving existing, but also by adding new habitats, we can expect an increase in biodiversity in the area adding additional amenity value to the development. Flood mitigation works will require some land re-profiling and landscape works but the reshaped Oxpens Meadow will be supplemented by new landscape features including new tree planting. Enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow to access landscape features, such as the watercourses, should also be carefully located to avoid harm to high quality habitats and protected species along the watercourses. Disturbance could reduce biodiversity value of these areas and their function as corridors within Oxfordshire.</i></p>	No – text additions provides clarification in response to comments made at during the consultation. Not a significant change.
8.	Page 34/ Para 3.67 Contaminated land	Consultation	<p><i>Identified historical and current activities within the Oxpens area may have resulted in contamination. Land remediation or mitigation measures may be required. Site contamination and ground condition surveys will be required to inform any detailed design proposals. Development of the Oxpens site has the potential to facilitate the clean-up of any contamination which may have resulted from various contaminating activities and past industrial heritage. Providing long term benefits to the environment and protecting human health.</i></p>	No – added text provides more details regarding contamination issues on site and the potential for clean-up. Not a significant change

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
9.	Page 47/ Para 5.15 DP3 A Sustainable Scheme	Consultation	Additional bullet point: <i>Facilitating the remediation of any contaminated ground</i>	No – bullet point added regarding remediation of contaminated land. Not a significant change
10.	Page 33/ Para 3.61 Utilities	Clarity	<i>Any development should not be commenced until the applicant can demonstrate how and when the required water and waste water infrastructure requirements will be addressed and connected. Any required sewer network upgrades should be undertaken before or in line with the development to ensure there are no problems and that the water quality of the aquatic environment is protected. Thames Water should be contacted in relation to any development proposals to discuss available capacity.</i>	No – word added for clarity. Not a significant change
11	Page 62/ Para 6.5 Framework Plan	Consultation	<i>The Development Framework Plan illustrates core Masterplan design guidance for Oxpens that Oxford City Council strongly favour: all planning applications are expected to be in conformity with this plan. If flood mitigation measures are not needed in due course then the framework may evolve but the essential characteristics of the design approach must be retained – a series of urban blocks with riverside park area responding to the site's location and reflecting important heritage aspects of the city. There is flexibility in the framework and creative solutions for flooding that do not compromise the integrity of this approach are welcomed.</i>	No – additional wording clarifies what happens if flood mitigation measures are not required. Not a significant change.
12	Page 29 Para 3.47 Flood Mitigation	Consultation	<i>It is recommended therefore, that a more detailed analysis of flood risk is undertaken for the site, subsequent to the publication of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD, as better information becomes available and prior to the progression of the site beyond masterplan stage. As at Autumn 2013 the Environment Agency are due to deliver an updated, and more representative, hydraulic model for the River Thames through Oxford during the summer of 2013, and this model will be used to identify development impacts and appropriate mitigation measures prior to the site being taken forward. The new model may impact on the available options for handling flood storage and mitigation on the site.</i>	No – factual update in relation to EA progress with updating flood modelling. Not a significant change.

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
13	Page 104 Para 5.44 DP8 Relationship to the River	Consultation	The flood mitigation scheme needs to be resolved and delivered prior to the development of built form to ensure flood protection is in place before new property is accommodated on the site. <i>A phasing plan for development and flood mitigation will need to be agreed by the City Council in consultation with the Environment Agency before commencement of development.</i>	No – clarification regarding phasing of development and flood mitigation. Not a significant change.
14	Page 109 Para 7.47 Infrastructure Planning	Consultation	First Phase (see indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a): -Upfront cost required to mitigate potential flood risk. -Required as first phase to protect the site from more extreme flood events; -Flood mitigation work must be complete prior to occupation of new development in <i>flood risk zones at Oxpens</i>	No – clarification regarding development in flood zones. Not a significant change.
15	Page 64 Para 6.12 Possible Land Uses	Consultation	..This plan identifies where the land uses <del>should</del> could be located within the site -	No – change clarifies that plan is indicative. Not a significant change.
16	Page 64 Para 6.18 Employment	Consultation	The WEAAP identifies B1 <del>(e)</del> Offices as a potential appropriate land use for the Oxpens site. <del>It also encourages B1(b) Research and Development as a potential secondary land use for the Oxpens site and encourages Research and Development space.</del>	No – deletion clarifies position in the West End Area Action Plan. Not a significant change
17	Page 100 Para 6.128 Economic Sustainability	Consultation Correction Clarification	The Oxpens site must <i>comprise more than one use and can provide accommodation for new business opportunities including those listed below: Offices; Research and Development; Hotel and conference facilities; and Jobs in A1-A5 land uses (retail, eating/drinking, professional services).</i>	No – addition provides clarification as to the mixed use nature of the site. Not a significant change.
18	Page 63 Figure 3.1	Consultation Correction	The southernmost blue arrow (minor access point) should be shown in a different colour to show that it is not for vehicular access.	No – this is a correction. Not a significant change

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
19	Page 91 Fig 6.14	Consultation	<i>INDICATIVE OXPENS MEADOW LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL (Note that designs for this area are not fixed and will be developed in consultation with Fields in Trust and the local community. The bridge location is also indicative at this stage.)</i>	No – change clarifies how design for this area will be taken forward. Not a significant change
20	Page 78 Fig 6.8 Oxpens road public realm improvements	Consultation Clarity	<i>Add note to Figure 6.8 middle left on drawing Note: Public realm treatment of Oxpens Road and Becket Street extension to be the same. Add note to Figure 6.8 bottom right on drawing: Note: Public realm and movement interfaces with Westgate junction to be considered.</i>	No – change made for clarity. Not a significant change
21	Page 78 Para 6.85	Consultation	<i>All proposed streets should include footways and ensure provision for pedestrian access, and cyclists may be accommodated within the carriageways or by way of off-carriageway cycle facilities or “hybrid” cycle lanes.</i>	No – change clarifies the type of cycle lanes that may be used Not a significant change
22	Page 78 Para 6.85 Main Route through Oxpens	Consultation	<i>This route, its alignment and junctions have been analysed by Oxford City Council Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. The route must be designed to cope with major flows but also safe pedestrian and cycle facilities. Early pre-application discussion should be held with the county council to discuss emerging street layout and design proposals for any planning application.</i>	No – additional sentence specifies type of route and flows. Not a significant change
23	Page 68 Para 6.51	Consultation Clarification	<i>School- Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed that the site does not need to accommodate a school. Oxford City Council's Sites and Housing Plan allocates a site for a new school in New Hinksey at Bertie Place. It is expected that this would provide additional school capacity to allow the primary education needs of the Oxpens development to be met.</i>	No – additional sentence states school requirements as set out in the Sites and Housing Plan. Not a significant change.

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
24	Page 47 DP3 – A Sustainable Scheme	Consultation	<b>Additional Bullet Point:</b> <i>Facilitating recycling and composting.</i>	No – additional wording does not require a significant change
25	Page 78 Footways and Cycleways and Leisure Routes	Consultation	<i>Add bullets: Facilities for cyclists should be considered including electric bike recharging and well-spaced cycle stands. The needs of cyclists with trailers, tagalongs, electric batteries and three wheels should also be considered in street design. Consideration should be given to the different cycle parking needs of employees from shorter-stay users of the site. A safe route for cyclists should be provided through the site from Oxpens Meadow to connect with the station area.</i>	No – additional information provided relating to needs of cyclists. Not a significant change
26	Page 7 Para 1.4	Consultation Correction	<i>The site is currently in multiple-ownership: Oxford City Council, British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR), <del>and the</del> Milton Property Investments Ltd (the key landowner at the Oxford Business Centre), and Royal Mail each own part of the site, and there are ongoing uses including the Royal Mail <del>sorting office</del> Delivery Office and administrative functions, Oxford Ice Rink, a coach park, a petrol filling station, sheltered housing and a range of local businesses. The masterplanning work contained within this SPD has taken account of these factors”</i>	No – Additional wording clarifies the role of the Royal Mail Building on site. Not a significant change.
27	Page 23 Para 3.26 & 3.27	Consultation Correction	<i>Change ‘sorting office’ to: ‘delivery office and administrative offices’.</i>	No – Additional wording clarifies the role of the Royal Mail Building on site. Not a significant change.
28	Page 23 Royal Mail	Consultation Additional Information	<i>Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide an efficient mail sorting and delivery service for Oxford Council’s administrative area. Relocation/re-provision of the Delivery Office to another suitable site in Oxford will be required before that site can be developed.</i>	No – this is a factual clarification. Not a significant change

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
29	Page 64 Para 6.21	Consultation Clarification	6.21 ....proposed new uses include new employment floorspace, <i>retail, hotel and R&amp;D uses, ensuring continued presence of employment activity. Although the existing employment space may be replaced in a different location, the objective is to have no net loss of employment space at Oxpens, some of which could be provided by non-B uses.</i>	No – use classes added to text to reflect AAP. Not a significant change.
30	Page 105 Para 7.24	Consultation Clarification	<i>Redevelopment of the Royal Mail site will be wholly dependent on the relocation / re-provision of the Delivery Offices so that it can comply with its statutory duties.</i>	No – additional text provides clarification. Not a significant change
31	Appendix A	Simplification	Appendix A lists relevant policy documents. Instead these will be referenced by way of links on the website to current policies.	No. Deletion Not a significant change
32	Appendix B	Simplification	Appendix B contains the accessibility study but the relevant drawing already forms part of the main document.	No. Deletion Not a significant change
33	Appendix C	Simplification	Appendix C sets out 'other land uses that were discounted. Not needed-referenced in main document.	No. Deletion Not a significant change
34	Appendix D	Simplification	Appendix D contains out-of-date information about planning applications for nearby sites. Therefore, not required.	No. Deletion Not a significant change
35	Page 35 Para 3.77	Consultation Additional Information	<i>The character, extent and state of preservation of any remains associated with Hart's Civil War Scence is currently poorly understood as the site has not previously been investigated. If remains are present and well preserved, they may be of national significance and, therefore, should be preserved in-situ within the development. This would require reconsideration of the location of flood mitigation measures. Archaeological evaluation will be required to demonstrate whether any remains of Osney Abbey are present within the development site. Should important remains be present then the development should aim, as far as is practical and in line with existing policy, to preserve these in situ by means of adaptive design. Should remains of lesser significance be identified then it will be necessary to ensure these are appropriately investigated and recorded prior to the commencement of development.</i>	Additional information provided in relation to procedure if archaeological remains are found. Not a significant change.

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
36	Page 45 Para 5.8 DP1 A High Quality Development	Consultation	<i>Add after 3.78. A desk based assessment has identified the potential for the presence of archaeological remains associated with agricultural use of the area in the past including the potential for waterlogged remains associated with drainage ditches running across this low-lying area and including potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval period use of the area. Development will need to be preceded by further investigation of the area's archaeological potential to be guided by discussion with the City's archaeological advisor.</i>	Additional information provided in relation to procedure if archaeological remains are found. Not a significant change.
37	Page 49 Para 5.23 Street Trees	Consultation	<i>The development should enhance views of Oxford from the railway line.</i>	No. Text added as a result of consultation. Not a significant change.
38	Page 49 DP4 Addressing Oxpens Road	Consultation	<i>Given the wide scale of Oxpens Road large street trees should be specified to provide a foil to the large scale and massing of building frontages.</i>  <i>Add bullets: -Oxpens Road's frontage should be designed in accordance with the adopted Design Codes that form part of the AAP. Frontages could reflect the scale and massing of buildings on streets including Park End Street and South Parks Road, with a series of prestigious buildings designed to catch the eye through use of refined architectural detailing and using a similar palette of materials to provide a sense of unity. The choice of materials could reference those used on other streets of similar status within the city (see Cooper's Marmalade Factory and the Cantay Depository on Park End Street). - Within the frontage blocks defined in the masterplan, frontages should be broken up to provide a succession of buildings of a vertical proportion with the width being perceived as being less than the height of the building and active ground floor frontages to create an active and human-scale streetscene.</i>	No. Additional information provides clarity. Not a significant change.  No. Additional bullet points provide information regarding the design code Not a significant change

Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
40	Page 55 DP7: Enhancing Oxpens Meadow	Consultation	<i>Enhancement of public open space should include provision for measures to discourage the use of areas under the railway bridge for anti-social behaviour.</i>	No. Additional text provides clarification as to potential enhancement of open space. Not a significant change.
42	Page 59 Additional Bullet to para 5.53 DP11: Coherent Character	Consultation	<i>This can be facilitated by: Using streets of similar function in adjoining character areas, to provide a precedent for the scale and role of buildings to create a legible hierarchy of streets forming coherent character areas.</i>	No. Additional text provides clarification regarding urban character in relation to hierarchy of streets. Not a significant change.
43	Page 59 Additional Bullet to para 5.53 DP11: Coherent Character	Consultation	<i>This can be facilitated by: The hierarchy of streets in the new development reflecting the variation in street patterns in St Thomas' in particular to benefit from the potential to create links with existing areas of high quality historic and modern townscape. Street design is covered in more detail in the West End Design Code.</i>	No. Additional text provides clarification regarding urban character in relation to historic townscape. Not a significant change.
44	Page 59 Additional Bullet to para 5.53 DP11: Coherent Character	Consultation	<i>This can be facilitated by: Oxpens Road's character reflecting the broad width, strong enclosure and large building scale and pattern of Park End Street and Frideswide Square to which it is well connected with the buildings providing a series of landmark frontages to arrest the attention, allowing considerable potential for variety in detailing, but sharing a common scale. (Mixed –use main street in West End AAP)</i>	No. Additional text provides clarification regarding urban character in relation to historic townscape. Not a significant change.
45	Page 59 Additional Bullet to para 5.53 DP11: Coherent Character	Consultation	<i>This can be facilitated by: Residential lower order streets reflecting a more organic character of space and building reflecting the character of St Thomas Street or the denser developments of residential streets that characterised the later expansion of Oxford in the 19th and 20th centuries. Using more muted architectural detail and a limited palette of materials so that buildings contribute as groups with occasional stand out buildings providing focal features would also help create a coherent character. Redevelopment at Littlegate Street provides suitable models of good practice.</i>	No. Additional text provides clarification regarding urban character in relation to historic townscape. Not a significant change.



Item number	Page/ Ref	Reason for Change	Details	Requires further assessment? – Category of Change
46	Page 59 Additional Bullet to para 5.53 DP11: Coherent Character	Consultation	<i>This can be facilitated by: Repeated use of roofline features to support the rhythm created in frontages. Variation in detailing between streets could be included to avoid creating a monotonous street scene, whilst occasional gaps in the frontage are necessary to allow greenery to spill through the street. The Christ Church Old Buildings at Osney Lane provide a precedent for adding detail to larger residential blocks.</i>	No. Additional text provides clarification regarding urban character in relation to historic townscape. Not a significant change.
47	Page 75 Para 6.77	Consultation Additional Information	<i>Views out from the City should also be considered. Additional Views Study work it is being undertaken and initial studies show that that the views from the west are 'kinetic', not static. This needs to be factored in to the consideration of development proposals for Oxpens as they come forward. Regard should also be had to the fact that new buildings at Oxpens will be in the middle/foreground of views from the west, which means that even if they are below the 18.2 metre threshold, careful consideration needs to be given to their form, design and materials in order to ensure that they do not detract from the view.</i>	No. Additional text notes additional views should be considered. Not a significant change.
48	Page 75 Para 6.82	Consultation Clarification	<i>The Oxpens development should seek to <del>minimise its impact upon the Oxford skyline, to help ensure views of the city from the stated viewpoints are not unduly affected.</del> retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, and protect the green backcloth from any adverse impact.</i>	No. Text amended to reflect consideration of views. Not a significant change.

## **Appendices:**

## Appendix 1: Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening: Correspondence with Natural England

Rebecca Tibbetts,  
Natural England,  
Foxhold House,  
Crookham Common,  
Thatcham,  
Berkshire,  
RG19 8EL

Planning Policy

01865 252718 or 01865 252163

planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk

Please ask for: Sarah Harrison or  
Steve Pickles

12<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Dear Ms Tibbetts,

### Appropriate Assessment of Oxford's West End Area Action Plan

The Planning Policy department at Oxford City Council is currently working on an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Oxford's West End. In case you are not aware, the West End is the southwest quarter of the City centre, bounded by Hythe Bridge Street, Oxpens Road, St. Aldates and the railway line. The area covered is shown on the attached plan. It is expected that 600 new units of residential accommodation will be developed in the area, as well as new student accommodation, new tourist facilities and some new offices. A key aim of the West End AAP will be to improve the public realm and green spaces in the area, offering enhanced recreational opportunities. You may have come across the preferred options document, but if not, information is available on our website at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/planning/west-end-aap.cfm>. The draft Area Action Plan will be submitted for Examination to the Secretary of State in June.

The area covered by the West End Area Action Plan is at its closest point 800 metres from the southern edge of Port Meadow, which forms part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation. For this reason the City Council has carried out a Screening of likely impacts on this European site, which is contained below, and which concludes that there is unlikely to be any significant impact and that an Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required. I would be grateful if you would let me know whether you agree with this conclusion.

Appropriate assessment of plans that could affect Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) for habitats (SACs) is required by article 6 (3) of the European Habitats Directive, which states:

*'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'*

The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to SACs. Plans and projects can only be permitted if it can be shown that they will have no significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site in question. They may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

### Relevant European Sites

Figure 1 shows the location of the area covered by the West End Area Action Plan and the nearest European sites. There are three SACs within 15 kilometres of the area covered by the West End Area Action Plan. These are:

- Oxford Meadows: which is located 800 metres away at the closest point;
- Cothill Fen: which is located 7 kilometres away;
- Little Wittenham: which is located 15 kilometres away.

It is considered that the West End Area Action Plan could not have an adverse impact on either Cothill Fen or Little Wittenham. Cothill Fen is an alkaline fen dependent on a high water table and calcareous, base-rich water supply. As Cothill Fen is in the catchment of the River Ock which is a different catchment, it could not have an adverse impact on this site. Little Wittenham has been designated because it contains two ponds with large populations of great crested newts. As development in Oxford's West End will not affect the habitat in the ponds or the newts foraging habitat around them, the West End Area Action Plan could not have an adverse impact on this site. These two sites have therefore been excluded from further assessment in this screening exercise.

### **Oxford Meadows: Qualifying features and Environmental Requirements**

The citation for the Oxford Meadows SAC states that:

*'Oxford Meadows includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. Port Meadow is the largest of only three known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort *Apium repens*.*

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4 (4) of the Directive 992/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4 (4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Creeping marshwort *Apium repens*.

### Environmental Requirements

The following key environmental requirements to support the SAC's integrity were identified at an appropriate assessment screening workshop carried out for the South East Plan:

1. Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing.
2. Absence of direct fertilisation.
3. Minimal air pollution.
4. Absence of nutrient enrichment of waters; good water quality.
5. Balanced hydrological regime – alteration to adjacent rivers may alter flooding regime and reduce botanical diversity.

A further workshop on appropriate assessment for the Oxford Core Strategy was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at which the additional issue of ensuring that recreational pressures are maintained at a reasonable level was also raised as an issue.

### Possible Impacts of the West End Area Action Plan (AAP)

#### A34 goes through the SAC

**Table 1. Likely impacts of AAP on environmental requirements of Oxford Meadows**

Environmental Requirement of Oxford Meadows	Likely impact of AAP	Likely risk to site integrity
1. Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing.	None – related to activities directly at the site, which AAP will not affect.	No
2. Absence of direct fertilisation.		
3. Minimal air pollution	Additional development in the West End may increase traffic movements into Oxford. However, the area is very sustainably located with excellent public transport links as the railway station and Gloucester Green Bus Station are located within the area covered by the AAP. The area is also readily accessible from other parts of Oxford by walking and cycling and the AAP proposes to improve these links. There will be very limited residential and commercial parking and no increase in public parking, with the intention of helping to ensure car use is not increased. Given the large number of vehicles which travel along the A34 the impact on pollution levels deriving from this source of increased traffic from the West End is considered to be imperceptible.	Little or no impact.
4. Absence of nutrient enrichment of waters: good water quality.	Although relatively close to the Oxford Meadows, Oxford's West End is downstream of the site, so any pollution of surface water run	Little or no impact.

	<p>off could not affect the Oxford Meadows. Sewage treatment will be dealt with at Sandford Sewage Treatment Works, which is located just outside Oxford on its southern boundary, downstream of the SAC.</p>	
<p>5. Balanced hydrological regime</p>	<p>Water to serve development in the West End would come from Farmoor reservoir, which derives its water from the Thames. There is the potential for water abstraction from the Thames to affect the hydrology of Oxford Meadows. Water levels in the Thames have not dropped enough to affect the meadows since the drought of 1976, but climate change and increased water abstraction could potentially lead to this in the future. However, use of water for development of the West End would be a tiny proportion of the total extracted from the Thames and in itself is not likely to have a significant impact.</p> <p>The West End AAP Preferred Options Document states that ‘to cater for development in the West End, alternative flood-plain capacity may be needed. It could be provided within the West End, or may be more appropriately located outside the area, further upstream.’ If the compensation was provided upstream it is possible that the works could affect the hydrology of Port Meadow.</p>	<p>Unlikely to be significant impact in terms of water abstraction. If flood compensation is provided upstream of the West End, it will be important to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are included to prevent it having an adverse impact on the hydrology of the Oxford Meadows. Flood compensation is currently being investigated as part of a SFRA of the West End.</p>
<p>6. Balanced use for recreational pressures</p>	<p>Public consultation carried out by Scott Wilson as part of their ‘Oxford City Green Space Study’ revealed that people are willing to walk approximately 1,900 metres to important green spaces and 750 metres to neighbourhood sites. As the West End is 800 metres from the southern end of Port Meadow it is likely that some people will use this area of the SAC for recreational purposes. Extensive public use is already made of Port Meadow for informal recreation without an adverse impact on <i>Apium repens</i>, the species for which it has been designated a SAC. This species is not particularly sensitive to trampling and also thrives in the wettest areas, where there is least recreational pressure for most of the year. The remaining areas of the SAC are at least 3,500 metres away beyond Port Meadow, and it is considered that recreational use of these areas is unlikely to increase significantly as a result of implementation of the West End AAP.</p> <p>A key aim of the West End development will be to improve the public realm and green spaces</p>	<p>Unlikely to be significant</p>

	<p>in the area, offering enhanced recreational opportunities. Key of these will be the creation of a linear park along Castle Mill Stream, improvements to Oxpens Field and to the path along the Thames. Amenity space and play areas to serve the new residential development will also be required. It is expected therefore that many recreational needs will be met within the West End, which will reduce the pressure on Port Meadow. There are also already extensive alternative areas of green space that residents of the West End would be able to use including Grandpont Nature Park; Christchurch Meadows; the University Parks; Oxpens recreation ground; the Thames path long distance trail and the canal towpath.</p>	
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**Possible ‘in combination’ impacts**

Table 2 shows other plans, programmes and underlying trends, which could affect the environmental requirements of Oxford Meadows and lead to ‘in combination’ impacts.

**Table 2. Likely ‘in combination’ impacts on environmental requirements of Oxford Meadows**

<p><b>Environmental requirements of Oxford Meadows</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Impact of Other Plans, projects and Trends</b></p>	<p><b>Likely ‘in combination’ risk to site integrity</b></p>
<p>1. Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing. 2. Absence of direct fertilisation.</p>	<p>The A34 goes through the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation. Improvements/widening to the A34 could potentially have a significant impact on the SAC through land take. The draft South East Plan states that ‘Premium bus routes with frequent, high quality services will also be needed to link the country towns to Oxford, supported by bus priority measures and remote park and ride. There is also a need for improved rail services on the A34 corridor, particularly as this is unlikely to be widened and the government is considering demand management measures. East West Rail is crucial to linking the sub-region to Milton Keynes and supporting development at Bicester. So is enhanced capacity at Oxford station (linked to essential resignalling work), if this busy rail corridor is to cope with growth in passenger and freight traffic in the face of limited capacity on A34.’ The importance of these measures is further emphasised by the report in the Oxford Times on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2006 that ‘experts at the Highways Agency predict that by 2026 the A34, between the M40 and Didcot, will become one of the most congested roads in the South-East...the A34 is already operating above capacity and ... Oxford city, the only major hub in the region, attracts more than 22,000 car based commuters from the outlying districts every day.’</p>	<p>By taking the opportunity to make more efficient use of the land near the station/bus stations, the West End Area Action Plan will help to reduce pressure on the A34. However, it also represents a unique opportunity to secure improved rail and bus facilities in central Oxford, which are likely to be key in avoiding the need for further widening of the A34.</p>

<p>3. Minimal air pollution</p>	<p>The table below shows where air pollution levels at Oxford Meadows in 1999/2000 exceeded the site’s critical load. Pollution loads were within the critical load for acid deposition, ammonia, nitrogen deposition and SO<sub>2</sub>, but near capacity for ozone. Compared to most other European sites in the South East region, Oxford Meadows is relatively unaffected by pollution. Air pollutant levels in the South East are expected to go down until about 2010 – 2015 due to improving technology (particularly for cars), after which they are likely to rise again.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>pollutant</th> <th>deposition / critical load</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>acid deposition</td> <td>0.433</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ammonia</td> <td>0.163</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N deposition</td> <td>0.772</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NO<sub>x</sub></td> <td>0.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ozone</td> <td>1.26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SO<sub>2</sub></td> <td>0.18</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.apis.ac.uk">http://www.apis.ac.uk</a>,</p> <p>Note: The critical air pollutant loads that a given site can accommodate depends on the type of site. In this case, Oxford Meadow has been assumed to be unimproved hay meadow.</p> <p>Key: deposition / critical load</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>&lt;0.25</td> <td>0.25-0.74</td> <td>0.75-0.99</td> <td>1-1.24</td> <td>1.25-1.99</td> <td>2+</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Development of 47,200 new homes in Oxfordshire as proposed in policy H1 of the draft South East Plan and 80,000 new homes and 2 million square metres of new business floorspace in South Hampshire is likely to increase traffic levels on the A34 and cause reduced air quality.</p>	pollutant	deposition / critical load	acid deposition	0.433	ammonia	0.163	N deposition	0.772	NO <sub>x</sub>	0.99	ozone	1.26	SO <sub>2</sub>	0.18	<0.25	0.25-0.74	0.75-0.99	1-1.24	1.25-1.99	2+	<p>Air pollution is likely to worsen at the Oxford Meadows site due to increased traffic levels, particularly on the A34. The West End AAP proposes very limited residential and commercial parking and no increase in public parking, with the intention of helping to ensure car use is not increased. It is unlikely therefore to significantly contribute to these increased pollution levels.</p>
pollutant	deposition / critical load																					
acid deposition	0.433																					
ammonia	0.163																					
N deposition	0.772																					
NO <sub>x</sub>	0.99																					
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SO <sub>2</sub>	0.18																					
<0.25	0.25-0.74	0.75-0.99	1-1.24	1.25-1.99	2+																	
<p>4. Absence of nutrient enrichment of waters; good water quality</p>	<p>As the area covered by the West End AAP is downstream of the Oxford Meadows, it will not adversely impact on nutrient enrichment or water quality in combination with other plans.</p>	<p>Little or no impact.</p>																				
<p>5. Balanced</p>	<p>Development in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire,</p>	<p>Natural England has</p>																				



<p>hydrological regime</p>	<p>including that in the West End, that uses water from the River Thames catchment upstream of Oxford Meadows could affect the hydrology of the meadows.</p> <p>Gravel extraction to meet the increased primary aggregate targets (South East Plan Policy M3) could affect the hydrology of the site.</p> <p>The Environment Agency’s flood alleviation scheme for Oxford, which is likely to consist of enlargement of existing watercourses and/or creating flood relief channels, may affect the flooding regime of the River Thames.</p>	<p>stipulated that a key requirement of the Oxford flood relief scheme is that it does not have an adverse impact on the Oxford Meadows hydrological regime. Similarly it is important that other plans that could impact on it are also subject to appropriate assessment, but their impact is beyond the scope of this assessment. Given the scale of water abstraction from the Thames and the relatively small scale of development in the West End it is not considered likely that it would cause a perceptible effect on the hydrological regime of the Oxford Meadows, in combination with other plans.</p>
<p>6. Balanced use for recreational pressures</p>	<p>There has been extensive development in the Oxford canal corridor in recent years, but this is now largely complete. Few other sites have been allocated for residential development within 1,900 metres of the SAC in the ‘Oxford Local Plan 2001 –2016’, though Wolvercote Paper Mill has been allocated for a mix of employment and employment generating uses. Further residential development within this zone could also occur if the Safeguarded Land at Peartree was allocated for residential use in the Oxford Core Strategy. However, while this covers 16 hectares, it is more likely to be developed for employment uses, which is the current preferred option in the Core Strategy. There are few other opportunities for residential development in north Oxford owing to the extensive area of the Oxford flood plain, while access from the existing residential areas of north Oxford is limited by the severance created by the main Oxford to Birmingham railway line.</p>	<p>Unlikely to be significant</p>

## Suggested Avoidance Measures

### Widening of the A34

There are currently no proposals by the Highways Agency to widen the A34. The road through Oxford is, however, already at capacity and forecasted to become through Oxford one of the most congested roads in the south east. While the development proposed in the West End Area Action Plan is unlikely to have a significant impact on traffic levels on the A34 and the issue of whether in the long term widening is more likely, it does provide a unique opportunity to improve public transport facilities in central Oxford, and thereby reduce the likelihood of such a widening to become necessary.

Ensure that the West End Area Action Plan makes provision for improving rail and bus transport facilities in the West End and does not increase public parking, with very limited residential and commercial parking so as to encourage residents, with the intention of ensuring that car use is not increased.

### Air pollution

The Environment Agency's advice<sup>5</sup> on traffic related pollution is that it needs to be considered if a road carrying a significant proportion of new traffic related to the plan runs within 200 metres of a European site. In the case of the West End Area Action Plan, this will generate some new traffic that will pass along the A34 through the Oxford Meadows SAC. No precise information is available on the volumes of traffic involved. However, it is likely to be very small in terms of the overall levels of traffic along the road. The West End is also located in a very sustainable location, in transport terms, probably more so than almost any other location in Oxfordshire given its location in the centre of Oxford, in an area which includes the railway station and the Gloucester Green Bus Station. Given that large numbers of people commute into Oxford the provision of 600 homes in the heart of Oxford is likely to help reduce commuting in contrast to development in other places close to the A34 that are further away from Oxford, such as Bicester and Didcot. The West End Area Action Plan also provides the opportunity to improve rail and bus facilities in Oxford, thus encouraging more people to travel by public transport and to further limit public and private parking. Therefore it is considered that provided the West End Action Plan does incorporate measures to promote public transport use and limit travel by car, it will not significantly increase traffic along the A34 and exacerbate pollution levels in the vicinity of the Oxford Meadows SAC.

Recommend that further information is obtained from the highway authority on whether there is likely to be an increase in traffic generation along the A34 arising from development in the West End Area Action Plan and to ensure that the submission document includes measures designed to improve the use of public transport by improvements to the railway station; bus terminals and by restricting public and private parking in the West End.

### Water quality

As development in the West End is downstream of the Oxford Meadows it is considered that it will not lead to any deterioration in water quality on the Oxford Meadows.

### Hydrological Regime

The City Council has adopted a Natural Resource Impact Analysis Supplementary Planning Document (NRIA SPD). This requires new developments to look at the issue of minimising the use of water resources, and encourages new developments to look at measures such as water-saving devices; rainwater collection/harvesting and grey water recycling. The preferred target is to achieve a 30% reduction of average

<sup>5</sup> English Nature (16 May 2006) letter to Runnymede Borough Council, 'Conservation (Natural Habitats&c.) Regulations 1994, Runnymede Borough Council Local Development Framework

water use. Given also the scale of development is small scale compared to the extent of development in other areas of the Thames catchment, it is considered that the impact on the Oxford Meadows hydrological regime would be insignificant. As these measures are already in the NRIA SPD, no further action is required.

### **Recreational Pressures**

The impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC is unlikely to be significant as there are other areas of green space closer at hand that can also be used. A key aim of the West End development will be to improve the public realm and green spaces in the area, offering enhanced recreational opportunities. Key of these will be the creation of a linear park along Castle Mill Stream, improvements to Oxpens Field and to the path along the Thames. Amenity space and play areas to serve the new residential development will also be required. It is expected therefore that many recreational needs will be met within the West End.

While the recreational impact from development in the West End on the Oxford Meadows SAC is unlikely to be significant, the West End AAP will ensure that new recreational provision is made within the area which will help to encourage people to also use other areas for recreational purposes and thereby reduce recreational pressure.

In conclusion, our own screening of the likely impacts of development of the West End on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation has indicated that there are unlikely to be any significant impacts and that an Appropriate Assessment is therefore not required. I would be grateful if you would consider this issue and let me know whether you agree with this conclusion.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Sarah Harrison**

**Senior Planning Officer**

Date: 21 February 2007  
Our ref: SP 40.05  
Your ref:



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Oxford City Council  
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Dear Ms Harrison

**Appropriate Assessment of plans that could affect Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation for Habitats (SACs) as required by Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive**

**Appropriate Assessment of Oxford's West End Area Action Plan**

Thank you for your letter of 12 January 2007. This letter is Natural England's formal consultation response under Section 28 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and Regulation 48(3) of the *Habitats Regulations 1994*<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the information provided, **Natural England has no objection to the proposed development**. It is our view that, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, it would not be likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the Oxford Meadows SAC, or any of the features of special scientific interest of the Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common and Green, Pixey and Yarnton Meads, Cassington Meadows and Wolvercote Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that make up the site. Our detailed reasoning behind this view is set out below:

Air Pollution - The likely risk of air pollution of the West End Action Plan (APP) is acceptable to Natural England. Oxford City Council should be aware that the Appropriate Assessment for the Scuth-East Plan may recommend measures to be followed by all local authorities including some which are not

<sup>1</sup> *The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994*

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currently covered by the APP. It may be necessary to amend the APP to take these measures on board. The AAP must ensure that it provides opportunities to improve rail and bus facilities in Oxford and promote public transport use and limit travel by cars to ensure that the development does no exacerbate pollution levels in the vicinity of the Oxford Meadows SAC.

Nutrient enrichment of waters; good water quality - The likely risk of nutrient enrichment of waters of the APP is acceptable to Natural England.

Balanced hydrological regime - Consideration needs to be given to potential future climatic changes and future impacts caused by increased water abstraction. In particular, the Appropriate Assessment suggests that flood-plain capacity will be needed for the APP, which could impact on the hydrology of the Oxford meadows SAC and will require further investigation. To fully implement the precautionary principle for Oxford Meadows SAC, Oxford City Council should ensure that the new development minimise the use of water resources and encourages measures such as water-saving devices, rainwater collection and grey-water recycling. New developments should be water efficient with an excellent BREEAM rating with respect to its water component, exceeding the Government proposed code of Sustainable Construction.

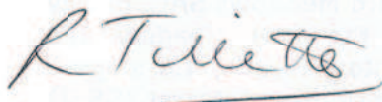
Recreational pressures - The likely risk of nutrient enrichment of waters of the APP is acceptable to Natural England. Ensure that new recreational provisions are made within the area which will help to encourage people to use other areas for recreational purposes.

**If the application is amended, Natural England should be re-consulted for a further 21 days in accordance with Circular 08/2005.**

**Please forward a copy of the decision notice to our office at the above address.**

If you have any queries relating to the content of this letter, please contact the author at the above address.

Yours sincerely



**DR REBECCA TIBBETTS**  
Grade II Advisor

## Appendix 2: Combined SEA Screening and Scoping Report

### Oxpens SPD

Strategic Environmental Assessment  
Combined Screening & Scoping Report  
Regulation 9 (1) (Screening) & Regulation 12(5) (Scoping)  
Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regs 2004



**02 April 2013**

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced to determine the need for, and consult on the scope and level of detail to be included for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations for the proposed Oxpens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is twofold. Firstly to undertake a screening assessment that meets the requirements of the European Legislation, applied in the UK through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (SI No. 1633). The Regulations do not require an assessment of the planning merits of the proposals at this stage, instead the requirements is to ascertain whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. This process is completely distinct from the planning process and governed by an entirely different set of Environmental Regulations.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is also to consult the consultation bodies on the level of detail of the information that must be included in the report (also known as scoping). The receipt of this report marks the start of the five-week consultation period in accordance with Regulation 12.
- 1.4 The policy framework for the Oxpens SPD is found in the Oxford Core Strategy (2011), and West End Area Action Plan (2008).
- 1.5 The SPD will be subject to public consultation in accordance with the relevant regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

### 2. Requirement for SEA

- 2.1 Previously all statutory land-use plans, including Supplementary Planning Documents, required a Sustainability Appraisal which incorporated the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment. This was a requirement under UK Government legislation. However, the 2008 Planning Act<sup>6</sup> and 2012 Regulations<sup>7</sup> removed the UK legislative requirement for the sustainability appraisal of Supplementary Planning Documents. Despite no longer requiring sustainability appraisal, SPDs may still require SEA.

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<sup>6</sup> Planning Act 2008 – Paragraph 180(5d)

<sup>7</sup> Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

- 2.2 The requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is set out in the regulations<sup>8</sup>. There is also practical guidance on applying European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>9</sup>. These documents have been used as the basis for this screening report. Regulation 5 sets out three types of plans that require SEA:
- The plan is for town and country planning and sets the development framework for future consent of projects listed in annexes I or II of the EIA Directive<sup>10</sup> (There is an exemption for a plan dealing with the use of a small area at a local level OR a minor modification of a plan<sup>11</sup>);
  - The plan requires a Habitat Regulations Assessment
  - The plan sets the future development consent framework that is not in the above two categories but has been determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 2.3 The proposed SPD will be for town and country planning and sets the development framework for future consent of a project within annex II of the EIA Directive. The relevant section of the EIA Directive is Annex II(10b) Urban development projects<sup>12</sup>.

### 3. Screening

- 3.1 The ODPM practical guidance provides a checklist approach based on the SEA Regulations to help determine whether SEA is required. This guide has been used as the basis on which to assess the need for SEA as set out below. **Figure 1** below<sup>13</sup> (taken from government guidance) illustrates the process that has been followed.

#### Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

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<sup>8</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (no. 1633)

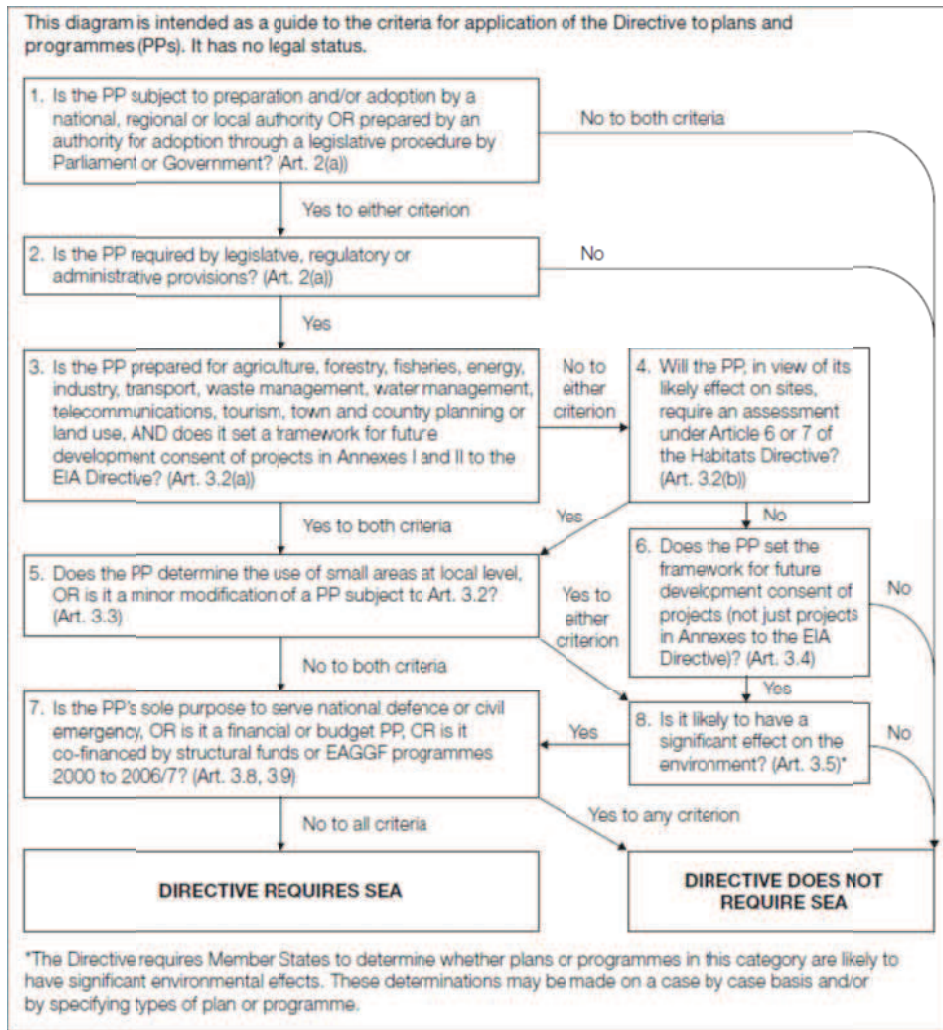
<sup>9</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

<sup>10</sup> Regulation 5(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (no. 1633)

<sup>11</sup> Regulation 5(6) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (no. 1633)

<sup>12</sup> Schedule II of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

<sup>13</sup> Taken from: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005), ODPM – page 13



3.2 **Table 1** below sets out the 8 questions identified in the diagram above and provides an answer with regard to the proposed Oxpens SPD.

**Table 1 – Application of the proposed SPD: Is an SEA required?**

Establishing the need for SEA		Answer	Reasons	Next step
1	Is the SPD subject to preparation and/ or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Article 2(a))	Yes	The SPD is to be adopted by Oxford City Council	Proceed to question 2
2	Is the SPD required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))	No	The SPD is not required but it is considered to be the appropriate delivery mechanism by which to bring the Oxpens site forward.	Proceed to question 3
3	Is the SPD prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry,	Yes	The SPD will be for town and country planning purposes and	Proceed to question 4



Establishing the need for SEA		Answer	Reasons	Next step
	transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a))		sets a framework for the development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive <sup>14</sup>	
4	Will the SPD, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	No	The HRA Screening concluded, and Natural England agreed that the West End AAP would not be likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the Oxford Meadows SAC.	Proceed to question 5
5	Does the SPD determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a plan subject to Article 3.2? (Article 3.3)	Yes	The SPD does determine the use of a small area at the local level.	Proceed to question 8
6	Does the SPD set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)	Yes	The SPD sets the framework for future development consent of projects.	N/A
7	Is the SPD's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Article 3.8, 3.9)	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Article 3.5)		See Table 2 below for the detailed reasoning	

<sup>14</sup> The EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) as amended in 1997, 2003 and 2009

3.3 **Table 2** below sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment taken from Schedule 1 of the Regulations<sup>15</sup> and applies them to the proposed Oxpens SPD.

**Table 2** – Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment

Criteria		Oxford City Council's Assessment
<b>1 Characteristics of the plan or programme</b>		
1a	The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The Oxpens SPD will set the framework for the development for the Oxpens site. The SPD will sit underneath the “parent” document - the West End Area Action Plan (AAP). In order to supplement the policies in the AAP, the SPD must reflect and be based on the AAP policies.</p> <p>Despite not formally allocating sites, the AAP provides the strategic mix of development for the area and lists the primary and secondary uses to be contained on individual sites in order to achieve the overall vision for the West End.</p> <p>The AAP states at Appendix 2 that <i>“the AAP has been written to address the West End as a whole instead of considering a series of individual sites... It should be recognised that at the planning application or master planning stage, further site investigations will be required to confirm that the indicative uses identified here are appropriate in all regards.”</i></p> <p>The Oxpens SPD will guide the location, nature, size and operating conditions of particular uses to meet the objectives of the AAP and ultimately the City Council. Whilst an SPD does not have the weight of a Local Plan policy, it will be adopted by the City Council as a material consideration when determining planning applications.</p> <p>Oxpens is a large site which falls primarily within the ownership of the City Council and British Rail Board (Residiary). The AAP lists the priority uses in Appendix 2. Priority use is defined as the main use or uses for the site. Priority uses include, houses, public, space community energy, leisure, conference and hotels. Opportunities for some uses are limited in the West End, in fact due to their size or location, if certain uses are not delivered on the Oxpens site, it is unlikely that they will be brought forward in in the West End at all.</p>
1b	The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and	The SPD will have less material weight than the Core Strategy and the West End Area Action Plan. It will only be able to expand on existing policies and will not be able to introduce any new policies.

<sup>15</sup> Criteria taken from Schedule 1 of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Criteria		Oxford City Council's Assessment
	programmes including those in a hierarchy	The SPD will be at the bottom of the hierarchy and will have no impact on the content of those documents above it.
1c	The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	<p>The SPD will help with the delivery of plan policies and help meet with the City Council's objectives contained in the Core Strategy and West End AAP, both of which were developed to deliver sustainable development. It is intended to promote sustainable development by ensuring that development fulfils the economic, social and environmental dimensions as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>The SPD will support strong, healthy and vibrant communities, by providing a framework to bring forward the supply of housing and it contributes to improving biodiversity, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, for instance through delivery of a community energy scheme in the West End.</p>
1d	Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The main existing environmental problem relevant to development of the Oxpens SPD is flooding and flood risk.</p> <p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was undertaken to support the Area Action Plan (Atkins, June 2007). The SFRA provides detailed flood zone maps of the area. The SFRA flood zone map shows the Oxpens site to contain an area of flood storage/ functional floodplain which lies in flood zone 3b, as well as some parts of the site, which lie in flood zones 3a, and flood zone 2. As part of this work, an initial investigation was also undertaken to see whether it might be possible to move the current flood storage area on the Oxpens site to create a more regularly shaped or larger area suitable for development. The AAP states that:</p> <p><i>"Potential ways of compensating for this flood storage were identified, and a feasibility study will be carried out to identify the best option as part of the master planning of the site".</i></p> <p>Other existing problems include, but are not limited to, the existing traffic and transport issues in the area; a poor quality townscape character and limited biodiversity opportunities.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the whole of the administrative area of the city has been declared an Air Quality Management Area.</p>
1e	The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of	There are unlikely to be significant impacts.

Criteria		Oxford City Council's Assessment
	Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	
<b>2 Characteristics of the effects of the area likely to be affected</b>		
2a	The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects	The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations breaks down the environment into a series of constituent parts. These are as follows: biodiversity; population; human health; fauna; flora; soil; water; air; climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; and the inter-relationship between these issues. See Tables 3 & 4.
2b	The cumulative nature of the effects	From the available evidence and technical studies, it is unclear whether there will be cumulative effects on biodiversity, water, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage, climatic factors and transport. Applying the precautionary principle means that factors should be considered as part of the SEA of the SPD. This does not necessarily mean that there will be any significant effects on the environment; it simply means that at present there is not the information available to be able to make a decision.
2c	The trans-boundary nature of the effects	There will be no trans-boundary effects in the sense of between countries. On a more local level, trans-boundary effects with neighbouring authorities are unlikely to result in significant environmental effects beyond those identified in the SA of the West End Area Action Plan
2d	The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	None identified.
2e	The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The site area is approximately 8.3ha. At present it is not clear how development of the site will impact either the site or the wider area in terms of flood risk. It is also unclear about how the development will impact the historic environment in particular townscape character and landscape. Oxford City Council's Heritage Team has been consulted regarding the historic environment, townscape character and below-ground heritage. Their response will feed into the final SEA Report. Although Biodiversity was covered at the AAP stage, a subsequent report has been produced looking at potential issues on site. This will be also be considered through the SEA

Criteria		Oxford City Council's Assessment
		<p>process.</p> <p>How the Oxpens site is developed could have implications for traffic and transport both inside and outside of the West End. Issues such as the routing of buses and visitor coaches (which currently park on the Oxpens site) will need to be resolved. The Oxpens site has been identified as an integral site in the delivery of a community energy scheme for the West End. The SPD should demonstrate how this scheme will be brought forward.</p>
2f	<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; or</li> <li>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</li> <li>iii) Intensive land-use</li> </ul>	<p>The SPD will supplement existing policies in the Core Strategy and West End Area Action Plan. It is envisaged that the SPD will firm up the types and quantum of development that will come forward on the Oxpens site.</p> <p>The Oxpens site is an important site within the context of delivering the City Council's objectives for the West End which are documented in the adopted AAP.</p> <p>It is not clear how the land-uses proposed will intensify the site and care should be taken not to substitute much needed community uses for more profitable uses if this has a negative effect on the Council's aims and objectives for the West End. Whilst clearly in a sustainable location in the heart of the city centre, care should be taken not to over-develop the site and create an over-intensified development framework. The Oxpens site is a key site for delivering many AAP objectives. The key question that should be asked is: If certain key uses are not going to be located on the Oxpens site, where will they go, are they likely to be delivered there and will this deliver the City Council's vision, aim and objectives for the area?</p>
2g	<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>None identified.</p>

3.4 In order to work out whether or not an SEA would be required on the Oxpens SPD, it was necessary to first review the Sustainability Appraisal for the West End Area Action Plan. **Table 3** reviews the Sustainability Appraisal of the West End AAP in relation to SEA Directive Topics giving specific consideration of the Oxpens site.

**Table 3** – Review of the Sustainability Appraisal of the West End AAP

SEA Directive Topics.  (The environment is defined by Schedule 2 paragraph 6 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)	Summary of previous SA findings or undertaken as part of the West End AAP.	Additional information
Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna	Potential loss of an area of scrub on the Oxpens site. The AAP will ensure that a linear park is to be created along the length of the castle mill stream to mitigate this.	The HRA Screening concluded, and Natural England agreed, that the West End AAP would not be likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the Oxford Meadows SAC.
Population	Development will bring more residents and workers to the West End.	n/a
Human Health	AAP will improve health by providing more affordable housing which will reduce the number of people in inadequate accommodation. Potential for new health centre in West End	n/a
Soil	Depending on flood remediation measures this may need to be addressed at a later date.	n/a
Water	Further investigations required in relation to the provision of flood storage capacity on Oxpens Site.	The AAP makes a commitment to carry out a feasibility study to identify the best option as part of the master-planning of the site. Further modelling work is being commissioned and will be undertaken to examine this issue part of the SPD.
Air	SA suggests that there are not likely to be any significant improvements in air quality.	The whole of Oxford City is now an Air Quality Management Area.
Climatic factors	The West End provides one of the few opportunities for providing a district-wide heating system for Oxford and as such the AAP commits to providing this system. The Oxpens site was identified by a study by ARUP as a key site to delivering the system in the West End.	If this commitment is not fully considered on the Oxpens site, there may be no further opportunities for its development in the West End

Material Assets	Depending on the detail of the development proposal this may have an impact on material assets.	n/a
Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Current policies exist in the Core Strategy and West End AAP which will ensure that these matters are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.	n/a
Landscape	Current policies exist in the Core Strategy and West End AAP which will ensure that these matters are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.	n/a
Inter-relationships between the above issues	SA suggests that vehicle movements associated with the AAP should have a modest impact on the strategic road network	Some transport issues unresolved with regards to the Oxpens site. For instance, visitor coaches currently use the site, and there are also proposed changes to the bus routes. The City Centre Stage 1 Transport Strategy has been completed. This provides some information about what is proposed for the routing of buses around Oxpens. There is also the issue that as part of the Westgate redevelopment, the car park on Oxpens was an option to use as a temporary car park while building works was undertaken.

3.5 The SPD itself is assessed as to what additional requirements, changes or omissions it contains, on top of the Core Strategy and West End AAP, to identify which topics require specific consideration in this screening. Table 4 provides this assessment.

**Table 4** – Assessment of additional requirements sought by the SPD

SPD Contents		Existing Policies	Additional requirements sought by the SPD
Vision		Core Strategy and West End AAP	None. Vision consistent with existing Local Plan documents
DP1: A HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT	High quality architecture	WE12; WEDC section E; CS18; HP9	None. DP1 consistent with existing policies and the Street Scene Manual.
	Palette of materials	Street Scene Manual for public realm materials	

<b>DP2: MAXIMISING THE VALUE AND POTENTIAL OF THE SITE</b>	Maximum number of units / floorspace	CS22 (“at least...”); HP9a (“efficient use of land”); WE20	None. DP2 consistent with existing policies
	Balance of land uses	CS23; WE15; WE20	
<b>DP3: A SUSTAINABLE SCHEME</b>	Water and flood risk	CS11; WE14	DP3 consistent with existing policies in all aspects except that the commitment to a district heating scheme is not referred to and flooding matters not fully addressed.
	Improving connections	CS13; CS14; WE2; WE3;	
	Sustainable building design	CS9; WE12; WE13; HP11	
	SUDS	CS11; WE14	
	City centre housing	CS22; WE15; WE19	
	Integrating movement options	CS13; CS14; WE2; WE3; AAP Appendix 4	
	Creating employment opportunities	CS27; WE21	
	Supporting viability of the wider West End and City Centre	CS5; WEAAP vision	
<b>DP4: ADDRESSING OXPENS ROAD</b>	Building line/ set back	WEDC type 1 streets	None. DP4 consistent with existing policies
	Floor to ceiling heights	WEDC type 1 streets	
	Public realm	WE1 and supporting text; WE3 and supporting text; WE5(Oxpens Square); Street Scene Manual	
	Pedestrian movement	WE2	
	Street trees	WEDC type 1 streets	
<b>DP5: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE OXFORD WEST END</b>	Network of connected streets	WE1; WE2; WE3; WE5; WE7; WE8; WE9; WEDC; CS13(1st bullet); CS5(5 <sup>th</sup> bullet)	None. DP5 consistent with existing policies in all aspects except that the SPD does not resolve the identified transport issues.
	Thames, Castle Mill Stream, Oxpens Meadow	WE2; WE7; WE8; WE9	
	Public transport	WE3 and supporting text	
	Foot/cycle bridge	WE2	
	Enhancement to Oxpens Road	WE1 and supporting text; WE3 and supporting text; WE5(Oxpens Square); Street Scene Manual	



<b>DP6: HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM: STREETS AND SPACES</b>	Palette of materials	CS18; Street Scene Manual for public realm materials	None. DP6 consistent with existing policies
	Oxpens Square	WE5 and supporting text	
<b>DP7: ENHANCING OXPENS MEADOW</b>	Using meadow more	WE8	None. DP7 consistent with existing policies
	Flood mitigation	CS11; WE14	
	landscaping	WE7; WE8;	
<b>DP8: RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIVER</b>	Flood mitigation	CS11; WE14	None. DP8 consistent with existing policies
	Orientated towards river	WE9	
<b>DP9: APPROPRIATE LAND USE MIX</b>	Mix of uses and residential types	CS23; WE15; WE20; AAP Appendix 2	None. DP9 consistent with existing policies
	Mix of business opportunities	WE21; WESection5.3; WE22; WE24; WE26; WE27; WE28; AAP Appendix 2	
	hotel	WE26; CS32(WE specifically mentioned); AAP Appendix 2	
	Student accommodation	CS25; WE18; HP5	
	Complimentary land uses	WE19; WE20; WE24; WE27; WE28; AAP Appendix 2	
<b>DP10: GENERATING ACTIVITY</b>	Balance of land uses	CS23; WE15; WE20	None. DP10 consistent with existing policies
	On street activity	WE20 and supporting text; WEDC section B3 and 4	
	Flexible ground floor uses	WE20; CS18 (bullet 4)	
<b>DP11: COHERENT CHARACTER</b>	Palette of materials	Street Scene Manual for public realm materials	None. DP11 consistent with existing policies
<b>DP12: PHASING</b>	Retention of ice rink in medium to long term	WE28;	None. DP12 consistent with existing policies
<b>Regulating Masterplan</b>	Main junction with Oxpens Road has moved A couple of streets have swapped places in the hierarchy.	West End AAP	None. Regulating Masterplan consistent existing policies.
<b>Uses</b>	Residential (Houses	Houses (P)	Draft SPD introduces

	and apartments) Employment: Offices, R&D Hotel A-Class Uses Student Accommodation Retirement Accommodation Café (Oxpens Meadow Attraction)	Flats (M) Public Space (P) Community Energy (P) Amenities for housing (S) Offices (S) Public Offices (P) Food and Drink (M) Museums (S) Hotel (P) Conference (P) Leisure (P)  Where P = Primary S = Secondary M = Minor	student accommodation and possible education use.  Draft SPD omits Community Energy, Museums, Conference and Leisure.
<b>Illustrative Masterplan</b>	Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how site can be designed in detail.  Includes proposed distribution of uses across the site.	No equivalent diagram in AAP.  AAP contains illustrations of building heights, streets and spaces and street sections, parking standards.	None. Illustrative Masterplan consistent existing policies.
<b>Phasing and Delivery</b>	SPD provides indicative phasing strategy, infrastructure list and funding options.	See Appendices 8 and 9 of the West End AAP.	None. The Draft SPD consistent with existing policies.  Draft SPD provides updated information on funding sources.

## 4. Scoping

- 4.1 The SPD incorporates no additional requirements on top of the policies Core Strategy or West End AAP. The SPD omits reference to a district heating scheme, does not provide the assessment for or address flood risk or transport matters as set out in the AAP. Therefore in order for the SPD to comply with the European Directive, when working out the scope and level of detail, the SEA must specifically consider these omissions and changes in the light of the SEA Directive topics that they affect. Additional information is also available with regard to the biodiversity of the site. This will be examined as part of the SEA. An assessment by the City Council Heritage Team will also be included which looks at the site in terms of its Cultural Heritage. The findings of this report will be included in the final SEA Report.

- 4.2 The review of the Sustainability Appraisal of the West End AAP (Table 3) and the assessment of the changes contained within the SPD (Table 4) have identified five SEA Directive topics that the SPD may have an effect upon: Biodiversity, flora and fauna; Water; Climatic Factors; Cultural Heritage; and Inter-Relationships (transport). An examination into the likely probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects is looked at in **Table 5**.

**Table 5** – Topics screened into the SEA Assessment

Directive Topic	Probability, Duration, Frequency & Reversibility of the effects
Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna	An additional report which looks at on-site biodiversity has been produced since the publication of the AAP. The findings of the additional information found in this report will be considered as part of the SEA process.
Water	Different land uses are appropriate in different areas of flood risk. This is set out nationally (in the NPPF and the associated technical guidance) and locally (in the Core Strategy (Policy CS11) and the West End AAP (Policy WE14)). The Oxpens site contains an area of flood storage (flood zone 3b). The SA and the AAP make a commitment to undertake further investigations to inform the master-planning of the Oxpens site. At present information is not known about the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects. As such it has not been possible to assess whether or not there will be likely significant effects on the environment. Therefore an SEA is needed with regard to this particular SEA Topic. It is worth noting that SEA is proportionate to the level of detail that is required. This topic is therefore screened into the assessment.
Climatic Factors	The Oxpens site has been ear-marked through the evidence base as a site which is integral in delivering the West End Community Energy scheme. The City Council invested in a series of reports to deliver a community energy scheme. The report concludes that an area of 20m x 30m could serve the longer term energy needs of the whole of the West End. As a site that is within the control of the city, siting an energy centre on the Oxpens site would enable a significant benefit to the city. There is no information about the probability duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of either including or not including the energy centre for the community energy scheme on this site. As such this topic is screened into the assessment.
Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	There are some uncertainties particularly around how the development will impact the historic environment in particular townscape character, landscape and below-ground heritage. Oxford City Council's Heritage Team has been consulted regarding the historic environment and townscape character and their response will feed into the SEA Report.
Inter-relationships (Transport)	There are some unresolved transport issues in relation to the Oxpens site. Despite being in a highly sustainable location, the number of residential units proposed has increased from the time of the assessment undertaken for the AAP. This new level of housing proposed on the Oxpens site has not been assessed in terms of its potential additional transport and traffic impacts. Issues such as the environmental impact of removing and relocating visitor coaches off the site would need to be addressed. As there is no additional information available other than that produced to support the AAP, transport impacts are screened into the assessment.

- 4.3 Table 5 concludes that at present, information is not known about the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects. As such it has not been possible to assess whether or not there will be likely significant effects on the environment. Therefore these topics are scoped into an SEA. It is worth noting that SEA is proportionate to the level of detail that is required.
- 4.4 By not including a topic in Table 5 it does not preclude the inclusion of any other SEA Directive topic from Table 3 from needing to be assessed in terms of any future potential Environmental Impact Assessment that may be required or as part of any planning application that is submitted.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposed SPD will supplement existing adopted policies as set out in Appendix 1. The SPD will form part of the framework for the development for the Oxpens site. It will sit underneath the “parent” document of the West End Area Action Plan (AAP) and will become a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 5.2 In order to supplement the policies in the AAP, the SPD must reflect and be based on the AAP policies. Any significant changes or additions to the policies in the AAP must be the subject of a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment as they would constitute a material departure from the development plan. This ensures that the SPD will comply with the European Directive.
- 5.3 This SEA Combined Screening and Scoping assessment has not been able to rule out that the SPD would give rise to any significant environmental effects. The SEA Combined Screening and Scoping assessment has shown that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required in relation to the following SEA Topics: Biodiversity, Water, Climatic Factors, Cultural Heritage, and Transport (Inter-relationship between Air, Climatic Factors and Material Assets) See Table 5. Therefore it is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the proposed Oxpens SPD that relates to only these SEA topics. It is considered that the rest of the topics were considered sufficiently through the Sustainability Appraisal (which includes SEA) of the West End Area Action Plan.
- 5.4 As this report also represents the Scoping Report, the City Council is consulting with the three statutory environmental bodies (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for 5 weeks in order to decide the level of detail of the information that must be included in the SEA Report. As well as meeting the requirements of the Regulations, this Combined Screening and Scoping Report will be made available alongside the draft SPD and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Draft SPD (programmed for June 2013).
- 5.5 The Oxpens SPD is likely to add an additional level of detail to that of the AAP. The SEA Guidance<sup>16</sup> states that

*“An SEA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. The Directive requires consideration of the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme,*

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<sup>16</sup> ODPM, (2005), A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

*and of reasonable alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.”*

As such the assessment should be proportional to the level of the plan that is being assessed.

- 5.6 Any assessment undertaken under the SEA Regulations<sup>17</sup> does not rule out the need for further assessment, should it be necessary, under the EIA Regulations.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

<sup>18</sup> Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 SI No. 1824

## Appendix 1 – List of policies directly relevant to the Oxpens SPD

**Oxford Core Strategy 2026 Policies:****Policy CS5****West End**

The West End is allocated as a strategic location which will deliver a mixed-use development. Planning permission will be granted for development that includes:

- Significant housing provision (approximately 700-800 dwellings);
- Retail floorspace (at least 37,000m<sup>2</sup>);
- Office space (15,000m<sup>2</sup> for the private sector and 20,000m<sup>2</sup> for the public sector);
- New leisure and cultural attractions;
- A high quality network of streets and public spaces; and
- A new 1-form entry Primary School to serve the area.

The supporting text of Policy CS9 – Energy and Natural Resources states at Paragraph 4.1.5 that

*Developments at the strategic locations offer opportunities to incorporate large scale or area-wide renewable energy or low-carbon technologies. For instance, a District Heating Scheme is being developed for the West End... The appropriate technologies for each location will be investigated through the AAP/ SPD processes.*

**West End Area Action Plan policies**

Policy WE1: Public realm

Policy WE2: New links

Policy WE3: Redesign of streets and junctions in the West End

Policy WE4: Public parking

Policy WE5: Public spaces

Policy WE7: Castle Mill Stream

Policy WE8: Oxpens field

Policy WE9: The Thames

Policy WE10: Historic environment

Policy WE11: Design code

Policy WE12: Design and construction

Policy WE13: Resource efficiency

Policy WE14: Flooding

Policy WE15: Housing mix

Policy WE16: Affordable housing

Policy WE17: Affordable housing from commercial development

Policy WE18: Student accommodation

Policy WE19: Amenities to support new housing

Policy WE20: Mixed uses

Policy WE21: Office accommodation

Policy WE22: Public sector offices

Policy WE23: Retail

Policy WE24: Cultural activity

Policy WE25: Visitor Coaches

Policy WE26: Hotel Accommodation

Policy WE27: Conference facility

Policy WE28: Leisure

Policy WE29: Streamlined contributions

Policy WE30: Pooled contributions and forward funding

Policy WE31: Compulsory purchase powers.

### Appendix 3: Complete List of Sustainability Objectives

SO1: To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment

SO2: To encourage urban renaissance by improving efficiency in land use, design and layout and to create and sustain vibrant communities

SO3: To meet local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, affordable home

SO4: To improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health

SO5: To reduce poverty and social exclusion and to reduce the crime and fear of crime

SO6: To raise educational achievement levels and develop the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills needed to find and remain in work

SO7: To provide accessible essential services and facilities

SO8: To provide adequate green infrastructure, leisure and recreation opportunities and make these readily accessible for all

SO9: To conserve and enhance Oxford's biodiversity

SO10: Protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets

SO11: Reduce traffic congestion and associated air pollution by improving travel choice, shortening length and duration of journeys and reducing the need to travel by car/ lorry

SO12: Maintain and improve soil and water quality and manage water resources

SO13: Increase energy and resource efficiency (including minimising waste) and renewable energy, with the aim of mitigating climate change

SO14: Achieve sustainable economic growth (includes the development of a dynamic, diverse and knowledge-based economy)

SO15: To stimulate economic revival in priority regeneration areas

SO16: To encourage the development of a buoyant, sustainable tourism sector



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Public Participation Statement sets out how Oxford City Council has engaged and consulted with stakeholders on the Oxpens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012<sup>1</sup>, and the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.2 This statement provides details of the informal and formal engagement and consultation activities and the resulting feedback and how this feedback has informed the final SPD. The period of statutory public consultation was 17<sup>th</sup> June – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

## 2 Purpose of the SPD

- 2.1 The purpose of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD is to provide detailed advice on the master planning and design principles for the development of the Oxpens site within the West End area of the City.
- 2.2 The City Council has an adopted Core Strategy (September 2011) and an adopted West End Area Action Plan (2008) that were subject to a rigorous consultation process and public examination. The Oxpens Master Plan SPD builds on the policy context set out within these documents and use this as a basis for the development of more site specific supplementary guidance for the master planning of Oxpens.

## 3 Early stage informal consultation

- 3.1 Early stage informal consultation took place with a range of officers from within the City Council particularly Property Team; City Development and Housing. Members Briefings sessions were also held for City Council and County Council councillors. A statement setting out the scope of the Public Consultation on the Draft Oxpens Master Plan SPD was submitted to and approved by the Public Involvement Project Board at their meeting in March 2013.
- 3.2 Oxfordshire County Council was informally consulted on the draft document and there were discussions and meetings with a range of officers, including property, infrastructure and transport.
- 3.3 Discussions and meetings took place with a number of external stakeholders, including key landowners, and/or agents in the area acting for, BRBR, the Milton Group, Royal Mail and Greensquare Housing.

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<sup>1</sup> With effect from 6th April 2012, the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2204) were replaced by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 767). Therefore 2004 Regulation 18 was replaced by 2012 Regulations 12(b) and 13.

- 3.4 Discussions and informal consultation took place with the representative resident group in the local area, SENDRA. Wider informal consultation was also carried out with stakeholders that have a particular interest in the West End area of the city, through the West End Steering Group (which includes representatives from Housing & Communities Agency, the Westgate Alliance, Christ Church, Saïd Business School, Science Oxford, Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Network Rail, the Environment Agency, English Heritage) who were asked for comments on the draft document.
- 3.5 The City Council appointed David Locke Associates and MJP Architects to draw up an indicative masterplan for the Oxpens site. Property market advice was provided by CBRE and technical engineering advice from Atkins and Halcrow. The consultants, together with officers from the City Council, prepared alternative options for the Oxpens site in consultation with key landowners and stakeholders to arrive at a mixed-use development that seeks to maximise the use of the site and ensure that any indicative proposals are viable.
- 3.6 As part of the early consultation process key landowners, external stakeholders, residents groups and City and County members and officers were invited to make comments on the indicative master plan, prior to the formal public consultation stage.
- 3.7 A joint Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Council Business evening event was held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June, which was attended by around 80 people. The purpose of these regular events is to provide a forum for engaging with the local business community on key issues or themes. There was a presentation on the Master Planning of the Oxpens site by the Head of City Development who highlighted the main headlines emerging from the SPD which was used to inform and stimulate an open discussion. Those present were also made aware of the formal Public Consultation process.
- 3.8 A report on the Draft Oxpens Master Plan SPD was taken to a meeting of the City Executive Board (CEB) on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Members agreed its content and its suitability for going out for Public Consultation.

#### **4 Consultation on the Draft SPD**

- 4.1 Formal public participation on the Draft SPD took place for a six-week period between 17<sup>th</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013. The consultation involved the information being made available on the City Council's website and for viewing at St Aldate's Customer Service Centre and at libraries within the city; use of the City Council's online consultation software; an invitation to comment sent to statutory consultees, and those persons who have registered an interest in planning policy documents (approximately 1400 parties and individuals) and a press release. An exhibition was held at St. Aldate's Chambers for three weeks during the formal consultation period.
- 4.2 A leaflet explaining the vision and key design principles together with a questionnaire was physically delivered to 900 local residents, landowners and businesses, plus a further 200 questionnaires were distributed through the Customer Service Centre and an electronic version was also made available for responses on the City Council's website.
- 4.3 143 responses from organisations and individuals were received. Following the six-week period of statutory public consultation, responses were processed, analysed and carefully considered and where appropriate have informed revisions to the draft SPD. 38 letters/e-mails were received plus 105 responses to the questionnaire.

## **5 Summary of Main Issues Raised through Public Consultation**

### **5.1 Long Term Vision for Oxpens**

Of the 143 responses received (from organisations and individuals) the vast majority were in favour of the proposed long term vision with only 20 individuals disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Upon interrogation of the negative responses it seems that most of those not in favour had concerns over flooding, traffic or transport. These matters are discussed further below.

### **5.2 Design Principles**

All twelve design principles were supported by the majority of respondents with an overwhelming agreement on a number of these principles, most notably, DP1: a high quality development, DP3: Sustainability, DP6: Quality public realm and DP8: Relationship to the river.

The only significant variant in this was the response to DP2: Maximising the Value of the Site, where about 20% of the 150 responses did not agree. This may be down to a misunderstanding of the terminology used. The term 'maximising value' in the context of the SPD is used to describe the ambition to create a scheme which is both deliverable and high quality, while making it a desirable place to live in Oxford so that the site's full potential is realised. The plan has gone to great lengths to incorporate open space and, with the provision of a public square and additional land adjacent to the meadow, the ratio of public open space to development exceeds that set out in the AAP, the Sites and Housing Plan (policy HP9) and policy SR7 of the Local Plan.

There was a very high degree of support for DP4: Addressing Oxpens Road and DP: 5 Improving Accessibility. The proposed public realm improvements to Oxpens Road were very much welcomed.

#### **Heritage**

English Heritage expressed concern that the heritage aspects were not adequately addressed. In response, additional work has been carried out in collaboration with the heritage officer to ensure that the nature in which heritage had informed the design is better articulated and greater guidance has been provided. A number of additions were made to the text, particularly to Dp1 High Quality Development, DP4: Addressing Oxpens Road, DP6: High Quality Public Realm, DP7: Enhancing Oxpens Meadow and DP11: A coherent character. Following comments from Oxford Preservation Trust the wording around the section on view cones has been further strengthened.

The section on archaeology has been strengthened following a desktop study and discussions with the City archaeologist.

#### **Oxpens Meadow**

DP7: Enhancing Oxpens Meadow was supported by the majority of respondents. One organisation expressed concern that the proposals for paths/cycle ways shown in the draft plan were too intensive. The arrangements for the Meadow shown in the plan are indicative only and any designs for the area will be subject to consultation with the local community and Fields in Trust, the body which has the benefit of the Deed of Dedication that the Council has made. To ensure that this is clear in the document, a note has been added to the plans.

At the request of the Environment Agency, the text has been adjusted to confirm that Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) features should not be incorporated within the flood mitigation area.

Design Principles DP9: Appropriate Land Use Mix and DP10 Generating activity and DP12: Phasing, were supported by the majority.

### **5.3 Pedestrian and Cycle Links**

Specific comments made reference to the importance of retaining or enhancing the links to the city centre, along the river and to the station. Castle Mill Stream which flows up from Oxpens meadow towards Paradise Street and continuing towards the east end of Park End Street currently has a series of paths along this route but it is not constant. The route could be improved so that all parts were connected and by doing this it may prove to be a key north-south corridor for cyclists if some obstacles, such as high kerbs, were modified. Similarly, there are some trails which run alongside the river and under the railway leading to Osney Mead which could be enhanced to provide good connectivity for Oxpens residents and surrounding communities. These routes could be improved so that there is a clearer east-west connection and, like its north-south counterpart, the route could be made to be more cycle friendly. The proposals to extend Beckett Street would provide another choice for cyclists travelling towards Botley Road and wishing to avoid Frideswide Square.

Overall it was noted that respondents wished to see a scheme whereby the provision for pedestrians and cyclists was integral to the scheme's design and not viewed as an add-on. As well as fostering better connections within the city it was also noted that the provision of cycle parking was a feature that should not be forgotten, especially the provision of secure facilities for the area of student accommodation. The SPD has been amended to incorporate consideration of facilities for cyclists and a safe route from the Oxpens Meadow area to connect with the train station.

### **5.4 Bridge over River**

There was majority support (c. 70%) for new bridge to provide cycle and pedestrian access to Grandpoint, although the exact position would need to be considered in the context of any scheme to enhance the meadow and in discussion with the Environment Agency. Text has been amended to reflect this.

### **5.5 Oxpens Road**

Responses show there is a very high level of support for the improvements to Oxpens Road to make crossing easier and improve permeability.

### **5.6 Public Square & Activities**

There is a high level of support for the new public square to be next to Oxpens Road. The Draft SPD discusses the appearance of the space and suggests potential occupiers. It is important that there is flexibility in the design, both now and into the future, so that demands are continually met and the suggestion is that units on the ground floor have the ability to be adapted to various uses, although these should remain small as set out in the Area Action Plan. There is flexibility in the SPD to adjust the location of the square if necessary. Text has been adjusted to ensure that smaller units are not amalgamated to form larger ones where this might undermine the retail core.

There has been a suggestion that some level of parking provision is needed for the traders or entertainment providers who operate in the square if this activity is to be successful and to also minimise potential conflict with neighbouring occupants. Current policy allows for operational parking to be included.

The most popular activities for the square were seating areas and restaurants/ cafes which suggests an interactive space that enables people to meet up.

A significant portion of comments referred to the need to make the space feel inclusive to all, particularly

families with children, as well as accessible to all, such as level access for wheelchair and electric scooter users. A play area or a place which provided activities for young families were two suggestions raised on a number of occasions. These items could be explored further as any scheme comes forward. Entertainment and arts related uses of the space were also suggested. An open air theatre, outdoor winter ice-rink, and performance space were all ideas put forward as well as other spontaneous activities such as having a culture of street entertainers and buskers. The area was also seen as another good venue for an open air produce or arts market. The general impression is for a vibrant and high quality space possibly showcasing a permanent piece of modern art or visiting exhibits. The practical needs of local residents were also highlighted in the feedback and shops selling general groceries and other daily items were all seen as features that would help the area thrive.

### **5.7 Ecology**

Following comments on ecological aspects, the text has been adjusted to enable an increase in biodiversity and avoid harm to high quality habitats by carefully locating any enhanced leisure or pedestrian routes.

### **5.8 Flooding**

Flooding was raised as a concern by several individuals and organisations. The quantum of development across the West End as a whole (which includes for development at Westgate, Oxpens and all the other sites in the West End Area) was assessed by way of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as part of the Area Action Plan which was approved by the Planning Inspector. Conceptual options for addressing the flooding issues at Oxpens were set out in the Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility Study (2007), prepared by Atkins in discussion with the Environment Agency, to support the AAP. These options were reviewed as part of the SPD development process and the 'Left Bank Option' was selected for the purposes of the SPD because it was wholly contained and deliverable on the Oxpens site. As a scheme comes forward for the site a detailed flood risk assessment will be undertaken. There were no objections to the SPD from the Environment Agency.

One landowner questioned the strict need for flood remediation measures to be resolved *and delivered* prior to development of any built form since there is no risk from actual building as opposed to occupation and expressed concern that this could restrict enabling development. The SPD has therefore been adjusted to allow for a phasing plan for development and flood mitigation that would need to be agreed with the City Council in consultation with the Environment Agency before commencement of development. This provides protection yet allows for flexibility. Following comments regarding the type of flood remediation solutions possible, and the fact that the environment agency has been planning for some time to update the Oxford flood model, the text has been amended to provide both flexibility on the solutions and clarity around the essential characteristics of the development framework that should be maintained should either a different solution be possible or if flood remediation work proved not required following update of the EA model.

### **5.9 Contamination**

Additional text was added at the request of the Environment Agency. One respondent suggested that the area had been used as a 'rubbish tip' in the past but investigations and records find no evidence of this. However, some of the site area comprises made-up ground and as such it may be that residents' memories of lorries delivering 'loads' to the site were misinterpreted as being rubbish, but were in fact 'clean fill'.

### **5.10 Transport**

A few respondents were concerned about the traffic generated by any new development. Trip generation across the West End was assessed as part of the AAP. The amount of traffic generated from the Oxpens development will be quite low, with parking policies allowing for 1 space per house, no parking (other than disabled and operational) for commercial, hotel and flats. The new road through Oxpens site (Becket Street extension) will provide an alternative route for traffic heading West from the South, thus reducing traffic movements through Hollybush Row and Frideswide Square, which is being redeveloped to provide a much improved public realm. The Becket Street extension will be designed with the same public realm improvements as Oxpens Road.

The Highways agency has no concerns over the proposal. Detailed transport studies will accompany a planning application as a scheme comes forward.

### **5.11 Uses**

The uses for the Oxpens site are set out in the West End Area Action Plan. Key adjacent land owners and the majority of respondents agree with the mixed-use proposal. One organisation has suggested that the scheme should be all residential but this would be contrary to adopted policy WE20 of the AAP which requires all sites of 0.2Ha or greater to incorporate more than one use. In addition, a fully residential scheme would not achieve the same employment and economic benefits. The SPD text has been strengthened to ensure that there is no net loss of jobs as a result of the development.

Other uses suggested for the site included concert hall, swimming pool and museum. These uses are not ruled out by policy set out in the West End AAP.

Locating the train station on Oxpens has been proposed. This would be contrary to the uses for the site identified in the West End AAP and has now been ruled out as an option through the Oxford Station masterplanning process.

### **5.12 Community facilities**

One respondent raised concerns over the loss of the petrol station, Royal Mail delivery office and coach parking. The latter two of these facilities would be relocated elsewhere and the Council is working with partners to enable this. Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide a delivery office in the City. There are 7 petrol stations within 4 miles of Oxpens and the proposed new development would have small retail facilities and services.

The long term future of the ice-rink was a recurring question. The SPD takes a long term view and sets out proposals for the whole site. However, the SPD does not preclude the ice-rink either staying or being relocated at some point in the future.

### **5.13 Integration with other schemes**

Some concerns were raised about the apparent lack of an integrated transport strategy and links between the Oxpens plans and those of nearby developments at Westgate and the station. However, these plans are in fact joined up and actions have been taken to address this issue. The SPD dovetails with plans for Westgate and the emerging station masterplan.

## **6. Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation**

A Combined Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and Scoping Report was produced to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 for the Draft Oxpens Master Plan SPD.

The City Council consulted with the three statutory environmental bodies (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for 5 weeks in order to determine the level of detail of the information that must be included in the SEA Report. As well as meeting the requirements of the Regulations, the SEA Combined Screening and Scoping Report was made available alongside the draft SPD during the formal public consultation period.

The SEA Combined Screening and Scoping report identified that the Oxpens SPD is likely to add an additional level of detail to that of the AAP. However any such assessment should be proportional to the level of the plan that is being assessed. Any assessment undertaken under the SEA Regulations 12 does not rule out the need for further assessment, should it be necessary, under the EIA Regulations.

In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI 1633, the SA for the SPD underwent a 5 week consultation for the Screening and Scoping Stages. In line with the Regulations, the environmental consultees – English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England were invited to comment at this stage. The Screening and Scoping consultations were conducted simultaneously for a period of 5 weeks. We received 5 comments from on the Screening and Scoping consultation from a range of groups including the environmental consultees at the scoping and screening stages and two other local groups – Oxford Preservation Trust and SENDRA.

Between 17 June and 30 July 2013, the Environmental Report for the SPD underwent a 6 week public consultation alongside the SPD itself. This consultation invited the same group that were consulted on the SPD to comment on the SEA and included members of the public who had registered an interest in planning on our online consultation portal. In total there were four responses on the Environmental Report. There were no objections or concerns from any of the statutory agencies.

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# OXPENS

## OXFORD WEST END

Master Plan  
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)  
November 2013

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# OXPENS

## OXFORD WEST END

Master Plan  
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)  
November 2013

prepared by  
David Lock Associates  
and  
MJP Architects

on behalf of  
Oxford City Council



David Lock Associates  
Town Planning and Urban Design



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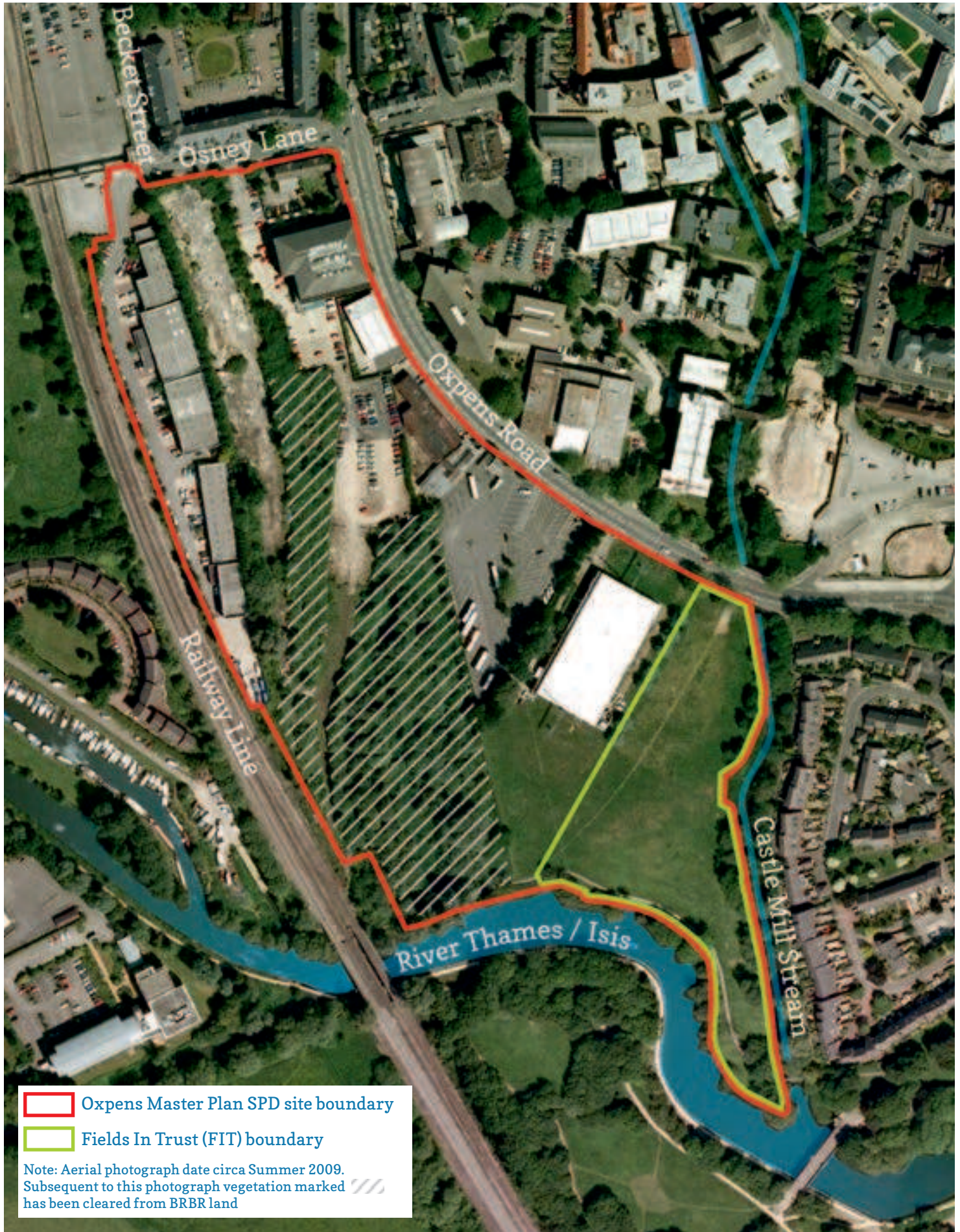


Chapter One  
INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Oxpens site represents one of the most significant development opportunities within Oxford city centre. Located in the Oxford West End, see **Figure 1.1**, close to the Railway Station, the University and the Westgate Shopping Centre (which is itself subject to major redevelopment plans) the site has potential to make a valuable contribution to the life and economy of the City through the delivery of new housing (for market sale and affordable housing), flexible office space, a hotel, local facilities and public open space.
- 1.2 Oxford City Council expects an exceptional scheme to come forward at Oxpens, one that responds to the status and ambition of the City whilst providing an exceptional local environment and embraces the principles of sustainable development. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced by Oxford City Council as a guide for future development of the land adjacent to Oxpens Road, herein known as the Oxpens site. It establishes the City Council's expectations on master planning, design quality and infrastructure requirements.
- 1.3 The SPD relates to the area of land identified in red on **Figure 1.1, Oxpens Site Plan – Aerial Photograph**. The SPD builds on the policy set out in the Oxford West End Area Action Plan (WEAAP), in particular WEAAP Volume 2 of 2, Appendices include the West End Design Code. The SPD should be read in conjunction with the WEAAP and other notable policy documentation covered in more detail in Section 2 of this report.
- 1.4 The site is currently in multiple-ownership; Oxford City Council, British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR), Milton Property Investments Ltd (the key landowner at the Oxford Business Centre) and Royal Mail each own part of the site, and there are ongoing uses including the Royal Mail Delivery Office and administrative functions, Oxford Ice Rink, a coach park, a petrol filling station, sheltered housing and a range of local businesses. The master planning work contained within this SPD has taken account of these factors.
- 1.5 There are no current plans to redevelop the Ice Rink site, and the master plan allows for the retention of the Ice Rink. The Ice Rink has been included within the Master Plan to allow comprehensive consideration of the whole of the Oxpens site. Potential phased development of the site is set out in Chapter 7, *Phasing and Delivery*.
- 1.6 In addition the site has a number of physical features which will influence the design of any future scheme. This includes areas that are subject to flood risk, railway noise and a deep inspection chamber. Oxpens Meadow includes a Fields In Trust (FIT) designation, there is no intention to develop housing on the FIT area of open space. This SPD provides guidance on how these constraints should be addressed.
- 1.7 This SPD establishes a **Development Framework** (see **Figure 6.1**) and **Illustrative Master Plan (Figure 6.3)** for the Oxpens site, with supporting design guidance in the form of illustrative Figures (plans, diagrams, illustrations and photographs) and written commentary.
  - *The Development Framework comprises a series of urban blocks that allow for flexibility in their intended use and distribution. The urban blocks allow for the phased delivery of development.*
  - *The Master Plan is Illustrative of how the urban blocks established in the Development Framework could be developed. The Master Plan is not intended to be prescriptive; rather it shows one way in which the site could be developed.*
- 1.8 The SPD will be a material consideration in determining the appropriateness of planning applications and in moving forward through to implementation. Oxford City Council strongly advise that future development proposals for the Oxpens site should be prepared in accordance with the design guidance set this Master Plan SPD, to help ensure the successful redevelopment of the Oxpens site, which in turn can act as a flagship to inspire further investment and renewal in the Oxford West End.
- 1.9 The SPD has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 1.10 The SPD has been prepared through a process involving the stakeholders (including Oxford City Council, Oxford County Council, the Environment Agency, Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxford Civic Society and SENDRA), landowners (Oxford City Council and BRBR), Officers and Members of the Council. It aims to balance the aspirations and objectives of all of these groups with acknowledged best practice principles for the design and development of sustainable, high quality places.
- 1.11 This draft report has been prepared for Oxford City Council (OCC) by David Lock Associates Limited, in association with MJP Architects, and informed by technical advice from CBRE property consultants, Atkins engineering consultants and Council officers. It has also been informed by the initial informal comments of a range of stakeholders.
- 1.12 [*Consultation has taken place and views have been taken into account in the formulation of this document as summarised under headings for stakeholder engagement and consultation in Chapter 1. This SPD was subject to formal consultation in accordance with Regulation 12 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.*]



## ROLE OF THE SPD: ESTABLISHING GOOD DESIGN & DELIVERY

1.13 This SPD sets out the minimum design standards which should be achieved to deliver the new development. Developers will be encouraged to exceed these standards where possible and will be expected to apply new standards that arise during the life of the document. The guidance given here reflects up to date best practice and design principles.

1.14 The key elements of the SPD are:

- a spatial framework plan which should form the starting point for master planning the site;
- design principles aimed at delivering a high quality scheme;
- requirements for addressing sustainable design;
- requirements relating to the scheme's delivery; and
- requirements which should be met at the detailed planning application stage and beyond to ensure adequate and consistent approaches to quality and delivery.

1.15 The SPD should be read in conjunction with other Government policy documents relating to large-scale development, sustainability, and design, in particular:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (DCLG);
- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice, (DETR and CABE);
- The Urban Design Compendium (editions 1 & 2) (Homes and Communities Agency);
- Places Streets and Movement: Better Places to Live by Design (CABE);
- The Manual for Streets (editions 1 & 2) (Chartered institution of Highways & Transportation, DfT); and
- Car parking, What works where (Design for Homes, EP);

1.16 These documents collectively promote a consensus view of good design principles which should lie at the heart of the design of the site, comprising:

- **Character** – somewhere with a sense of place, and that responds positively to the high architectural quality of the city centre as a whole;
- **Legibility** – a place which is easy to understand and navigate;
- **Permeability** – achieving a form of layout which makes for efficient pedestrian, vehicular movement and public transport provision, and ensures good connections with its surrounds;
- **An articulated townscape** – creating an interesting, contextually responsive townscape utilising building height, scale and massing, and design detail;
- **An integrated landscape** – a place which responds to its landscape setting and has a well considered urban landscape;
- **Human scale** – the arrangement of building forms which are easy for the human eye to read and provide a sense of scale and perspective;
- **Secure, natural surveillance** – creating places which are properly overlooked and make for effective passive and active policing;

- **Detailing, richness and interest** – promoting ornamentation, rhythm, consistent vernacular, richness, and intrigue to the built environment;
- **Quality within the public realm** – promoting routes and spaces which are attractive, safe and uncluttered;
- **Continuity and enclosure** – promoting the continuity of the street frontage and the definition of public and private space;
- **Adaptability, robustness and sustainability** – the layout of the site and individual buildings should reduce the use of resources and carbon impact from the design stage onwards; and
- **Diversity** – promoting diversity and choice through a mix of developments and uses, responding to local need.



Note: Image is indicative only, representing broad massing and form.

Specific details, for instance creating roofscape variety, will be developed in detailed design proposals with reference to WEEAP Appendix Design Code requirements for varied height of building lines addressing key streets.

Detailed design proposals should avoid large, flat roofed blocks and proposals should be considered in the context of the sensitivity of the city's skyline.

## STRUCTURE OF THE SPD

1.17 The remainder of this SPD covers the following content in six further sections:

- **Planning Policy Framework** (Section 2): a summary of the policy context for the SPD;
- **Site Context** (Section 3): A summary of the site location, local context, site features and opportunities;
- **Vision and Development Concept** (Section 4): A summary of the overall concept and the vision for the Oxpens site.
- **Key Design Principles** (Section 5): Statement of the key design principles that guide the development framework for the Oxpens site.
- **Oxpens Master Plan** (Section 6): Presentation of the key design guidance for the Oxpens site: illustration of master plan in the form of a Development Framework Plan that will guide all future applications for the site, accompanied by Illustrative Master Planning material showing proposals of how the site can be designed in accordance to the design principles set in the SPD.
- **Phasing & Delivery** (Section 7): Illustration of proposed indicative phasing strategy, statement of key infrastructure requirements, and management and maintenance.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 1.18 In the preparation of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD stakeholders have been consulted to further understanding of the key local issues in relation to the Oxpens study area, and the wider Oxford West End. Stakeholders consulted include:
- The Environment Agency;
  - Oxford County Council Highways Department;
  - Oxford Civic Society;
  - Oxford Preservation Trust; *and*
  - St Ebbes New Development Residents' Association (SENDRA)
- 1.19 Land owners have also been consulted in the preparation of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD including:
- BRBR;
  - Milton Property Investments Ltd;
  - Royal Mail; *and*
  - Oxford Citizens Housing Association.
- 1.20 Stakeholders were made aware of the purpose of the Oxpens SPD & Master plan. Issues and concerns raised during stakeholder discussions have informed the SPD. Relevant reports and studies that provide the design and planning policy context for the project were highlighted to stakeholders – these reports include:
- Oxford West End Area Action Plan, 2007-2016, prepared by Oxford City Council, Adopted June 2008;
  - Oxford West End Area Development Framework, prepared by David Lock Associates Limited, March 2005;
  - Oxpens Development Strategy, Final Report, prepared by CBRE, June 2010; *and*
  - Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility *Study*, prepared by Atkins, June 2007.

## Public Consultation

- 1.21 In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the SPD underwent a 6 week public consultation between 17 June and 30 July 2013. The draft document was published, advertised and made available for public comment. Statutory consultees were invited to comment. In addition an exhibition was held in St Aldates Chambers, 900 questionnaires were physically distributed to residents and businesses in the area, a further 200 questionnaires were distributed through the Customer Service Centre and around 1400 members of the public who had registered an interest in planning matters on our online consultation portal were invited to comment on the SPD. The Council received comments from 150 people or organisations.
- 1.22 In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI 1633, the SA for the SPD underwent a 5 week consultation for the Screening and Scoping Stages. In line with the Regulations, the environmental consultees – English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England were invited to comment at this stage. The Screening and Scoping consultations were conducted simultaneously for a period of 5 weeks. We received 5 comments on the Screening and Scoping consultation from a range of groups including the environmental consultees at the scoping and screening stages and two other local groups.
- 1.23 Between 17 June and 30 July 2013, the Environmental Report for the SPD underwent a 6 week public consultation alongside the SPD itself. This consultation invited the same group that were consulted on the SPD to comment on the SEA and included members of the public who had registered an interest in planning on our online consultation portal. In total there were four responses on the Environmental Report.
- 1.24 We considered all the comments and made amendments to the SPD where appropriate. The Final Public Participation Statement provides more detail on the issues raised during stakeholder engagement and the comments received during the public consultation and how they have influenced the final SPD.

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Chapter Two  
PLANNING POLICY

## 2 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 This section summarises the planning policy context of the Oxpens SPD.

2.2 The context for the master plan is set by a number of important reports including the following adopted policy documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (England), 2012;
- Oxford Core Strategy 2026, adopted 2011;
- Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy (2006-2016);
- Oxford Economic Development Strategy (2005-2020);
- Oxford West End Area Action Plan, 2007-2016, prepared by Oxford City Council, Adopted June 2008;
- Sites and Housing Plan, Development Plan Document (DPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted February 2013);
- Affordable Housing SPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted 2006;
- Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) SPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted November 2006; *and*
- Balance of Dwellings SPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted 2008.

2.3 Non-statutory context material of particular relevance for the Oxpens site includes:

- *Oxford West End Area Development Framework*, prepared by David Lock Associates Limited, March 2005;
- *Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility Study*, prepared by Atkins, June 2007; *and*
- *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council, 2010.

## Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 2.4 The SPD is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA), which is also subject to consultation. The guidance from both the European Commission and the Government indicates how local authorities can comply with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC and the subsequent "Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004" (the SEA Regulations) which amplify its operation within England. Under the SEA Regulations, local authorities must, where appropriate, carry out a SEA of land-use and spatial plans. Regulation 5 (2) of the Regulations describes that an environmental assessment should be undertaken for a plan or programme which -
- (a) *is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and*
  - (b) *sets the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC.*
- 2.5 Oxford City Council has considered whether the SPD is likely to require an SA/SEA. Taking account of its conclusion that an SEA was required for the Master Plan SPD, the Council has produced a Draft SA/SEA, which details the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the SPD and the reasonable alternatives considered, taking into account the objectives of the SPD.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Combined Screening & Scoping Report

- 2.6 Oxford City Council prepared a SEA combined screening and scoping report in April 2013:

*"1.1... to determine the need for, and consult on the scope and level of detail to be included for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations for the proposed Oxpens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).*

*1.2 The purpose of this document is twofold. Firstly to undertake a screening assessment that meets the requirements of the European Legislation, applied in the UK through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (SI No. 1633). The Regulations do not require an assessment of the planning merits of the proposals at this stage, instead the requirements is to ascertain whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. This process is completely distinct from the planning process and governed by an entirely different set of Environmental Regulations.*

*1.4 The policy framework for the Oxpens SPD is found in the Oxford Core Strategy (2011), and West End Area Action Plan (2008)."*

- 2.7 The report concluded:

*5.1...The proposed SPD will supplement existing adopted policies as set out in Appendix 1. The SPD will form part of the framework for the development for the Oxpens site. It will sit underneath the "parent" document of the West End Area Action Plan (AAP) and will become a material consideration when determining planning applications.*

*5.2...In order to supplement the policies in the AAP, the SPD must reflect and be based on the AAP policies. Any significant changes or additions to the policies in the AAP must be the subject of a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment as they would constitute a material departure from the development plan. This ensures that the SPD will comply with the European Directive.*

*5.3...This SEA Combined Screening and Scoping assessment has not been able to rule out that the SPD would give rise to any significant environmental effects. The SEA Combined Screening and Scoping*

assessment has shown that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required in relation to the following SEA Topics: Biodiversity, Water, Climatic Factors, Cultural Heritage, and Transport (Inter-relationship between Air, Climatic Factors and Material Assets) See Table 5. Therefore it is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the proposed Oxpens SPD that relates to only these SEA topics. It is considered that the rest of the topics were considered sufficiently through the Sustainability Appraisal (which includes SEA) of the West End Area Action Plan.

5.4..As this report also represents the Scoping Report, the City Council is consulting with the three statutory environmental bodies (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for 5 weeks in order to decide the level of detail of the information that must be included in the SEA Report. As well as meeting the requirements of the Regulations, this Combined Screening and Scoping Report will be made available alongside the draft SPD and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Draft SPD (programmed for June 2013).

5.5...The Oxpens SPD is likely to add an additional level of detail to that of the AAP. The SEA Guidance<sup>1</sup> states that

*“An SEA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. The Directive requires consideration of the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme, and of reasonable alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.”*

As such the assessment should be proportional to the level of the plan that is being assessed.

5.6... Any assessment undertaken under the SEA Regulations<sup>2</sup> does not rule out the need for further assessment, should it be necessary, under the EIA Regulations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ODPM, (2005), A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

<sup>3</sup> Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 SI No. 1824

Chapter Three  
SITE CONTEXT

## 3 SITE CONTEXT

3.1 This section provides a summary of the site location, local context, site features and opportunities.

### LOCATION: OXFORD WEST END CONTEXT

#### Proximity to Oxford Railway Station

- 3.2 Oxford Railway station is located to the north of the Oxpens site; its proximity is a great asset, providing excellent connections for both residential and commercial development and assisting in attracting inward investment. Direct access is via Becket Street and Oxpens Road – Holly Row, and the station is within easy walking distance. Access to the station is due to be improved further with the public realm enhancement of Frideswide Square, further information below.
- 3.3 The Railway Station and its environs may be subject to their own Supplementary Planning Document as part of master planning work jointly commissioned by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Network Rail. National level funding has been sought for infrastructure improvements in the Oxford corridor.
- 3.4 Potential changes to Becket Street (to be confirmed) are likely to include the creation of a two-way vehicular route enabled by removing on-street parking bays, which may be replaced at Osney Lane.
- 3.5 Oxfordshire County Council continues to review the transport requirements of Oxford West End in partnership with the City Council. .

#### Proximity to the heart of Oxford City Centre

- 3.6 The heart of Oxford City Centre is within walking distance of the Oxpens site. The proposed Westgate Centre redevelopment immediately to the east of Oxpens will draw the centre of gravity of the City Centre closer still to the Oxpens site, with retail and commercial activity proposed to stretch from the existing City Centre core, south towards Oxpens Road. The Oxford Castle Quarter is located between Oxpens and the heart of the City Centre and provides a strong example of recent high quality redevelopment within the Oxford West End. The presence of retail, leisure, food and drink attraction within short walking distance of the Oxpens site will increase the attraction of new development proposals for Oxpens. Currently connections for pedestrians between Oxpens and the rest of the City Centre are not as strong as they could be – see Development Principle 5 (DP5) and Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End* – and proposals across the area must seek to address this.

#### Development Schemes in the Oxford West End

- 3.7 Other key sites and development proposals in the Oxford West End include the following:
- Westgate Centre redevelopment;
  - Oxford & Cherwell Valley College site;
  - Frideswide Square redevelopment;
  - Oxford Railway Station redevelopment;
  - Oxford Railway Station Area Master Plan; *and*
  - The Magnet, Science Oxford's project to create a world-class centre for science and innovation in the Oxford West End.
- 3.8 The location of these proposals in relation to the Oxpens Master Plan site is illustrated in **Figure 3.1, Oxpens Site Location within the Oxford West End.**





## THE OXPENS SITE

### Study Area Boundary

3.9 For the purposes of the Master Plan SPD the Oxpens Site comprises the land located within the red line boundary shown in **Figure 3.2 – Oxpens Land Ownership Plan**. The site is approximately 8.3 hectares/20.5 acres.

### Site Edges

3.10 The Oxpens site is bounded by distinct edges as follows:

- **Oxpens Road, to the east:** a wide, traffic dominated inner city route which currently passes round the core of the City Centre. Currently a poor public realm experience for pedestrians and cyclists;
- **Osney Lane, to the north:** a lower order street that runs on an east west orientation, dissected by the Oxpens Road to the east and the railway line to the west;
- **Railway line, to the west:** the mainline rail route providing connections between Oxford, London (Paddington) and the South Coast;
- **Water courses to the south:** the River Thames (Isis) to the south of Oxpens Meadow, and Castle Mill Stream to the south/east.

3.11 Oxpens Road and Osney Lane – are also considered in the master plan SPD. Both routes would benefit from public realm enhancement works to transform traffic dominated roads into attractive streets that are welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists, create a better setting for development at Oxpens, and facilitate better movement between the site and the heart of the City Centre.

## LAND OWNERSHIP

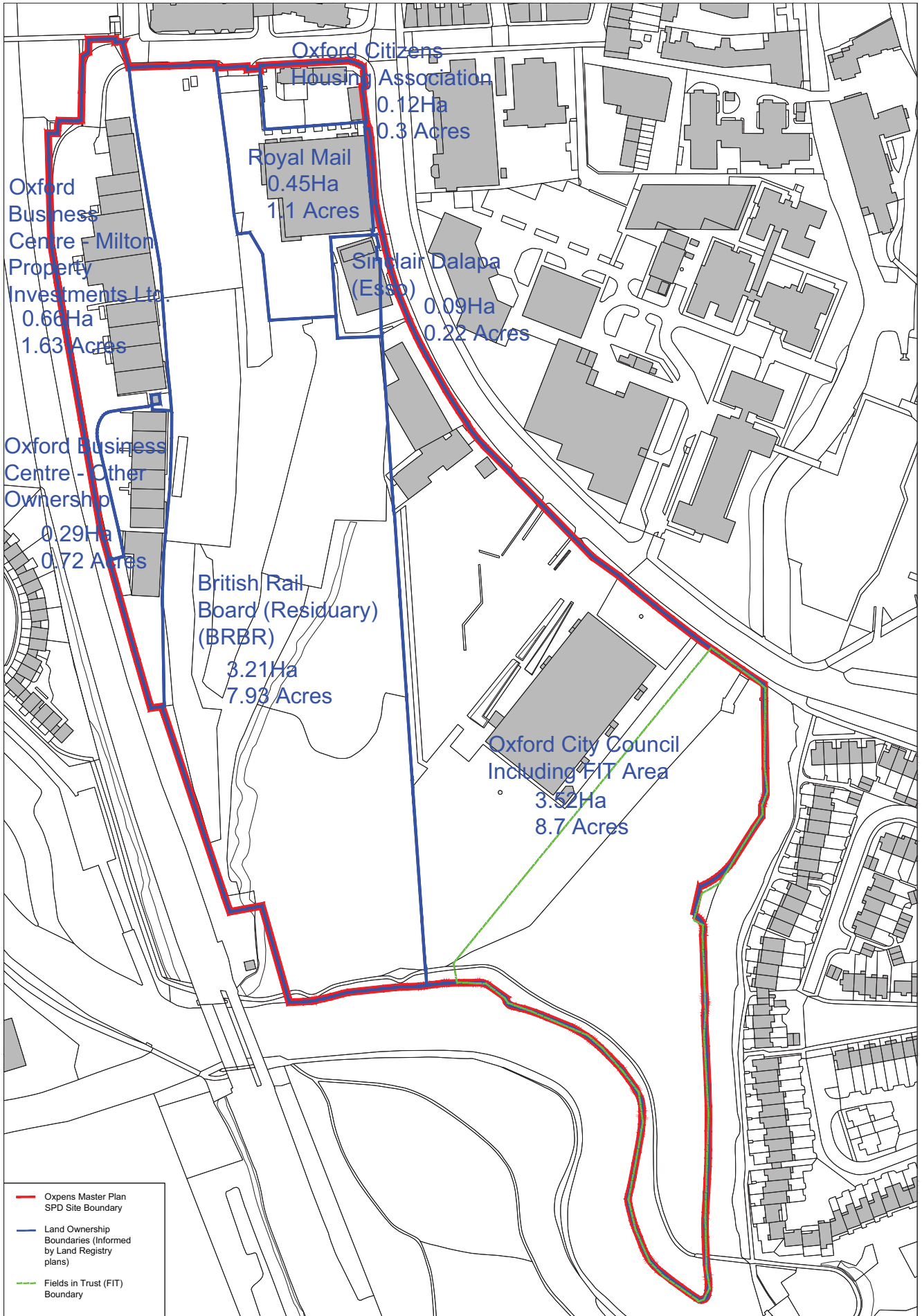
3.12 The Oxpens site is composed of six areas of different land ownership. The ownership boundaries are illustrated in **Figure 3.2 Oxpens Land Ownership Plan**. These boundaries have been informed by Land Registry information provided by Oxford City Council and BRBR.

3.13 The split of key land ownership for the Oxpens site includes land owned by the following groups:

- Oxford City Council;
- British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR);
- Milton Property Investments Ltd (the key land owner at the Oxford Business Centre);
- Royal Mail;
- Oxford Citizens Housing Association; *and*
- Sinclair Dalapa (Esso, petrol filling station).

## Comprehensive Master Plan

3.14 Oxford City Council are committed to facilitating the delivery of a comprehensive development on the Oxpens site: despite the presence of multiple land ownerships within the site Oxford City Council believe the best approach for this valuable West End opportunity site is to embrace a master plan for the entire site.



3.15 An overview of the existing land uses within each of the ownership areas is outlined as follows:

### **Oxford City Council**

3.16 Oxford City Council has the largest land holding within the Oxpens site, an area of approximately 3.5 hectares (8.7 acres).

3.17 The Oxford City Council land extends along Oxpens Road and currently includes the following land uses:

- Oxpens Meadow – green public open space, occupying the south eastern quarter of the site, adjacent the Castle Mill Stream and River Thames (Isis). A Fields In Trust (FIT) designation applies to part of the Oxpens Meadow, as illustrated in Figure 3.6.
- Oxford Ice Rink;
- Surface car park including coach parking area, public car parking and public conveniences;
- The building the currently accommodates the Lodge night club;
- The light industrial unit that currently accommodates a car repairs workshop; and
- The frontage strip between Oxpens Road and the petrol filling station (Esso).

3.18 The current coach parking is under review by Oxfordshire County Council and alternative arrangements are being considered including coach parking at the Redbridge Park & Ride site, with coach drop off in the city centre. The Oxford Transport Strategy provides further information.

### **British Railway Board (Residuary) - BRBR**

3.19 BRBR own an area of approximately 3.2 hectares (7.9 acres). This land holding is situated behind the Oxford City Council land parcel with access from Osney Lane only. It extends south the entire length of the Oxpens site, up to the edge of the River Thames (Isis).

3.20 The BRBR site has been removed from operational use and all operational infrastructure (including railway sidings) has been removed. The site has recently been cleared of vegetation and buildings by BRBR to provide a vacant site ready for future redevelopment.

3.21 There is a notable change in levels in the southern section of the BRBR land where soil has been extracted creating lower ground level. The comprehensive master plan has been prepared on the assumption that ground levels will be made consistent across land ownership to create a level platform for development.

3.22 Network Rail has a Right of Access through the BRBR land holding as illustrated in **Figure 3.7, Site Features Plan**.

### **Oxford Business Centre (Milton Property Investments Ltd, majority land owner)**

3.23 Milton Property Investments Ltd owns the freehold of the majority of the Oxford Business Centre estate and is fully engaged in the master planning process. The smaller remainder of the estate (located at the southern end of the plot) is owned by a family trust and one other owner occupier. Tenancies are all short term. The Oxford Business Centre has a site area of approximately 0.9 hectare (2.2 acres).

3.24 The Oxford Business Centre is located between the BRBR land holding and the Railway Line on the western edge of the Oxpens site. Access to the Oxford Business Centre is from Osney Lane, adjacent the junction with Becket Street.

**Royal Mail**

- 3.25 The Royal Mail occupies land measuring approximately 0.45 hectare (1.1 acres). This parcel has frontage to both Oxpens Road and Osney Lane. The main building on the site is Kings Mead House which accommodates the delivery office and administrative offices. The building is orientated to address the Oxpens Road. Vehicular access is taken from Osney Lane, with the service yard and parking located behind the building.
- 3.26 The Royal Mail currently leases an area of additional surface car parking (for staff) immediately south of their land holding from BRBR.
- 3.27 Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide an efficient mail sorting and delivery service for Oxford Council's administrative area. Relocation/reprovision of the Delivery Office to another suitable site in Oxford will be required before that site can be developed.

**Oxford Citizens Housing Association**

- 3.28 The Housing Association own small parcel of land (approximately 0.12 hectare, 0.3 acres) in an important location at the junction of Osney Lane and Oxpens Road. This site accommodates Richard Grey Court, a three storey block of flats.

**Sinclair Dalapa (Petrol Filling Station)**

- 3.29 Sinclair Dalapa owns a small site (approximately 0.09 hectare, 0.22 acres) that is currently occupied by the Esso petrol filling station. This land holding is 'land locked': set back behind the frontage strip owned by Oxford City Council to the east, with BRBR to the south and Royal Mail to the north and west.

## SITE HISTORY

3.30 Understanding the history of the Oxpens site can inform understanding of current site features. Some key issues in the recent history of the site are identified as follows and a snapshot of the previous form and function of the site is presented in **Figure 3.3, *Oxpens Historic Mapping***.

### Oxpens Meadow

3.31 Oxpens Meadow is the strongest remaining connection to pre-industrial Oxpens and the wider West End. The meandering route of the River Thames (Isis) will have been bounded by flood plain meadows prior to the expansion of the city towards the river, and the rich landscape character of the south eastern corner of the Oxpens site is a strong naturalistic link with the origin of the site.

3.32 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. Archaeological studies for evaluation, investigation and recording should be factored into the overall development plan to avoid delayed implementation of development proposals.

### Railway sidings

3.33 The historic mapping presented in **Figure 3.3** clearly illustrates the railway sidings as a dominant land use feature on the site for the majority of the twentieth century. The historic presence of railway sidings explain the shape and form of the British Rail (BRBR) land, which occurred as a result of re-profiling (see low lying area illustrated on **Figure 3.7, *Site Features Plan***). Although the railway tracks and sidings have been removed the change in levels is a distinct site feature that remains.

3.34 Railway sheds and industrial buildings are likely to have been present on the site related to the handling of goods connected to the railway line. One remaining example is the industrial unit that currently accommodates a car repair business, located between the petrol station and the coach park, on the Oxford City Council land. Hints of the old industrial character of the shed building can be glimpsed from the rear of the building.

### Residential

3.35 **Figure 3.3** illustrates the presence of previous residential accommodation in the north east corner of the site. This housing has subsequently been replaced by what is now Richard Grey Court, owned by Oxford Citizens Housing Association.

### Historic precedent issues

3.36 The site lies on the edge of the former historic suburb of St. Ebbes, whilst elements of St Thomas's suburb lie between the site and the heart of the city centre. These areas are characterised by a complex pattern of narrow streets and red brick terraced houses, interspersed with larger buildings associated with former industrial use set around courtyards and with large frontage blocks. This form can inform the design approach adopted. Further information on this issue noted in Chapter 6, Master Plan.

## West Oxford Historic Context Study

- 3.37 Further information on the historic pattern of development in the Oxford West End can be found in the **West Oxford Historic Context Study (March 2012, Oxford Archaeology)**. References of interest to the Oxpens site contained within the Context Study report relate to how districts around Oxpens have evolved. These include:

### **West Oxford Historical Overview:**

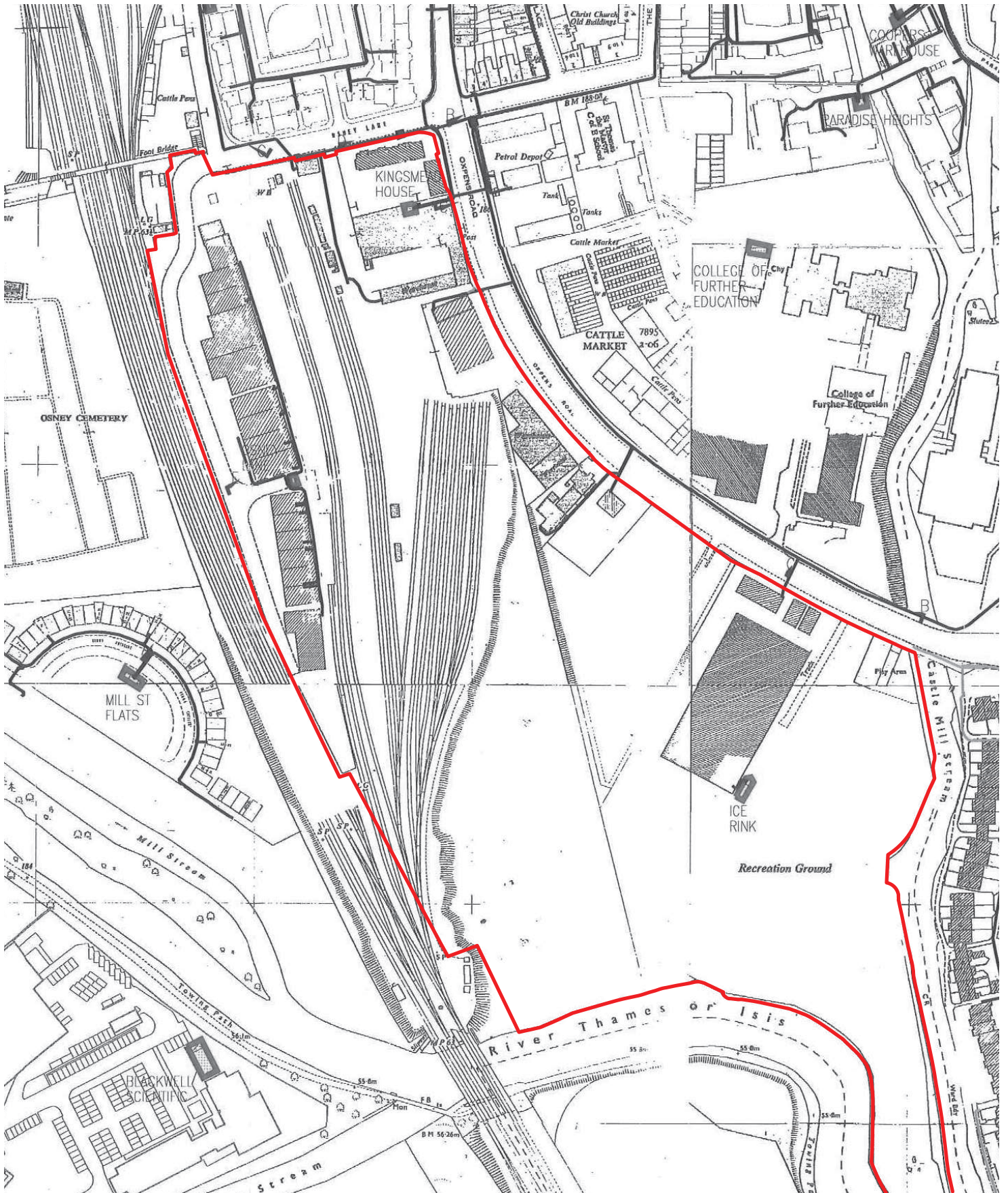
3,2,28 “The areas of older housing just outside the city centre were subject to sporadic clearance from the 1930s. St. Thomas’s lost a large part of its population as a result of slum clearance combined with commercial development: the castle mill was demolished in 1930, and Paradise Street, Tidmarsh Lane, Park End Street, and Hythe Bridge Street were given over to offices, warehouses, and garages. Beginning in the 1960s a long period of change has seen the disappearance of older housing cleared away as slum dwellings in both St Thomas’ and St Ebbe’s, the re-alignment of roads (particularly Oxpens Road) the proliferation of car-parks, the erosion of evidence for the earlier industrial and commercial activity in the area...”

- 3.38 The above extract from the *Historical Overview* identifies how land uses have changed with the loss of finer grain uses, replaced car parks and highways engineering. The extract shows the historic precedent for mixed use development with heritage of finer grain residential streets and larger plots for commercial enterprise which the Oxpens master plan could seek to replicate in a contemporary form.

### **Greyfriars and Paradise Areas of West Oxford, assessment of significance:**

**5.5.2 Community Significance:** *This area contains a number of residents in houses and apartments, in isolated islands and split from other main residential and recreational areas by the very busy Oxpens Road and large land unit car parks. Apart from Paradise Square the modern housing bears little relation to the pre-Victorian topography and the large-scale developments (plot size and mass) have overwhelmed the remaining historic features. The significance of the area is currently reduced by the delayed development and associated blight although recent redevelopment along St Ebbes has markedly improved this streetscene. Roads, car-parking, the Westgate Centre and College (OCVC) also make this a familiar area for workers. For the tourist/visitor arriving via the car parks or main coach park (Oxpens), who will mostly be unaware of the heritage of the area, the initial experience of the historic city is dismal in particular the sign-posted route to the city beneath the multi-storey car park. Approached from this low-lying area, the historic city is largely hidden from view and the road system and poor signage add to the confusion and bleakness of this major gateway to the city for many visitors. Sparse greenery is provided by churchyards/college gardens –with the exception of Paradise Square which has mature trees but with its air of neglect and reputation for anti-social use is little visited. Castle Mill Stream is screened from Oxpens Road and has an air of neglect. Oxford Preservation Trust buildings, Littlegate House and the buildings in Paradise Square offer a rare and much appreciated tangible reminder of the former character of the area the redevelopment of which was a key event in the modern history of the city. Its lost schools, pubs, work places, and shops still hold important memories and associations for many local families now living elsewhere in the city.*

- 3.39 The above extract regarding *Community Significance* further identifies a rich mixture of community land uses have largely been lost, replaced by car parks, highways engineering and island blocks of more recent residential infill development. This extract clearly states how the current Oxpens Road area presents a poor image for visitor, with a lack of clear connection to the historic city. Improving the appearance of the area with high quality urban design, architecture and public realm is an objective of the Oxpens master plan, improving connections and links to the historic city is also an important objective.





## SITE FEATURES

3.40 A comprehensive overview of the key features that affect the Oxpens site is provided in **Figure 3.7, Site Features Plan**. This plan illustrates the constraints, existing form, facilities and assets which overlap each other as is common for a brownfield development opportunity site. The most significant features are considered in turn as follows, with some illustrated in separate figures to clearly present specific issues. Key site constraints include:

- Flood risk and flood mitigation;
- Oxpens Meadow open space, including Fields In Trust (FIT) designation;
- Oxpens Road;
- Sewer Inspection Chamber;
- Utilities;
- Proximity to Rail Line – noise mitigation;
- Poor pedestrian / cycle connections;
- Network Rail Right of Access;
- Contaminated land;
- Change in Levels on boundary between BRBR & OCC land;
- Conservation Area;
- Ecological Features;
- Archaeological considerations;
- Heritage Assets; *and*
- Phasing of development in relation to ownership & land use.

### Flood Risk

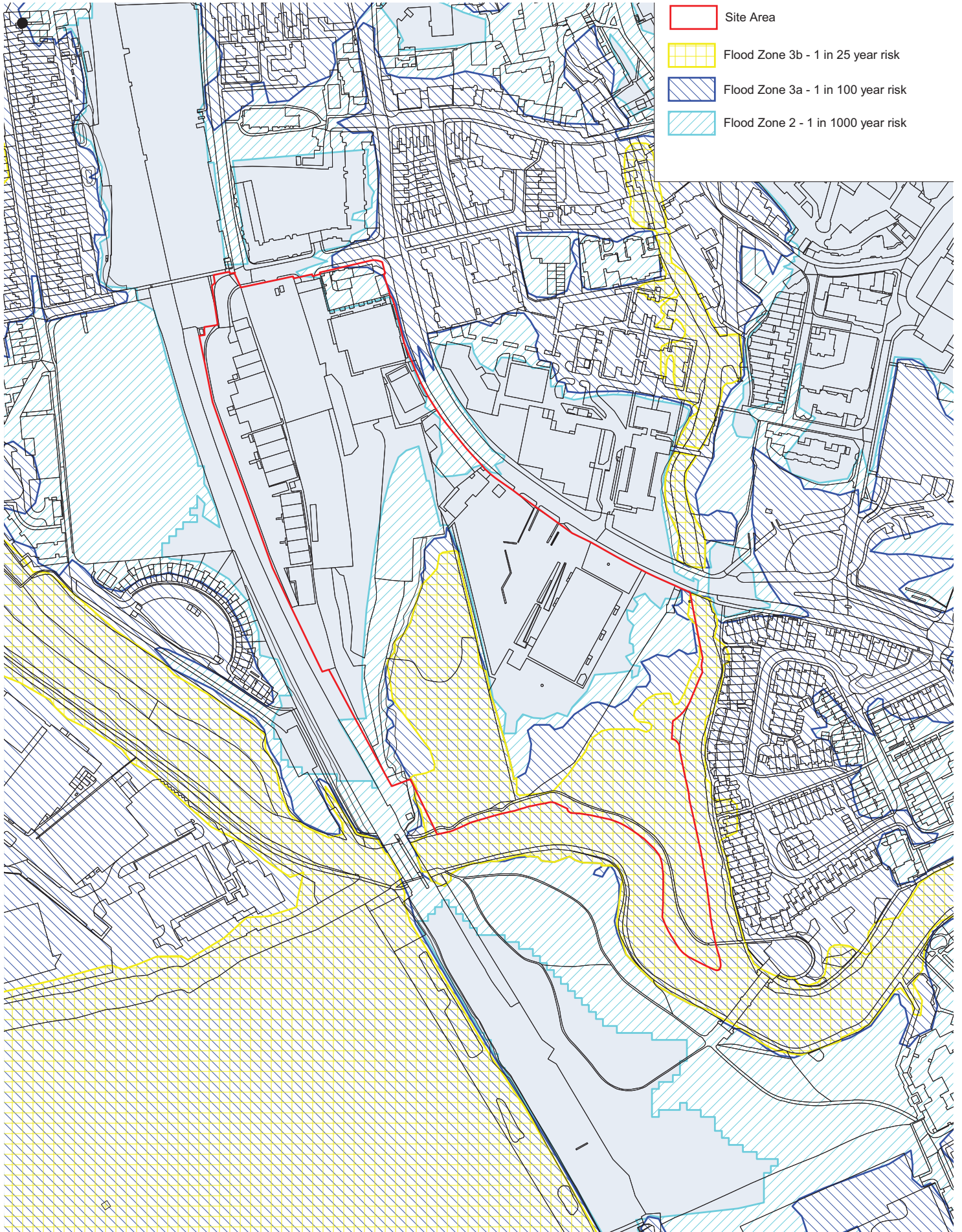
3.41 Flood risk is a significant consideration in Oxford with the River Thames (Isis), the Oxford Canal and various streams and tributaries running through the city. Large areas of the city are potentially at risk from flooding during more extreme flood events.

3.42 Oxpens, located at the junction between the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream is located in a position at potential risk from flood events. Environment Agency derived flood risk mapping is illustrated in the context of the Oxpens site in **Figure 3.4, Flood Risk, Environment Agency Flood Zones**. Areas of greatest flood risk are the lower lying land at the south of the site immediately adjacent to the water courses. Potential flood risk affects two areas in particular:

- The Oxpens Meadow open space; *and*
- The lower area of land in the southern half of the BRBR land holding.

3.43 The BRBR land is particularly susceptible to flooding as the southern portion of this land holding is considerably lower, with a retaining wall defining the boundary edge between BRBR and Oxford City Council ownership – this is illustrated in **Figure 3.7, Site Features Plan**.

3.44 In addition the Environment Agency flood zones illustrate a small area of potential flood risk in the north east corner of the site. This is only for the most extreme type of flood event (1 in 1,000 year flood risk).

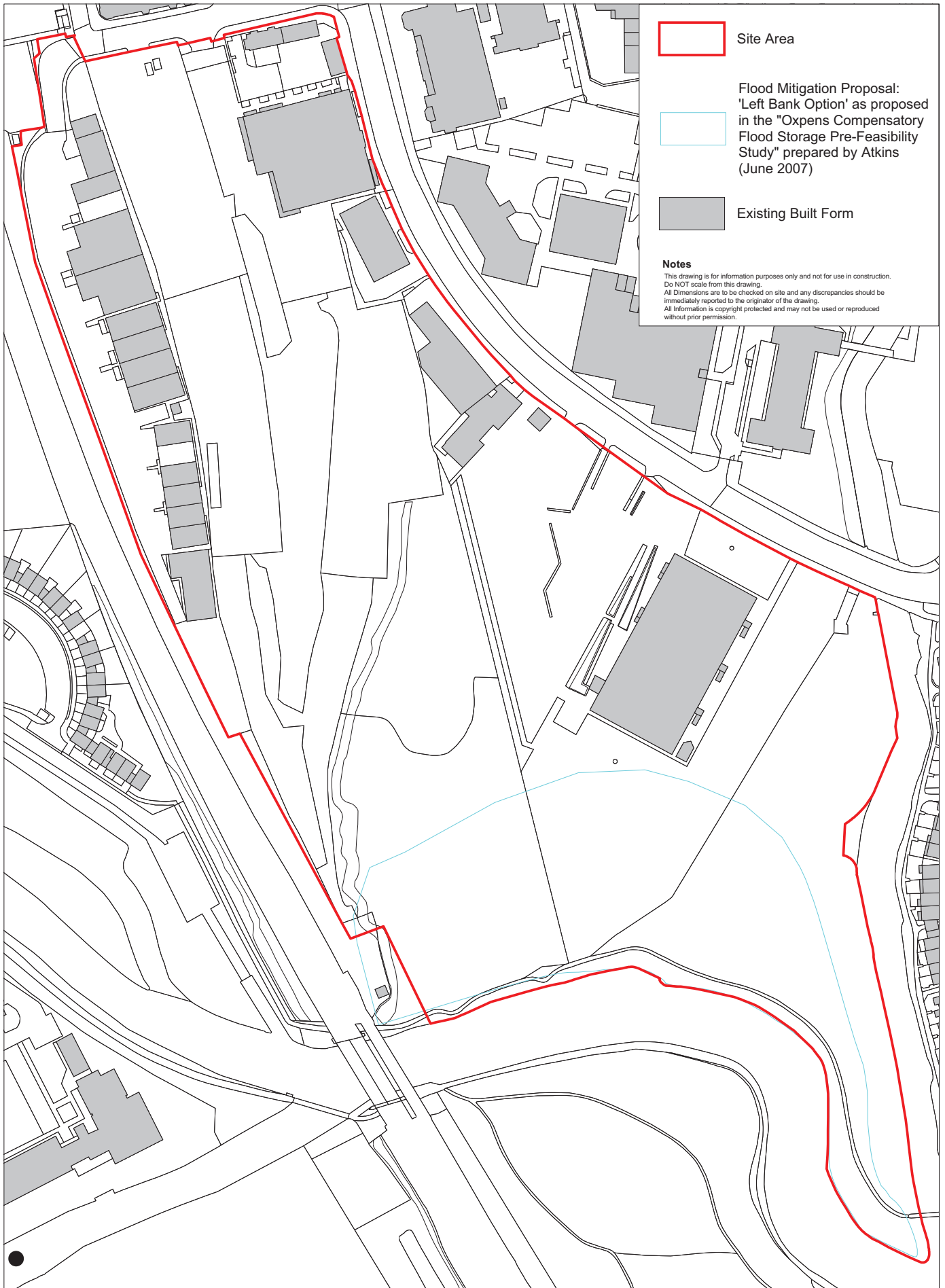


## Flood Mitigation

- 3.45 As part of the development of this SPD, all reasonable efforts (proportionate with the requirements of an SPD) have been made to fully understand flood risk issues to the Oxpens site, likely impacts to flood risk subsequent to development and, the potential need for flood risk mitigation. The flood risk analysis undertaken was based upon the best available information at the time of writing, as used by the Environment Agency to produce the published Flood Map.
- 3.46 It was identified that there are inherent uncertainties associated with current understanding of flood risk and it is not possible, therefore, to definitively report on the extent or severity of flood risk and, whether there would indeed be a need for mitigation and if so, the scale of that mitigation. A short technical note was produced to support this analysis and circulated between project partners.
- 3.47 It is recommended therefore, that a more detailed analysis of flood risk is undertaken for the site, subsequent to the publication of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD, as better information becomes available and prior to the progression of the site beyond this master plan stage. As at Autumn 2013 the Environment Agency are due to deliver an updated, and more representative, hydraulic model for the River Thames through Oxford, this model will be used to identify development impacts and appropriate mitigation measures prior to the site being taken forward. The new model may impact on the available options for handling flood storage and mitigation on the site.

### ***Identification of a flood mitigation zone to inform the master plan:***

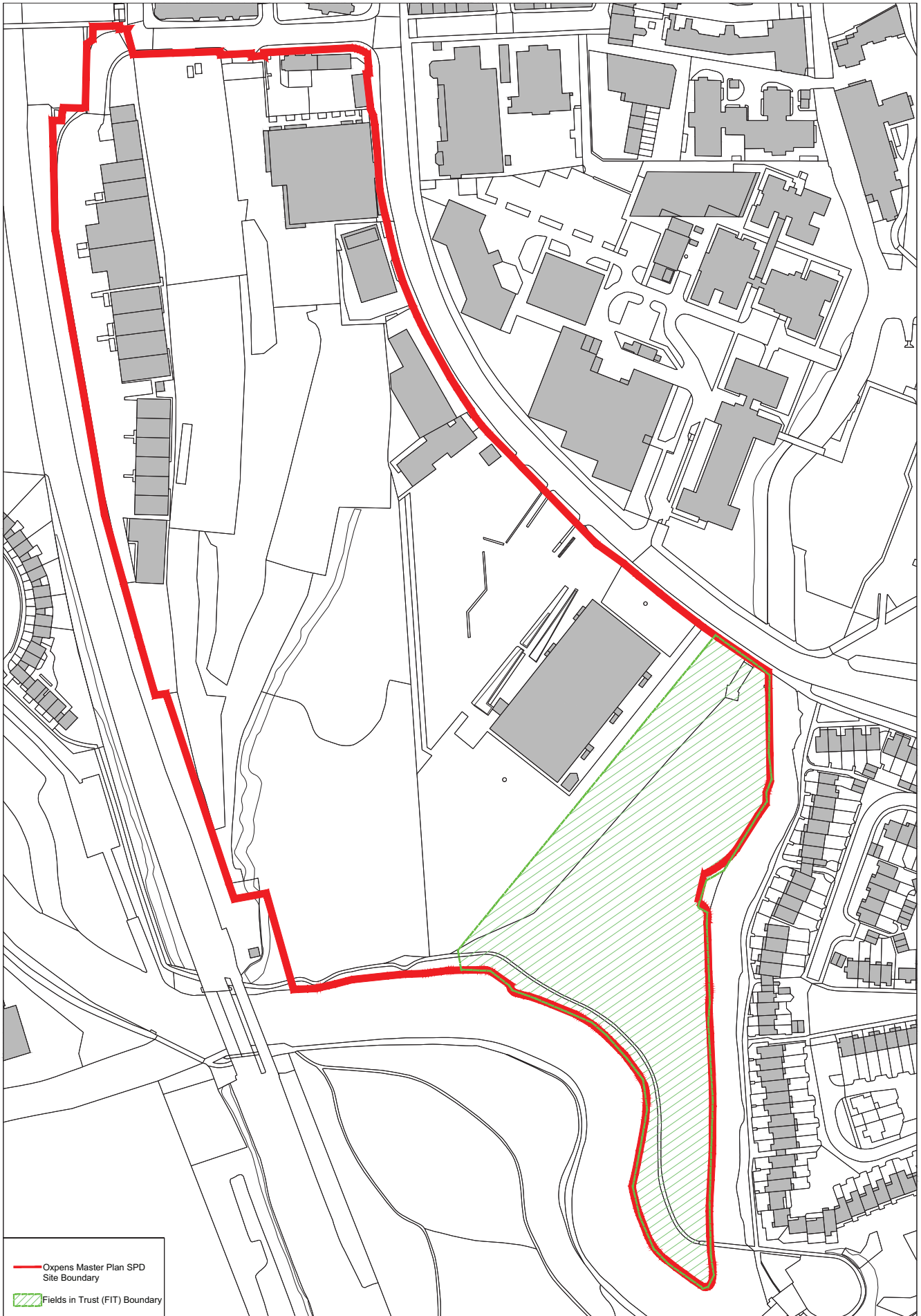
- 3.48 Oxford City Council commissioned the *Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility Study (2007)*. The report, prepared by Atkins in discussion with the Environment Agency, states that further investigations should be undertaken as plans for the site progress.
- 3.49 The study identified three potential options for flood storage / mitigation worthy of further investigation:
- *Option on the left bank only;*
  - *Option on the right bank only; and*
  - *Option considering both left and right banks.*
- 3.50 For the purposes of the SPD the preferred option is the **left bank only option**, chosen because it is wholly contained and deliverable within the Oxpens site.
- 3.51 The preferred option for flood mitigation is presented in **Figure 3.5: Flood Mitigation, Left Bank Option**.



**Oxpens Meadow open space, including Fields In Trust (FIT) designation**

- 3.52 Oxpens Meadow is a valuable area of open public amenity space and to protect this valuable landscape asset part of the meadow now has 'Fields In Trust' (FIT) status. Fields In Trust (FIT) is a nationally recognised designation to give important public open spaces a level of protection, ensuring they are protected from future development. See **Figure 3.6, Oxpens Meadow – Fields in Trust & Open Space**.
- 3.53 The Deed of Dedication (dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013) between Oxford City Council and National Playing Fields Association outlines the agreed appropriate functions of this public open space. In this respect the Fields In Trust Deed of Dedication states that the area designated as FIT should not be used:

*"3.1 ... other than as an area of public open space, for use by the public for leisure or recreational purposes and/or for the purpose of holding occasional fetes, fairs, circuses, concerts, dramatic productions, sporting events, community events and other public entertainments which may involve the erection of marquees, tents and other temporary structures or enclosures (entry to which may or may not be subject to the imposition of a charge), and which provide entry onto the property of necessary motor vehicles, provided that there shall be no more than 6 such events per calendar year (the Primary Use); such use being subject to any reasonably required flood remediation or flood prevention work;*



## Oxpens Road

- 3.54 Oxpens Road defines the eastern edge of the Oxpens site and is the primary vehicular route through the Oxford West End. The environment of Oxpens Road is currently not in keeping with the rich urban grain of the rest of Oxford City Centre: it is wide, traffic dominated and hostile to pedestrians and cyclists. Whilst its capacity must be retained, there is considerable scope to re-imagine Oxpens Roads through a combination of new development frontage and public realm works.
- 3.55 Investment in a street enhancement scheme has the potential to help attract investment and link Oxpens with new development at Westgate and Frideswide Square / Oxford Station.
- 3.56 Guidance for the re-design of Oxpens Road is set out in Chapter 5 *Design Principles* – see **Figure 5.3 Oxpens Road Frontage** and Chapter 6 *Oxpens Master Plan* - see **Figure 6.8 Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements**.

## Sewer Inspection Chamber

- 3.57 The path of an underground foul sewer runs through a section of the Oxpens site. Notably this sewer path includes a deep inspection chamber which cannot be relocated. The indicative path of the foul sewer and location of the of the sewer inspection chambers is illustrated in **Figure 3.7 Site Features**.
- 3.58 Future detailed development proposals should be informed by consultation with the relevant statutory (water) authorities to locate the exact position and depth of the sewer and inspection chamber.
- 3.59 The sewer inspection chamber is an important site feature to consider in future development proposals. Built form development should not be proposed over the location of the inspection chamber, as access is required. The SPD Master Plan proposals illustrate how this can be achieved – see illustrations in Chapter 6, Oxpens Master Plan.

## Utilities

- 3.60 Future proposals for development within Oxpens will need to consider connection to utilities infrastructure. Surveys may be required as part of any detailed design proposals and all development proposals will need to be informed by discussions with utility providers to ensure that connections to proposed development can be made to provide water, gas, electricity, sewage, telecommunications etc.
- 3.61 Any development should not be commenced until the applicant can demonstrate how and when the required waste water infrastructure will be addressed and connected. Any required sewer network upgrades should be undertaken before or in line with the development to ensure there are no problems and that the water quality of the aquatic environment is protected. Thames Water should be contacted in relation to any development proposals to discuss available capacity.

## Proximity to Rail Line – noise mitigation

- 3.62 The railway line defines the western edge of the Oxpens site. The Oxford Business Centre immediately abuts the railway line, and the BRBR area of the site neighbours a slightly widened area of Network Rail land immediately adjacent the rail line.
- 3.63 Whilst close proximity to the railway station is an opportunity for the site, as an asset that will help attract interest and inward investment to the site, the immediate proximity to the railway line is an issue that needs to be appropriately managed in future development proposals. Noise from the railway is the notable constraint which needs to be mitigated.
- 3.64 The master plan proposals set out in Chapter 6, Oxpens Master Plan illustrate how the built form can respond to this issue: primarily by delivering a form of development parallel to the railway that will protect much of the remainder of the site from excessive noise. Student accommodation is proposed for this area, although other uses including employment (e.g. research and development) or a hotel may be permissible.

### Network Rail Right of Access

- 3.65 Network Rail has a right of access through the Oxpens site from Osney Lane to ensure continued access to the network rail land. The current route of Network Rail access is illustrated in **Figure 3.7 Site Features Plan**.
- 3.66 The exact route through the site is not set, but the master plan must ensure there is a clear route from Osney Lane to the Network Rail land holding: the proposed network of connected streets advised in the Oxpens Master Plan ensures this is possible, see Chapter 6.

### Contaminated Land

- 3.67 Identified historical and current activities within the Oxpens area may have resulted in contamination. Land remediation or mitigation measures may be required. Site contamination and ground condition surveys will be required to inform any detailed design proposals. Development of the Oxpens site has the potential to facilitate the clean up of any contamination which may have resulted from various contaminating activities and past industrial heritage, providing long term benefits to the environment and protecting human health.

### Change in Levels on boundary between BRBR & Oxford City Council land

- 3.68 Land at the rear of the coach / car park is marked by a retaining wall and notable change in levels. **Figure 3.7 Site Features Plan** illustrates the location of the retaining wall and most notable step change in levels between the BRBR and Oxford City Council land holdings.
- 3.69 Land remodelling will be required to facilitate the comprehensive planning and development of the site.

### Conservation Areas

- 3.70 The Oxpens site forms part of the setting of both the city's Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area, notably in longer range views of the city and views from Osney Cemetery. The impact of development on the Conservation Areas' setting is both a constraint and an opportunity and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

### Ecological Features

- 3.71 Oxpens Meadow is the greatest existing landscape feature, mostly comprising open, short mown grassland with trees and other vegetation along the waterside edges to the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream.
- 3.72 Aerial photography including Figure 1.1, Oxpens Site Plan – *Aerial Photograph* has illustrated trees within the central section of the site, within the BRBR land. The majority of these trees and vegetation have been cleared since the photograph was taken, creating a predominantly vacant development plot.
- 3.73 Smaller areas of tree planting exist along some site boundaries including:
- The eastern edge of the Oxford Business Centre, screening the site from adjacent sites;
  - Some trees adjacent Oxpens Road;
  - Both long edges of the Oxford Ice Rink plot – screening to the current coach & public parking area on one side and a more formal row of trees along the edge adjacent to Oxpens Meadow open space.
- 3.74 Where possible the existing trees to the edge of Oxpens Road and the edge of the Ice Rink addressing Oxpens Meadow should be retained. Trees and vegetation along the waterside edges to the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should be retained where possible, although this will be subject to detailed design considerations in the re-profiling of Oxpens Meadow to accommodate flood mitigation.
- 3.75 Further details regarding ecological features in the Oxford West End are presented in ecological studies and previous SEA for the WEAAP.
- 3.76 Appropriate ecological assessments will be required to inform and support future development proposals, for instance arboriculture surveys.



## Archaeological Considerations

- 3.77 The site has potential archaeological remains of the medieval abbey and Civil War defensive works (including Hart's Sconce), which are likely to be of 'at least' local significance, but possibly of greater significance depending on their nature, condition and extent. Development proposals should be informed by the results of archaeological evaluation undertaken to a brief agreed by the City's Archaeologist prior to the submission of a planning application.
- 3.78 The character, extent and state of preservation of any remains associated with Hart's Civil War Sconce is currently poorly understood as the site has not previously been investigated. If remains are present and well preserved, they may be of national significance and, therefore, should be preserved in-situ within the development. This would require reconsideration of the location of flood mitigation measures. Archaeological evaluation will be required to demonstrate whether any remains of Osney Abbey are present within the development site. Should important remains be present then the development should aim, as far as is practical and in line with existing policy, to preserve these in situ by means of adaptive design. Should remains of lesser significance be identified then it will be necessary to ensure these are appropriately investigated and recorded prior to the commencement of development.
- 3.79 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording could delay implementation of development proposals if not factored into the overall development plan.
- 3.80 A desk based assessment has identified the potential for the presence of archaeological remains associated with agricultural use of the area in the past including the potential for waterlogged remains associated with drainage ditches running across this low-lying area and including potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval period use of the area. Development will need to be preceded by further investigation of the area's archaeological potential to be guided by discussion with the City's archaeological advisor.

## Heritage Assets

- 3.81 Heritage Officers have not yet undertaken an assessment of what up-standing heritage remains within the site. Whilst much of the railway sidings landscape has been cleared of historic features, any small structures that survive and illustrate previous land uses could be retained within large development to help to retain a sense of connection with the past as well as adding detail and interest. Such buildings should be identified at an early stage and consideration given to how they may be put to beneficial use within the new development.

## Poor pedestrian / cycle connections

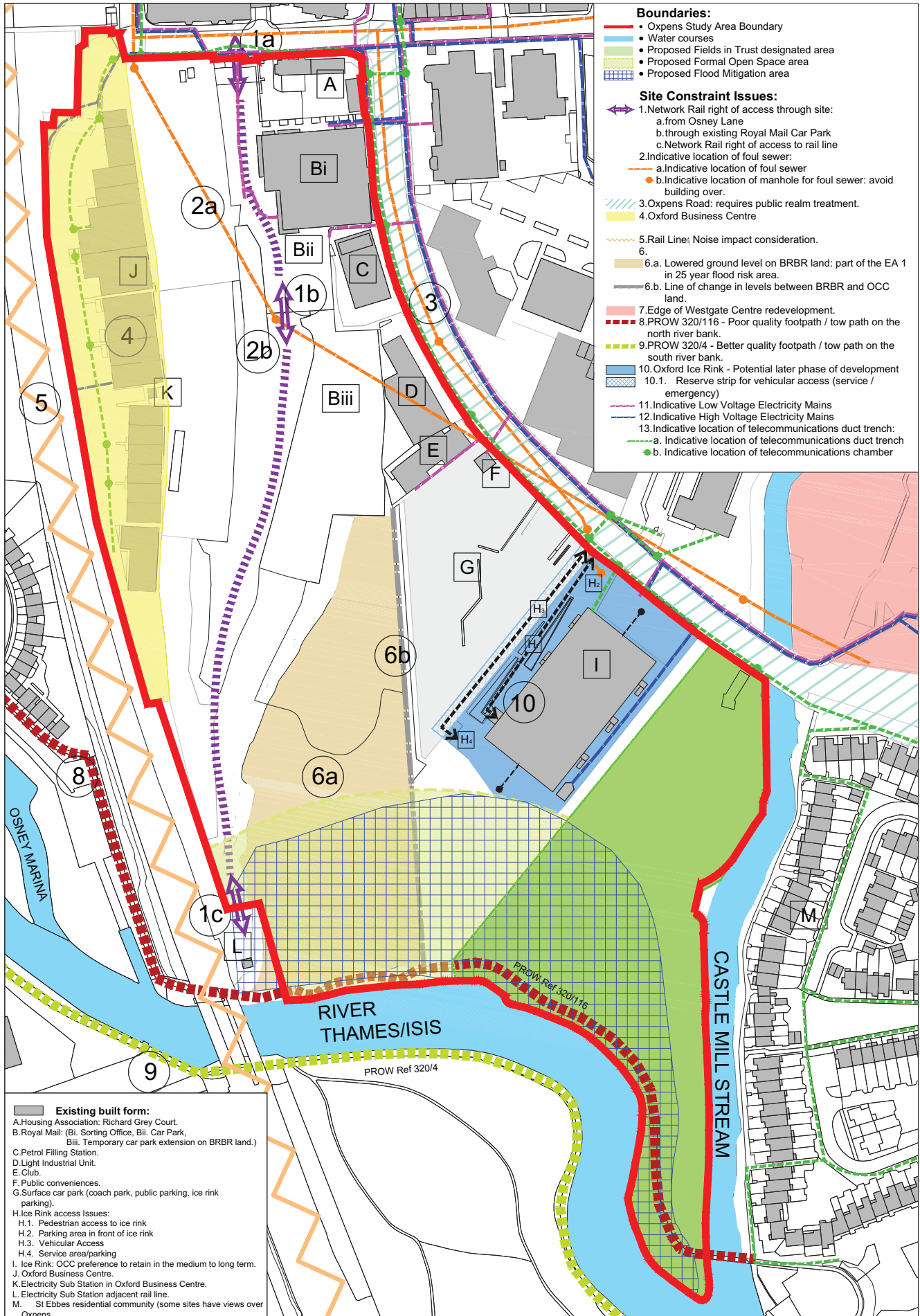
- 3.82 Pedestrian and cycle access to and through the Oxpens site is currently limited, and access is a significant consideration for the site. A full assessment of access and connections between Oxpens and the wider Oxford West End is presented in the Accessibility Study that accompanies the Master Plan SPD.
- 3.83 Please see Development Principle 5 (DP5) and Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End* for further details of this site feature. This Figure (5.4) identifies current access connections (good and bad) and makes proposals for improvements.

## Phasing of development in relation to ownership & land use

- 3.84 The pattern of land ownership within the Oxpens site (as illustrated in **Figure 3.2 Land Ownership Plan**) will impact on the longer term phasing of development. Proposed phasing strategies are set out in further detail in Chapter 7 *Delivery*.

## Illustration of Site Features

- 3.85 Further illustration of Oxpens site features is presented in **Figure 3.8, Site Features Photographs**.





Osney Lane - Oxpens Road junction



Light industrial unit fronting Oxpens Road



Petrol Station & Royal Mail



Oxford Business Centre



Royal Mail & Housing Association



Oxford Business Centre



BRBR site change in levels in cleared site



Poor quality riverside path (railway bridge over Thames)



Coach Station & Oxpens Road



Oxpens Meadow



Ice Rink



Network Rail adjacent land



College site poor frontage to Oxpens Road

## SITE OPPORTUNITIES

3.86 Important opportunities at Oxpens are illustrated in **Figure 3.9, *Site Opportunities Plan*** and **Figure 3.10, *Site Opportunities Photographs***. These include:

- River Frontage;
- Oxpens Meadow as an attractive setting for development;
- Opportunity to improve connections;
- Opportunity to improve Oxpens Road;
- Opportunity to deliver a city centre housing;
- Opportunity to deliver business accommodation to support economic development; and
- Opportunity to deliver further complimentary land uses to generate investment and activity.

### River Frontage

3.87 The Oxpens site benefits from frontage to the River Thames (Isis) to the south and the Castle Mill Stream to the east. The SPD Master Plan seeks to illustrate how views to the waterways can be enhanced to maximise benefit for the proposed development.

### Oxpens Meadow as an attractive setting for development

3.88 The Oxpens Meadow is a significant area of public open space, one of few located in relatively close proximity to the heart of the city centre. As such this site feature is an asset not just for Oxpens but for the wider Oxford West End and the city centre. The area known as Oxpens Meadow is proposed to be retained as public open space.

3.89 The Meadow will create an attractive setting for the development. It could provide space for informal recreation and play, as well as scope for programmed outdoor events.

### Opportunity to improve connections

3.90 The comprehensive master planning of the Oxpens site should improve connections through the whole site, enabling better public access through the West End and in particular to Oxpens Meadow and the river frontage. Opportunities for improving connections are illustrated in further detail in **Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End***.

### Opportunity to improve existing streets

3.91 The master plan also highlights the opportunity to enhance the public realm along Osney Lane and Oxpens Road. Proposals should seek to improve connectivity across the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists. Further detail of potential improvements to Oxpens Road are presented in:

- Chapter 5 *Design Principles* – see **Figure 5.3 *Oxpens Road Frontage***;
- Chapter 5 *Design Principles* – see **Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End***.
- Chapter 6 *Oxpens Master Plan* - see **Figure 6.8 *Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements***;

**Opportunity to deliver a city centre housing**

3.92 The Oxpens site is the largest single redevelopment site identified in the Oxford West End AAP. It offers a unique opportunity to accommodate a range of appropriate land uses. Oxford City Council have identified the need to provide further city centre housing to support the needs of existing and new residents, and to ensure sufficient housing stock is available to support on-going economic development in the city. Oxford City Council require a balanced development to be delivered, with an appropriate proportion of the scheme is for residential houses, not just apartments.

**Opportunity to deliver further complimentary land uses to generate investment and activity**

3.93 The site is large enough to accommodate a range of land uses which will generate activity on the site at different times of day. Land uses should add to the rich mix of uses within the city centre as well as increasing opportunities for employment and economic activity.

**Illustration of Site Opportunities**

3.94 See **Figure 3.9, Site Opportunities Plan** and **Figure 3.10, Site Opportunities Photographs**.





Accomodate new business



Deliver a range of housing



Improve pedestrian access in currently fenced site



Potential for events on the meadow



Riverside location



Generate activity



Opportunity to improve Oxpens Road public realm



Oxpens Meadow setting



Deliver a range of housing and amenity space

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Chapter Four  
VISION AND  
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

## 4 VISION

### OXPENS VISION STATEMENT

4.1 The vision for the Oxpens development is encapsulated in the following statement:

**4.2 *The Oxpens site should be developed in a comprehensive manner to deliver maximum benefit and a fully integrated scheme that properly responds to its surroundings, enhancing connections to the wider Oxford West End.***

**4.3 *The Oxpens site should be developed in an effective and efficient way that maximises the use of the land and promotes the principle of sustainable development. Redevelopment should positively integrate Oxpens with its surroundings and realises the benefits that greater linkages can bring to the wider renaissance of the West End***

**4.4 *Development at Oxpens should be of high architectural design quality, to attract investment and raise aspirations in the Oxford West End. The development at Oxpens will set the high standard for architecture, public realm and landscape design in the Oxford West End.***

**4.5 *Development should protect, enhance and positively address Oxpens Meadow (including the FIT designation), the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream.***

**4.6 *Master plan proposals should address Oxpens Road and seek to enhance the quality of public realm for all.***

**4.7 *Residential development should include a balance of family housing with gardens and apartments with outdoor amenity space.***

**4.8 *Space for business should be accommodated in the form of offices and research & development premises. Educational uses, such as a business school, may also be accommodated to build upon the established success of nearby educational institutions.***

**4.9 *Complimentary land uses including hotel(s), retail, food, drink and professional services should be located in the most visible locations on Oxpens Road and set around a new public square. Such uses will create activity at different times of the day, enlivening this part of Oxford, creating the right conditions for appropriate city diversity.***

**4.10 *The palette of materials should carefully reflect the colours and materials commonly found in the city centre, with core materials used consistently across the site helping to establish a common identity and character.***

4.11 Visualisation of the form of development at Oxpens as proposed in the Master Plan is presented in:

- **Figure 1.2, *Oxpens Visualisation – Master Plan Scheme facing north over Oxpens Meadow***; and
- **Figure 4.1, *Oxpens Visualisation – Master Plan Scheme view facing south***.



Note: Image is indicative only, representing broad massing and form.

Specific details, for instance creating roofscape variety, will be developed in detailed design proposals with reference to WEEAP Appendix Design Code requirements for varied height of building lines addressing key streets.

Detailed design proposals should avoid large, flat roofed blocks and proposals should be considered in the context of the sensitivity of the city's skyline.

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Chapter Five  
KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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## 5 OXPENS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Oxpens Master Plan Design Principles (DP) include:

- **DP1: A High Quality Development**
- **DP2: Maximising the Value of the Site**
- **DP3: A Sustainable Scheme**
- **DP4: Addressing Oxpens Road**
- **DP5: Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End**
- **DP6: High Quality Public Realm: Streets and Spaces**
- **DP7: Enhancing Oxpens Meadow**
- **DP8: Relationship to the River**
- **DP9: Appropriate Land Use Mix**
- **DP10: Generating Activity**
- **DP11: Coherent character**
- **DP12: Phasing**

### OXPENS & WEAAP DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.2 The design principles for Oxpens reflect and expand on the design principles set out in the West End AAP. The WEAAP headline principles for the whole Oxford West End are listed in the table below.

5.3 For reference these overarching WEAAP principles are set out against the design principles (DP's) that are specific for the Oxpens site:

<b>Principles for the Oxford West End, Set out in WEAAP Volume 1</b>	<b>Oxpens Design Principles</b>
An attractive network of streets and spaces	DP1, DP4, DP5, DP6
A high quality built environment	DP1, DP2, DP6, DP11
A strong and balanced community	DP2, DP9, DP10
A vibrant and successful West End	DP9, DP10, DP11
Delivery and implementation	DP2, DP9, DP12

5.4 The Oxpens Design Principles are presented as follows:

**DP1: A HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.5 The highest quality of development should be sought for the Oxpens site. Delivery of a high standard of design in architecture, public realm and landscape will set the standard for subsequent development on other opportunity sites in the Oxford West End.
- 5.6 As stated in AAP Policy WE 12 high quality architecture will be expected in all new development. It should be demonstrated in planning applications that buildings are designed to be flexible and long lasting.
- 5.7 High quality design is essential to attract investment in the Oxpens site and the wider Oxford West End and help to lever land values that are sufficient to ensure viability. Attractive contemporary building design will be an important factor in attracting investment in residential, business and commercial land uses within the site.
- 5.8 New built form and public realm should respond positively to the high architectural quality of the city centre as a whole. The development should enhance views of Oxford from the railway line.
- 5.9 Contemporary architecture and design should be encouraged so that the development is 'of its time' and not a pastiche of past eras.
- 5.10 Material and colour palette choice is important and should reflect the local context sensitively. Use of a limited number of core materials is an important requirement to ensure that the scheme reads as one, and has a common identity which will contribute to the generation of a sense of place.
- 5.11 See **Figure 5.1, High Quality Development - Precedent Photographs**





High quality apartments



High quality landscaping



Business and innovation



Contemporary townhouses



Events in public open space



Blocks with high quality public realm



Contemporary office opportunities



Mixed use buildings with strong street frontage, especially at Oxpens Road

**DP2: MAXIMISING THE VALUE AND POTENTIAL OF THE SITE**

- 5.12 Oxford City Council and associated land owners want to maximise the value of the site by seeking to exploit its full potential with the best quality scheme. Viability is key to delivery and to ensure the redevelopment of Oxpens is viable the site should seek to delivery the maximum number of residential units and commercial floorspace whilst following the guidance set in the Master Plan SPD to ensure the design of an appropriate form of development.
- 5.13 Development proposals should configure an efficient form of development that responds to site features whilst also maximising development yield contributions to fund public improvements - notably improvements to Oxpens Road and improving connections, for instance a new foot/cycle bridge crossing of the River Thames (Isis).
- 5.14 Whilst seeking to maximise floorspace an appropriate balance of land uses should be sought. Policy WE15 requires 50% of homes to be houses. Residential development should be balanced between family houses and apartments, although the precise implications for viability will need to be considered and discussed at detailed stages of design.

**DP3: A SUSTAINABLE SCHEME**

- 5.15 Oxpens should showcase best practice in sustainable development. Sustainability should be integrated throughout the development proposals, not bolted on as an optional extra. Sustainability embraces the physical development, social interactions and economic opportunities. Sustainable design should include reference to:
- Managing water and flood risk;
  - Improving connections;
  - Sustainable building design;
  - Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS);
  - Sustainable energy, including a potential CHP Energy Centre which could be one way to help a development scheme to achieve the 20% of energy from on-site renewable energy, in line with Policies WE13 and CS9.;
  - Promoting bio-diversity, particularly by protecting and enhancing ecological assets in Oxpens Meadow;
  - Sustaining the significance of the city's renowned historic environment;
  - Providing city centre housing;
  - Integrating movement options (car clubs, cycle facilities);
  - Creating employment opportunities;
  - Supporting the vitality of the wider Oxford West End and City Centre;
  - Facilitating the remediation of any contaminated ground; *and*
  - Facilitating recycling and composting.
- 5.16 Themes of sustainability are explored in further detail in Chapter 6, Master Plan under the section *Integrating Sustainability*.
- 5.17 Illustration of potential sustainable design solutions and issues that could be integrated into the Oxpens scheme is presented in **Figure 5.2, A Sustainable Scheme - Precedent Photographs**.



Oxpens Meadow multi-functional – flood mitigation, events, open space



Proximity to Oxford City Centre



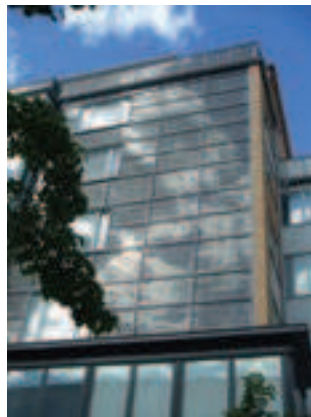
Proximity to Oxford Railway Station



Pedestrian and cycle routes



Bus route spine



PV cells on building facade



Cycle parking at key entrance points



Family housing with gardens



Cycle parking integrated into block design



Water management in urban context

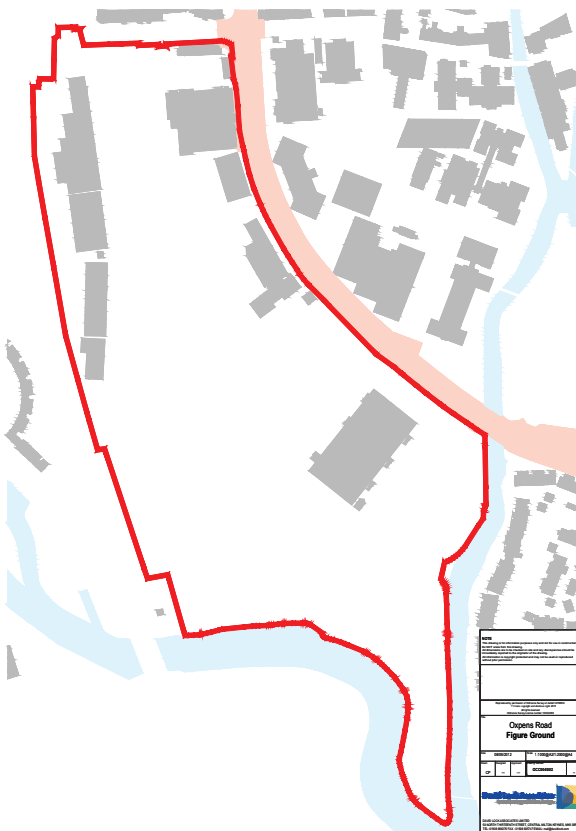


Electric car charging points

**DP4: ADDRESSING OXPENS ROAD**

- 5.18 Development will be orientated to address Oxpens Road with a mix of land uses capable of generating activity and visual interest.
- Oxpens Road's frontage should be designed in accordance with the adopted Design Codes that form part of the AAP.
  - Frontages could reflect the scale and massing of buildings on streets including Park End Street and South Parks Road, with a series of prestigious buildings designed to catch the eye through use of refined architectural detailing and using a similar palette of materials to provide a sense of unity. The choice of materials could reference those used on other streets of similar status within the city (see Cooper's Marmalade Factory and the Cantay Depository on Park End Street).
  - Within the frontage blocks defined in the masterplan, frontages should be broken up to provide a succession of buildings of a vertical proportion with the width being perceived as being less than the height of the building and active ground floor frontages to create an active and human-scale streetscene.
- 5.19 A **consistent building line / building set back from Oxpens Road** is important to ensure different buildings have a common form and presence to the street. Currently Oxpens Road lacks any form of unity and cohesion in built form that addresses it, which perpetuates the sense of a wide, uninviting route as opposed to an attractive civilised street.
- 5.20 Ground floors in buildings and blocks fronting Oxpens Road should incorporate taller floor to ceiling heights to provide maximum flexibility to accommodate a range of land uses and activities. The WEAAP Appendices Design Code specifies a ground floor height of 3.5m for this purpose.
- 5.21 A comprehensive scheme of public realm improvements is required to enhance the quality of Oxpens Road, improving the physical form and function of the street, and improving access and experience for pedestrians and cyclists. This should be agreed with Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority. The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*.
- 5.22 The design of the street surface and the selection of materials should promote easier pedestrian movement across Oxpens Road, and should draw people into the site at key locations, including Oxpens Square.
- 5.23 **Street trees** are an important landscape design feature for the public realm and should be incorporated to line the route of Oxpens Road. Street trees can help to frame the space within the street corridor, and soften the urban environment, enhancing the appearance and 'experience' of the street. Given the wide scale of Oxpens Road large street trees should be specified to provide a foil to the large scale and massing of building frontages.
- 5.24 An extension to Becket Street will create a new route through the site and an alternative route for traffic within the West End, reducing vehicular flow on Oxpens Road, which in turn should help improve conditions for pedestrian and cyclist crossing and links to the wider area. This proposal is reliant upon a feasible solution for the existing Becket Street being confirmed but is likely to include the creation of a two-way vehicular route with current on-street parking potentially to be relocated from Becket Street to Osney Lane.
- 5.25 See **Figure 5.3, Oxpens Road Frontage**

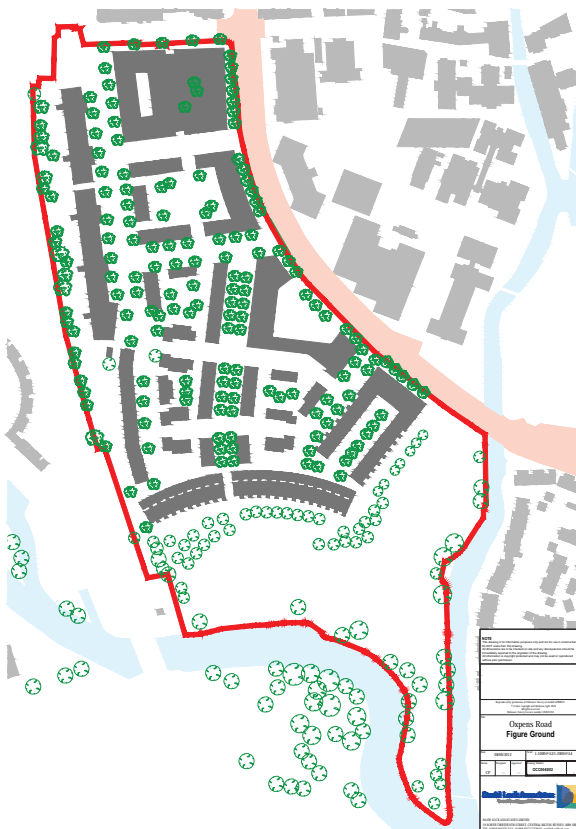
## EXISTING OXPENS ROAD FRONTAGE



- Street lacks enclosure
- Wide carriageway
- Inconsistent building line
- Traffic dominated, poor pedestrian environment



## PROPOSED OXPENS ROAD FRONTAGE



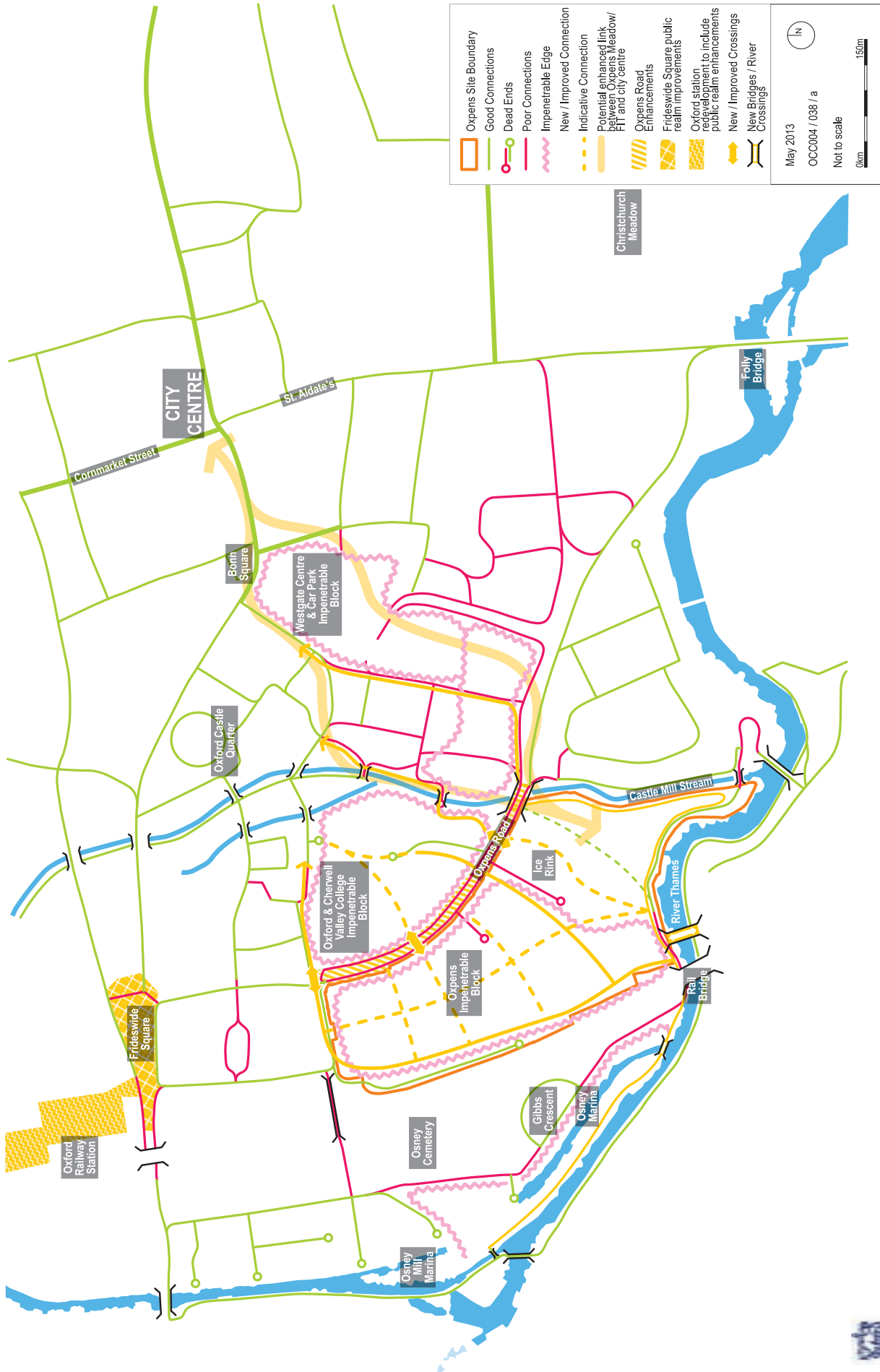
- Street enclosed with mixed use buildings
- Continuous building line / set back
- Street trees and wide pavements
- Enhanced experience for pedestrians and cyclists



**DP5: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE OXFORD WEST END**

- 5.26 The SPD Master Plan illustrates how the site should be structured to create **a network of connected streets and spaces**, to enhance legibility and improve access for pedestrians and cycles.
- 5.27 In addition to maximising access through a grid of streets, access should also be improved to and through Oxpens Meadow with the creation of **leisure routes** for cycling and walking, towards and along the water front of the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream.
- 5.28 The principle of improving access and connections should be continued from within the Oxpens site to extend to enhancing links to, and through, the wider Oxford West End, and onward to the heart of the City Centre.
- 5.29 Public transport access through the site may be required, and the SPD Master Plan indicates where the highway specification and geometry should be designed to facilitate this. The County and City Council's objectives are to ensure that the street network within Oxpens is an integral part of the wider City network, and has inherent flexibility in response to changing travel demands over time. The variety of movement routes are illustrated in the master plan drawings presented in **Figure 6.1, Development Framework Plan** and **Figure 6.6 Street Hierarchy**.
- 5.30 A **new foot/cycle bridge** crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably to the Grandpont Nature reserve, and residential areas further up/down-stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Master Plan. The exact location of the bridge is to be determined and the Environment Agency must be consulted on its design.
- 5.31 Public Realm enhancements to Oxpens Road (see Design Principle 2) are central to improving accessibility, but the site should also be laid out to respond to related development opportunities and sites in the Oxford West End as illustrated in **Figure 5.4, Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End Diagram**.
- 5.32 An improved connection for pedestrians and cyclists should be provided from the riverside (and potential bridge crossing), across Oxpens Meadow and Oxpens Road, connecting north through the wider Oxford West End to link to the heart of the City Centre.
- 5.33 Walking and cycling links through to the wider Oxford West End will be enhanced by improved crossing points along Oxpens Road, improving access between Oxpens and important local features including the Westgate Centre, the Castle, Castle Mill Stream, and proposed attractions including the Magnet.

INDICATIVE IMPROVED CONNECTIONS



OXPENS SPD AND MASTER PLAN

David Lock Associates  
Town Planning and Urban Design



**DP6: HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM: STREETS AND SPACES**

- 5.34 In line with the West End AAP Design Code the design of the public realm should be given the high priority and designs should be of high quality to create attractive streets and spaces as a setting for the new development.
- 5.35 A **consistent palette of high quality street surfacing materials, street furniture, street trees** and other landscape features should be applied to all streets and spaces to ensure continuity in design and appearance. This is crucial to create unified sense of place, and aid orientation.
- 5.36 The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*.
- 5.37 The **Oxpens Square** will be a new civic space of exceptional quality located in the heart of the Oxpens development. The Square should have a direct relationship with Oxpens Road, positioned adjacent to the main route, and united in design with use of a common palette of surfacing materials, street furniture and landscaping.
- 5.38 To soften the transition from the rural character space of Oxpens Meadow to the more built-up urban spaces of the new development, tree planting could include street trees and trees as part of landscaping for individual developments that provide foliage that spills through the building line into the streetscene. Examples of this effect are seen in many streets in Oxford, reflecting the presence of college gardens with mature planting. The West End Design Code provides further details of suitable species and factors to influence the choices of tree planting. Choices of architecture, materials and landscaping could seek to provide a natural city edge frontage overlooking green space. The Georgian and Victorian townhouse frontages of London Place, overlooking South Park, could be used as a precedent in the city to inspire design but this does not imply a restriction of architectural idiom to neo-vernacular design. The promotion of good contemporary architecture is established in the West End Area Action Plan.
- 5.39 See **Figure 5.5, High Quality Public Realm – Precedent Photographs**





Main public square with mixed use frontages



Active buildings and streets



Green open spaces around larger blocks (e.g. student accommodation)



Public spaces within blocks



Water management rill in streetscape



Wider pavements will spill out space on main streets



Public Square activity



Street trees line key routes and spaces



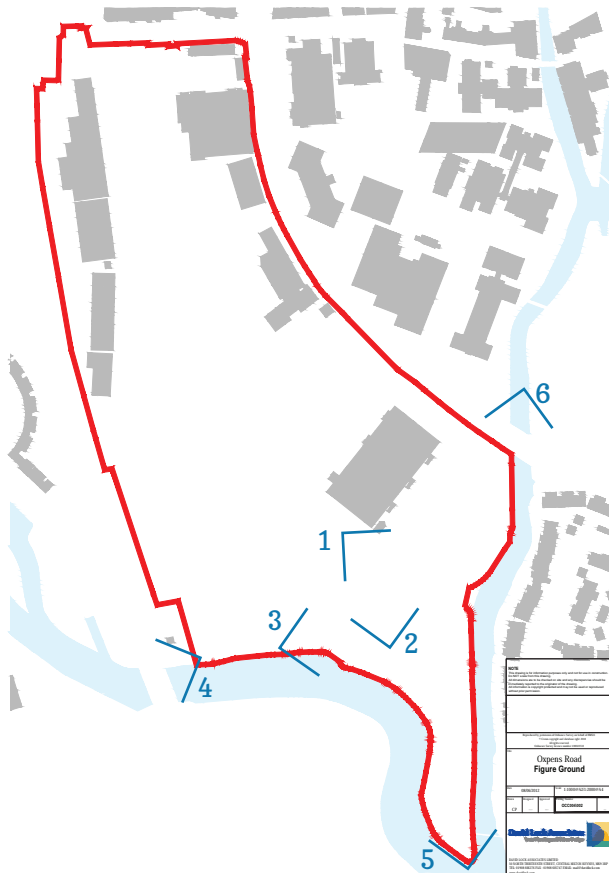
Landscaped streets and amenity spaces

**DP7: ENHANCING OXPENS MEADOW**

- 5.40 Oxpens Meadow will be retained as public open space in proposals for the future of the site. The majority of Oxpens Meadow has a Fields in Trust (FIT) designation and this area may be supplemented by further public open space adjacent the River Thames (Isis) that can be created as part of a flood mitigation solution. The need to integrate a flood mitigation solution with the redevelopment of Oxpens provides the opportunity to enhance the form of Oxpens Meadow to create an attractive public open space that can accommodate a range of activities including outdoor events and performances. Reshaping land as part of flood mitigation work may create landforms that can provide scope for sitting and overlooking performance areas. This idea promotes the concept of Oxpens Meadow as a multi-function space. Other solutions may be possible and Oxpens Meadow provides an exciting opportunity to engage with local stakeholders to design a space which serves the needs of the wider community, both existing and future local residents.
- 5.41 A landscape scheme which supports informal recreation and organised activities is required as part of a planning application. Built structures may be able to be incorporated into Oxpens Meadow or the proposed adjacent open space next to the River Thames (Isis) for example, scope may exist for a free standing pavilion building to accommodate A3 uses (café or restaurant), and for a platform or hard-surfaced area to allow performances. Structures proposed within the FIT area will be subject to the agreement of Fields in Trust and Oxford City Council, in line with the FIT deed of dedication.
- 5.42 Policy H9 of the Sites and Housing Plan requires all developments of 20 dwellings or more will be required to provide a minimum of 10% of the total site area as public open space. The proposals as presented in the *Illustrative Master Plan* show that this target can be achieved in the additional proposed open space adjacent the FIT area and the River Thames (Isis). Further public open space will include the Oxpens public square.
- 5.43 Enhancement of public open space should include provision for measures to discourage the use of areas under the railway bridge for anti-social behaviour.

**DP8: RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIVER**

- 5.44 The issue of flood risk should be considered and scheme design must incorporate appropriate flood mitigation proposals. Oxpens Meadow and proposed adjacent open space could be re-profiled to create land form terracing around a landscaped flood attenuation area that is capable of accommodating excess water from the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream should more extreme flood events occur. The design of the flood mitigation scheme should accommodate other landscape and land use aspirations – see Design Principle 7: *Enhancing Oxpens Meadow*.
- 5.45 A phasing plan for development and flood mitigation will need to be agreed by the City Council in consultation with the Environment Agency before commencement of development.
- 5.46 Proposals should maximise the opportunity of the river frontage to River Thames (Isis) and the Castle Mill Stream. Development should be **orientated to ensure streets, spaces and buildings have views across the open space, towards the waterfront**. This will help to create an attractive setting for the public open space, whilst maximising the value of the built form.
- 5.47 See **Figure 5.6, Oxpens Waterside Frontage**



1 Oxpens Meadow facing toward the River Thames/Isis



2 Oxpens Meadow with Ice Rink



3 Oxpens Meadow, River Thames/Isis footpath



4 River Thames/Isis under railway bridge



5 River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream



6 Castle Mill Stream

**DP9: APPROPRIATE LAND USE MIX**

5.48 Oxpens should accommodate an appropriate mixture of land uses, with a preference to accommodate land uses listed as follows in this Design Principle. The Master Plan Development Framework presented in Chapter 6 establishes a clear structure of urban blocks that have the flexibility to accommodate a range of land uses:

- Residential (houses and apartments);
- Employment (offices, research & development);
- Hotel;
- A1 – A5 Land Uses (retail, food, drink, professional services);
- Student Accommodation;
- Educational Uses;
- Retirement Accommodation;
- Café (Oxpens Meadow attraction); *and*
- A potential Energy Centre.

5.49 Appropriate land uses are illustrated in **Figure 5.7, *Appropriate Land Uses – Precedent Photographs***.

**DP10: GENERATING ACTIVITY**

5.50 Oxpens is currently lacking in activity, aside from vehicular movements through the Oxpens Road. A key design principle of the SPD is to design a place with an appropriate balance of land uses that can attract interest and generate activity. Residential and employment uses are central to achieving this objective.

5.51 The design of high quality streets and spaces is important to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists feel welcome and are encouraged to move freely through Oxpens. All buildings should be accessed from the street to maximise on-street activity.

5.52 Buildings that front the public square and Oxpens Road should have flexible ground floors that can accommodate a range of land uses. Retail units and eating and drinking establishments would be particularly appropriate at the ground floor around Oxpens Square and Oxpens Road, encouraging activity in the public realm, and benefiting from high visibility and passing trade to support business growth.

5.53 The redevelopment of Oxpens can support cultural activity through the provision of high quality public open spaces including a new civic space and the enhanced Oxpens Meadow. The proposals for Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space (see Oxpens Meadow landscape design proposals in Chapter 6) include space for community events and the potential to accommodate performance space, possibly with an amphitheatre.



Mixed use block with ground floor activity



Business opportunities



Cafes & restaurants around square



Family housing with gardens



Apartments - residents, students or retirement



Business incubator space and education uses



Mixed use blocks



Hotel



Housing with amenity space



Student accommodation



Office and R&D



Cafe restaurant in open space

**DP11: COHERENT CHARACTER**

5.54 The design of Oxpens should foster a sense of place and character. This can be facilitated by:

- A consistent and constrained material and colour palette for all built form which reflects the local context;
- Consistent material and colour palette for the public realm, streets and spaces (in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*);
- New built form and public realm should respond positively to the high architectural quality of the city centre as a whole;
- Boundary edges for private amenity space facing the public realm should be defined as per the guidance established in the WEAAP Appendices Design Code;
- Consistent specification of a limited palette of landscape features, especially street tree species;
- A uniform palette of street furniture and lighting;
- Using streets of similar function in adjoining character areas, to provide a precedent for the scale and role of buildings to create a legible hierarchy of streets forming coherent character areas;
- The hierarchy of streets in the new development reflecting the variation in street patterns in St Thomas' in particular to benefit from the potential to create links with existing areas of high quality historic and modern townscape. Street design is covered in more detail in the West End Design Code;
- Oxpens Road's character reflecting the broad width, strong enclosure and large building scale and pattern of Park End Street and Frideswide Square to which it is well connected with the buildings providing a series of landmark frontages to arrest the attention, allowing considerable potential for variety in detailing, but sharing a common scale. (Mixed -use main street in West End AAP);
- Residential lower order streets reflecting a more organic character of space and building reflecting the character of St Thomas Street or the denser developments of residential streets that characterised the later expansion of Oxford in the 19th and 20th century. Using more muted architectural detail and a limited palette of materials so that buildings contribute as groups with occasional stand out buildings providing focal features would also help create a coherent character. Redevelopment at Littlegate Street provides suitable models of good practice; *and*
- Repeated use of roofline features to support the rhythm created in frontages. Variation in detailing between streets could be included to avoid creating a monotonous street scene, whilst occasional gaps in the frontage are necessary to allow greenery to spill through the street. The Christ Church Old Buildings at Osney Lane provide a precedent for adding detail to larger residential blocks.

5.55 Establishing a clear identity for development is important to help attract inward investment and to ensure that new and existing residents and visitors can understand the place and orientate themselves.

5.56 See **Figure 5.8, Character – Precedent Photographs**



Integration of locally relevant features - e.g. cycle storage



Consistent material palette unifies the whole



Considered choice of brick and edging



Boundary walls in consistent material to define edges



Contemporary design in consistent material and colour palette



Oxford West End precedents – Woodins Way



Local material choice



Locally relevant material and colour palette



Amenity space integrated into built form

**DP12: PHASING**

- 5.57 Development proposals for the Oxpens site should take account of the potential need to phase development in stages.
- 5.58 The SPD Master Plan as presented in Chapter 6 presents a comprehensive development proposal for the site. The Master Plan illustrations show the site in fully developed form, but the arrangement of blocks, streets and spaces has been carefully considered to ensure that the site could be delivered as separate phases. The Oxford Business Centre site could be delivered alongside the core development area, but the master plan retains flexibility.
- 5.59 Phasing is considered in more detail in Chapter 7, *Phasing & Delivery*.



Chapter Six  
EXPENSES MASTER PLAN

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## 6 OXPENS MASTER PLAN

- 6.1 This chapter presents the SPD Master Plan for Oxpens. The Master Plan establishes a framework of design guidance for the Oxpens site. Oxford City Council strongly encourages future detailed design proposals for the development of Oxpens to adhere to the master plan design guidance.
- 6.2 The Master Plan comprises two key drawings:
- **Development Framework Plan (see Figure 6.1); and**
  - **Illustrative Master Plan (see Figure 6.3).**
- 6.3 These plans are supported by with a series of interpretive plans and illustrations, presented in subsequent figures.

## EXPENS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

- 6.4 The Development Framework Plan presented in **Figure 6.1** sets a clear design framework, comprising a series of urban blocks that allow for flexibility in their intended use and distribution, and phased delivery of development.
- 6.5 The Development Framework Plan illustrates core Master Plan design guidance for Oxpens that Oxford City Council strongly favour: all planning applications are expected to be in conformity with this plan. If flood mitigation measures are not needed in due course then the framework may evolve but the essential characteristics of the design approach must be retained – a series of urban blocks with riverside park area responding to the site's location and reflecting important heritage aspects of the city. There is flexibility in the framework and creative solutions for flooding that do not compromise the integrity of this approach are welcomed.
- 6.6 This technical plan is supported by a series of plans and diagrams, presented in subsequent figures.
- 6.7 The Development Framework Plan is informed by site constraints and uses the design principles to identify a range of physical elements that are seen as critical to the successful design co-ordination and comprehensive redevelopment of Oxpens, including:

### Access Requirements:

- Points of access (main and minor);
- Oxpens Road (including area for focus of public realm improvements);
- The alignment of the primary route and lower order streets;
- Local side streets junctions with the primary street;
- Footway / cycleway / leisure routes; *and*
- Network Rail access.

### Built Form Requirements:

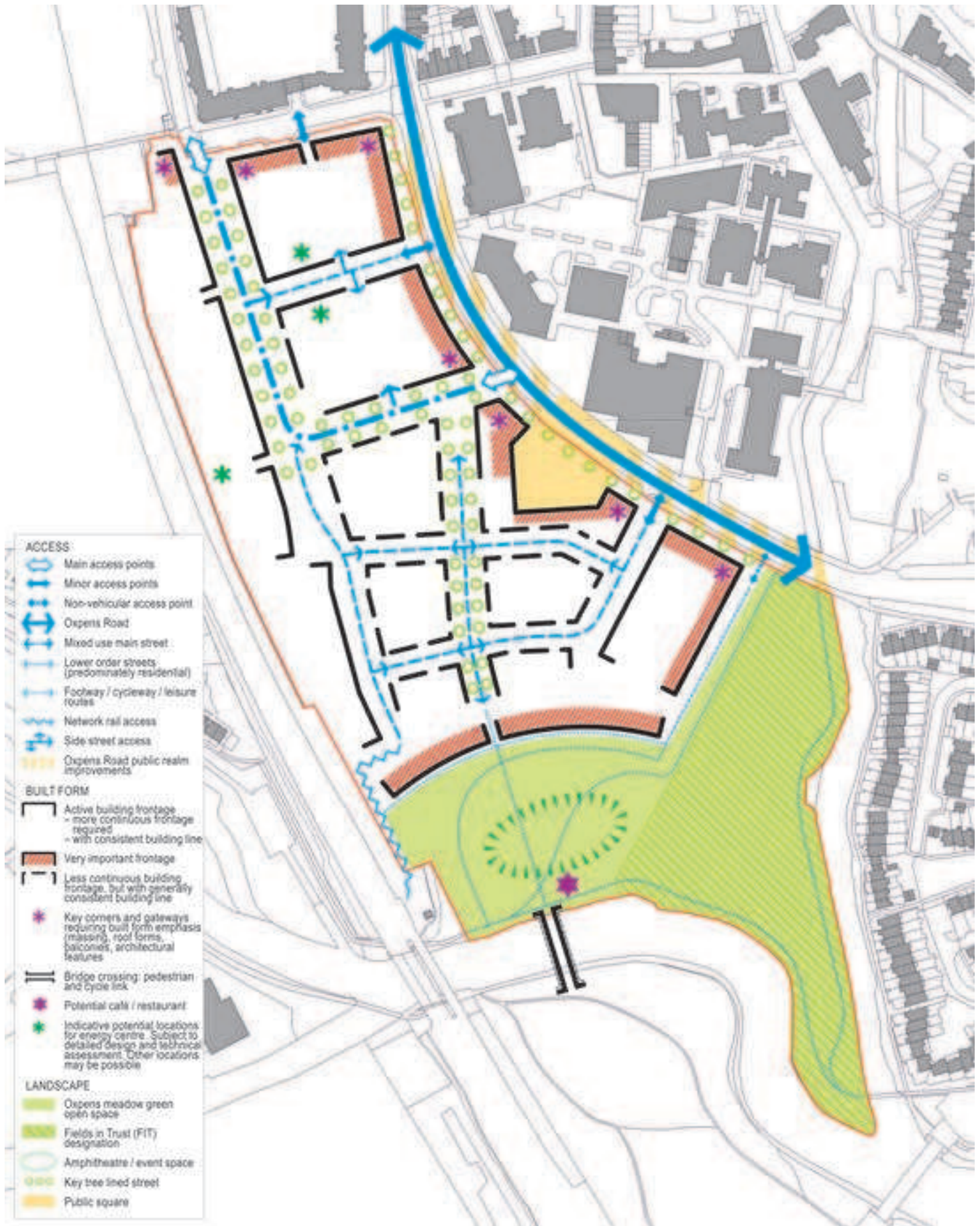
- Areas where a more continuous built frontage is required;
- Locations of the most important building frontage;
- Areas where a less continuous building line is required;
- Building frontage lines illustrate locations where *active frontages* are required (i.e. building frontages with activity-generating fenestration, front doors and windows);
- Location for a potential foot / cycle bridge crossing; *and*
- Location for a potential café / restaurant.
- Potential locations for an Energy Centre, other suitable locations may also exist, all subject to detail design testing.

### Landscape Requirements:

- Public open space to the south of the site (Oxpens Meadow and proposed adjacent open space);
- Area of Fields in Trust designation;
- Location for potential amphitheatre / event space;
- Key routes that require trees to line the street;
- Public square; *and*
- Locations for shared surface treatment of minor public spaces / crossovers.

### Urban Blocks and Urban Grain:

- 6.8 Informed by the issues listed above the Development Framework establishes a clear network of urban blocks that are proportioned to accommodate a range of potential land uses.
- 6.9 The urban grain varies with slightly larger urban blocks on the main street frontages to Oxpens Road and Osney Lane, a finer grain of streets and development blocks within the central core of the Oxpens site.
- 6.10 This approach has local precedent in the historic urban morphology of St. Ebbes and St Thomas's that have presented patterns of narrow streets of housing, interspersed with larger buildings associated with non-residential uses, as noted in *Site History*.
- 6.11 See **Figure 6.1, Development Framework Plan**



## POSSIBLE LAND USES

- 6.12 Land uses that are appropriate for the Oxpens site are presented in **Figure 6.2, Possible Land Uses Plan**. This plan identifies where **the land uses could be located within the site** - in relation to each other, public spaces, site features, constraints and local context.

### Residential (houses and apartments)

- 6.13 Residential development should aim to be equally balanced between housing and apartments.
- 6.14 In line with the Oxford West End AAP Affordable Housing policy (WE16) 50% of the residential development should be affordable housing (comprising 80% social rented and 20% shared ownership).
- 6.15 All homes must have access to an area of private amenity space: houses should have gardens, and apartments should have access to private balconies and/or communal gardens.
- 6.16 The Possible Land Uses Plan illustrates how residential development can largely be accommodated across the site, with the exceptions of the north east corner which is a valuable location for commercial development, and the site of the Oxpens Business Centre which has the greatest proximity to the railway line (noise mitigation measures required) and has the potential to accommodate other land uses, most notably student accommodation.

### Employment: Offices, Research & Development

- 6.17 Opportunities for business, including offices and accommodation for Research and Development, should be provided within the Oxpens site to help create a mixed development with a balance of activities and land uses, complementing other core uses.
- 6.18 The WEAAP identifies B1 Offices as a potential appropriate land use for the Oxpens site and encourages Research & Development space.
- 6.19 Office buildings can be either 'stand alone' office buildings or blocks, or office floorspace may be provided as individual storeys / floors, within mixed use blocks. Research and development floorspace is a priority land use and again could be provided in individual block form, or as part of larger mixed use building. The central location of the site enables walking distance relationships between off-shoot businesses at Oxpens and central hubs of activity in the Colleges and City Centre.
- 6.20 Key locations for new office and research and development floorspace are identified as:
- the Oxpens Road frontage;
  - the junction of Oxpens Road / Osney Lane; and
  - fronting the public square.
- 6.21 Policy CS28 *Employment Sites* safeguards key protected employment sites as shown on the Oxford Policies Map 2013 (formally known as the Proposals Map). Although no key protected employment sites are designated within Oxpens there are existing employment plots within the site (including Royal Mail, and light industrial units fronting Oxpens Road). The Master Plan proposes redevelopment of these existing plots. Proposed new uses include new employment floorspace, retail, hotel and R&D uses, ensuring continued presence of employment activity. Although the existing employment space may be replaced in a different location, the objective is to have no net loss of employment at Oxpens, some of which could be provided by non-B uses. Policy CS28 includes statement that: *"Planning permission will only be granted for the modernisation and regeneration of any employment site if it can be demonstrated that new development:*
- *secures or creates employment important to Oxford's local workforce; and*
  - *allows for higher-density development that seeks to make the best and most efficient use of land; and*
  - *does not cause unacceptable environmental intrusion or nuisance."*
- The master plan proposals align with these statements, creating opportunities for employment in a higher density form of development as part of a comprehensive mixed use scheme for Oxpens.

6.22 Policy SR.7 (Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016) requires provision of public open space as part of new business, commercial and institutional developments:

*“On large-scale business, commercial and institutional developments the City Council will seek the provision of suitable public open space to serve the recreational needs of employees, customers and hospital patients/visitors where:*

- a. there is a shortage of public open space in the vicinity; or*
- b. the development would create a significant additional need for public open space.*

*Where appropriate, as part of major new commercial developments, the City Council will seek contributions for the provision, or enhancement, of public squares which will be secured by planning obligations.*

*Developers will be asked to secure adequate maintenance of new areas of public open space where appropriate.”*

6.23 A new public square is proposed as part of the Oxpens master plan scheme and the enhancement of Oxpens Meadow (areas within and outside of the FIT designation) will provide a significant area of public open space for use by the new Oxpens community including residents, employees and visitors.

### **Hotel**

6.24 The SPD Master Plan includes provision for at least one hotel.

6.25 The preference for the Oxpens site is for a hotel graded as preferably 4 or 5 star to bring a high quality offer to the site. This preference is in line with the WEAAP which includes policy WE26 as follows under hotel accommodation: *“...Planning permission will be granted for a new 4 or 5 star hotel on the Oxpens site.”*

6.26 The WEAAP also permits the inclusion of a flexible conference centre facility.

6.27 The Illustrative Master Plan tested the potential to accommodate a 150 bedroom hotel and conference facility.

6.28 Appropriate locations for the hotel are on the most prominent corners of the site to maximise visibility and attract trade and investment. Key locations for a hotel include:

- The junction of Oxpens Road / Osney Lane; *and*
- The northern edge of the site, opposite Beckett Street.
- It may be possible to explore potential to accommodate the hotel in relation to the public square.

### **A1 – A5 Land Uses (retail, food, drink, professional services)**

6.29 A mixture of A1-A5 land uses could be accommodated in the ground floor of the mixed use buildings that front Oxpens Road and the Oxpens Public Square. These land uses should be located on this street frontage to maximise visibility to passing trade and thus attract business. Positioning this potential mixture of finer grain land uses on Oxpens Road and around the square will help to generate activity and interest on the street and in the new civic spaces.

6.30 The Oxpens site is outside of the Oxford City Centre primary shopping frontage and therefore retail floorspace will be restricted to smaller units which should not be amalgamated to create larger units if this would undermine the retail core.

### **Student Accommodation**

6.31 Student housing is a relevant land use given the location of the site on the edge of the city centre, close to University colleges and campuses.

6.32 The site of the Oxford Business Centre is a suitable location for the provision of student accommodation. The scale and massing of the proposed student accommodation blocks can provide a visual screen and acoustic buffer between the railway line and the rest of the Oxpens site. Other land uses may also be appropriate including employment (e.g. research & development) or a hotel.

- 6.33 A high standard of design will be required for the student blocks as they are proposed for a prominent edge of the site that is visible from the railway line and within long distant view cones. As such the architectural appearance is an important consideration, a varied roofscape with high quality elevation treatment to both the street frontage (Becket Street extension) and the façades addressing the railway line will be required.
- 6.34 Tree planting and landscape treatment will help to soften the appearance of the student block from longer distant views including the view cone points. The landscape of the communal gardens behind the student blocks will also provide an attractive buffer between the blocks and the railway line.
- 6.35 The ground floor of student accommodation blocks should include activity-generating uses to create activity on the route of the Becket Street extension.
- 6.36 The student accommodation is envisaged to be units that are not self contained. The student blocks in the Illustrative Master Plan use a working assumption of clusters of 5-7 student rooms that will share a communal kitchen and living room. In this mode of provision there will not be a requirement for provision of affordable housing, with reference to the Affordable Housing SPD, paragraph 39: *“Developments of student accommodation where units are not self-contained (where each unit shares a kitchen or bathroom) will not be expected to provide affordable housing....”*
- 6.37 Should a development scheme be brought forward that includes student accommodation units that are self contained these would be expected to provide affordable housing, as stated in the Affordable Housing SPD, paragraph 39: *“... Where student accommodation units are self-contained, they will be treated as normal housing so the developer will be expected to provide 50% of the dwellings as affordable housing in line with the Local Plan policies.”*

### Educational Uses

- 6.38 **Educational uses**, such as a business school, will be encouraged with the opportunity to build on the success of the nearby Saïd Business School and create an educational quarter within this area of the Oxford West End.

### Retirement Accommodation

- 6.39 Retirement accommodation could be an appropriate land use for the Oxpens site as elderly residents would benefit from the sites proximity to a range of amenities including the city centre (shops and services) and public transport.
- 6.40 The Oxpens Meadow would provide an appropriate setting for such development, allowing views and immediately accessible public open space for residents. Appropriate locations for retirements homes include:
- The site of the Oxford Ice Rink; *and*
  - Development blocks / parcels within the core of the master plan site, set back from Oxpens Square.
- 6.41 It should be noted that specialist residential development such as retirement accommodation will be expected to provide affordable housing in line with standard residential development policy requirement (provision of 50% of the dwellings as affordable housing). Reference to Affordable Housing SPD, paragraph 38:

*“Specialist residential development*

*38. The requirement for affordable housing extends to all types of residential development including retirement homes. A retirement home falls into the same use class as residential (class C3) and is therefore expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. In these cases it may be more appropriate for the provision to be affordable retirement housing. Care homes and nursing homes (class C2) that are not self-contained are not required to provide affordable housing.”*



### Café (Oxpens Meadow attraction)

- 6.42 A small café or restaurant could be located within Oxpens Meadow or the adjacent proposed open space. This land use must be accommodated in a pavilion building of high architectural design quality.
- 6.43 The café / restaurant could be positioned close the River Thames / Isis to maximise the benefit of waterside location. The building should be located where it will be visible from Oxpens Road, to capture passing trade and thus help boost the viability of the service.
- 6.44 Proposals for a café in Oxpens Meadow or the adjacent proposed open space, particularly in a riverside location, will be subject to discussion with the Environment Agency. One potential design approach may be to raise the café on stilts; such a solution may be possible on technical grounds but will be subject to detail design proposals. A café would have small building footprint, resulting little loss of floodplain footprint or storage volume.
- 6.45 Safe access and egress during high water, safe operation of facility, ensuring warning procedures are in place, and how the facility closure would be managed during a high water event will be taken into account.
- 6.46 The café should incorporate sustainable design features and be sympathetic to its setting of Oxpens Meadow: a green roof and green walling would help the building to blend in to its landscaped surroundings.

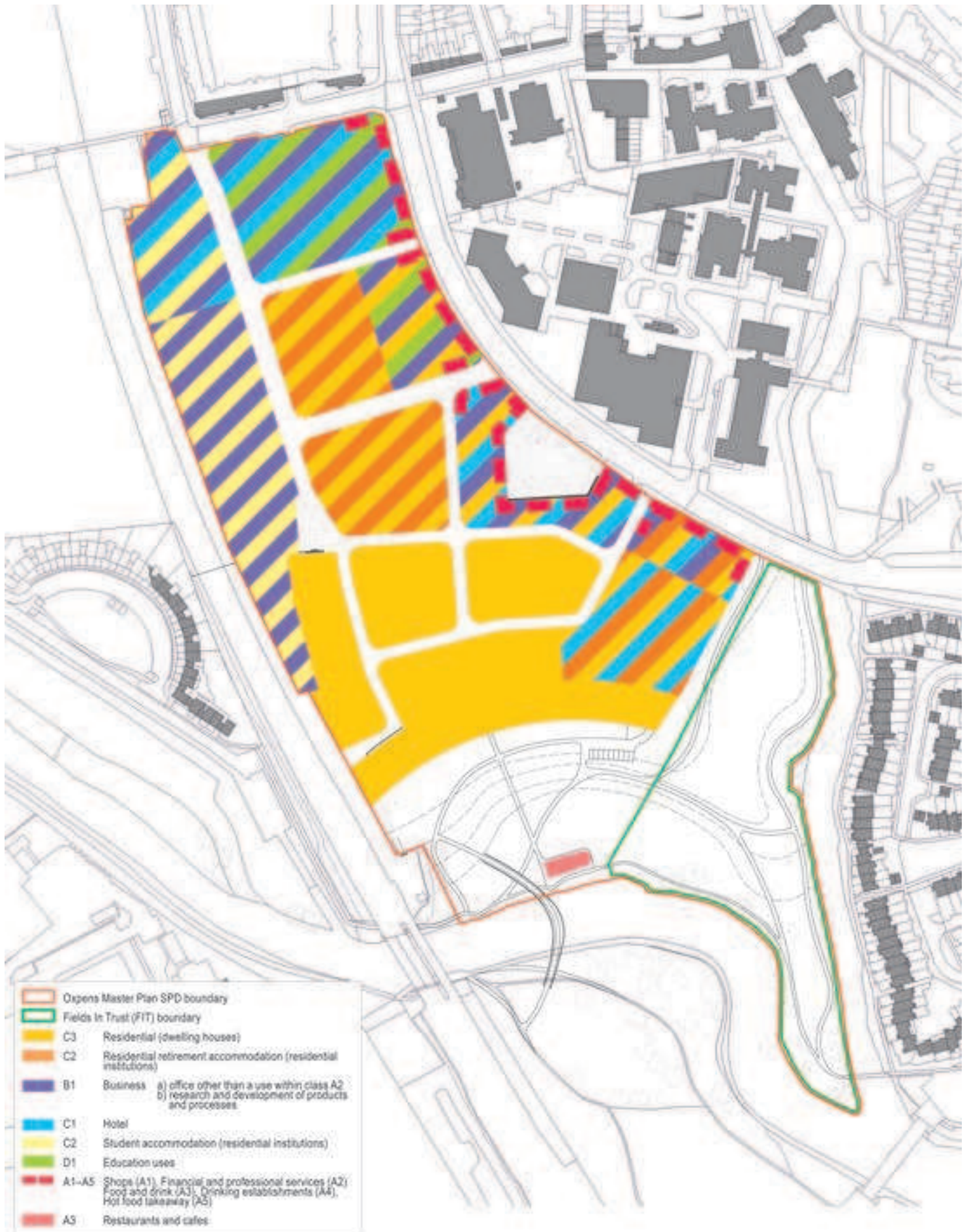
### Energy Centre

- 6.47 The site may be able to accommodate an energy centre, subject to detailed design considerations. This may provide one way of achieving the requirement for providing 20% renewable energy on-site, in line with the NRA SPD.
- 6.48 Policy WE13 in the Oxford West End Area Action Plan requires a community energy scheme to be developed within the Oxford West End. The Oxpens site was identified in the *Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study* (Stage 3 report, December 2008, Arup on behalf of Oxford City Council) as having the potential to accommodate an Energy Centre with associated district heating network.
- 6.49 Potential locations for an energy centre are identified on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Master Plan. Other locations may also exist. All are subject to detailed design testing.
- 6.50 Incorporating an energy centre into the site will require a sensitive design approach with due consideration of neighbouring adjacent land uses. Any proposal for an Energy Centre and/or related infrastructure will require consideration of issues including:
- **Size of plot:** the *Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study* includes illustration of CHP Energy Centre buildings in two scenarios including 30m x 20m building footprint and 20m x 20m building footprint. The size of the plot may be larger than these dimensions as external site area may be required for parking, landscaping and other issues listed below.
  - **Access:** Energy Centre plant would require access for servicing. The plot may need to accommodate space for vehicle turning.
  - **Deliveries:** an indication of the frequency and scale of deliveries would be beneficial to inform location. Timings of deliveries may need control.
  - **Design:** Any Energy Centre plant would need a high standard of architectural design to ensure it integrates with the adjacent development.
  - **Location:** An Energy Centre should be located to minimise visual impact on and from the public realm. Such a facility should not be located on main routes or frontages, preferably should be positioned within a block on internal streets to minimise visual impact.

**Other land use considerations**

6.51 Other land uses that have been considered by Oxford City Council for Oxpens, but are thought not appropriate for this site include the follow:

- Railway Station (relocated);
- Construction Compound for Oxford Railway Station Redevelopment;
- Bus Station / Bus Turn Around Facility;
- Public Car Park (except for a potential temporary car parking solution); *and*
- School – Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed the site does not need to accommodate a school. Oxford City Council's Sites and Housing Plan allocates a site for a new school in New Hinksey at Bertie Place. It is expected that this would provide additional school capacity to allow the primary education needs of the Oxpens development to be met.



## OXPENS ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

- 6.52 **Figure 6.3, *Illustrative Master Plan*** shows how the urban blocks established in the Development Framework could be developed. The Illustrative Master Plan is not intended to be prescriptive, rather it presents a 'worked up' master plan design that demonstrates how the guiding principles set in the Development Framework Plan can inform a detailed layout scheme.
- 6.53 Accompanying diagrams showing the spatial distribution of:
- Character Zones:
  - Building Heights:
  - Street Hierarchy: Street Sections:
  - Public Realm Improvements:
  - Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space; and
  - Sustainability Issues.
- 6.54 The Illustrative Master Plan has been prepared by MJP Architects in collaboration with David Lock Associates and Oxford City Council to test the capacity of the site and demonstrate a feasible configuration of land uses. The plan is designed to a level of detail that illustrates important features including :
- Arrangement of streets and spaces in line with the Development Framework Plan;
  - Individual buildings set within wider development plots;
  - Private amenity space – gardens for houses, communal areas for apartment blocks and student housing.
  - Walled boundaries where plots turn corners and/or address streets or public space; and
  - Streetscape details including alignment of footways, carriageways, street trees and areas of common surfacing for pedestrian crossovers and public squares.
- 6.55 The Illustrative Plan also includes details of the potential landscape design for the Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space next to the River Thames (Isis). This landscape design scheme is illustrated in further detail in **Figure 6.13, *Indicative Oxpens Meadow Landscape Design Proposal***.
- 6.56 The Illustrative Master Plan drawing is accompanied by a Land Use Summary schedule that provides an overview of the headline quantities. Floorspace areas are listed for all land uses. The residential split is also noted – the plan illustrates residential capacity for:
- 125 houses; *and*
  - 172 apartments.
- 6.57 The proportional balance of houses and apartments accommodated in the Illustrative Master Plan is close to the policy objective of achieving a 50:50 ratio / split between houses and apartments. The master plan illustrates a split of 42.1% houses, 57.9% apartments, because it seeks to maximise the number of residential units achievable within the physical parameters of the site.
- 6.58 The number of apartments could be reduced to meet the policy object for 50:50 ratio of houses/apartments.



## CHARACTER ZONES PLAN

6.59 The Oxpens Master Plan has five broad character zones as illustrated in **Figure 6.4, Character Zones Plan**:

- Mixed Use Frontage;
- Residential Core;
- Student Accommodation;
- Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space; *and*
- Oxpens Road / Osney Lane: Public Realm Improvements.

### Mixed Use Frontage

6.60 The Mixed Use Frontage will bring a strong development edge with a continuous building line and taller buildings of up to five storeys to ensure a sense of built enclosure is given to the wide street corridor. The taller buildings can accommodate a mixture of uses, primarily with apartments on the upper floors and a variety of other uses on the ground floors. The ground floor level will have higher floor-to-ceiling height to ensure the units can house multiple uses including business offices, research and development, retail, food, drink and professional services.

6.61 The long elevation to Oxpens Road needs to be carefully designed. It will be the most prominent elevation in the development and should include some variety in built form to help bring richness in appearance and create an attractive townscape. Variety should also be sought in the roofscape to avoid a single roofline level along this important street frontage.

6.62 The new Oxpens Square is included within the mixed use frontage area: it is important that a mixture of uses have the potential to be accommodated around the Square to create an active place and a destination to attract investment and interest. Mixed Use Frontage extends the along Oxpens Road to include the junction with Osney Lane.

### Residential Core

6.63 The heart of the site is proposed for residential land uses. The form of residential development in this location is biased towards housing. Set back from the main street and with close proximity to the Oxpens Meadow this is a preferable location area for a finer grain of residential development.

### Student Accommodation

6.64 The site for student accommodation has sufficient space to accommodate residential apartment buildings set in landscaped gardens that can insulate the remainder of the site from the railway line.

### Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space

6.65 Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space is a distinct character area, a defined area of land that has a multi-functional role – flood mitigation, public open space for recreation (with Fields in Trust designation), performance and event space. Further details of the design proposals for Oxpens Meadows and adjacent proposed open space next to the River Thames (Isis) are presented in **Figures 6.13 and 6.14**.

### Oxpens Road / Osney Lane: Public Realm Improvements

6.66 Although outside of the site boundary in the master plan (informed by land ownership) the adjacent streets of Oxpens Road and Osney Lane should be considered as a character zone for public realm improvements. Further details of the design proposals for Oxpens Road Public Realm improvements presented in **Fig. 6.8**.



## BUILDING HEIGHTS

6.67 **Building Heights** are noted on **Figure 6.3 Illustrative Master Plan**.

6.68 The range of building heights advised are as follows:

6.69 **Five storeys** (up to 18.2m including rooftop service/plant) to frame the main streets and spaces including:

- Oxpens Road frontage;
- Oxpens Public Square;
- Osney Lane – possibility for the mixed use blocks to be 4-5 storeys; *and*
- Student Accommodation blocks, providing visual and acoustic buffer to the rail line. The design of student accommodation blocks on the site of the current Oxpens Business Centre should make best use of roof voids to increase capacity and improve design.

6.70 Variety should be expressed in the roofscape design along frontages to the main streets and spaces. Five storeys is the maximum building height and variety should be expressed using design detailing to accentuate some top storeys / roof lines to help delivery a varied skyline on the frontage to main streets and spaces. The principle of skyline variety is informed by guidance in the WEAAP Design Code, notably policies B1.2 and E3.

6.71 **Four storeys** to frame other key streets and spaces including:

- Built from frontage to Oxpens Meadow;
- Residential block adjacent the railway line (providing visual and acoustic buffer to the rail line); *and*
- Residential block on secondary streets.

6.72 **Three storeys** in the centre of the scheme:

- Finest grain residential streets in the centre of the site.

6.73 **Single storey** building height for the potential café/restaurant located in the Oxpens Meadow or adjacent proposed open space.

6.74 Building heights, and the forms, extents and materials of rooflines will receive detailed consideration in the determination of planning applications and will need to be carefully considered during the preparation of proposals.

6.75 Further detail in relation to the roofscape design is noted under Oxford skyline and view cone issues, as follows.



## 6.76 Oxford Skyline: Key View Cone Points

- 6.77 Oxford has protected view cones, of long-distance views into the city from sites on the outskirts of the city. The view cone policy (Policy HE10) protects the distinctive skyline of Oxford, the city of 'Dreaming Spires'. Views out from the City should also be considered. Additional Views Study work it is being undertaken and initial studies show that that the views from the west are 'kinetic', not static. This needs to be factored in to the consideration of development proposals for Oxpens as they come forward. Regard should also be had to the fact that new buildings at Oxpens will be in the middle/foreground of views from the west, which means that even if they are below the 18.2 metre threshold, careful consideration needs to be given to their form, design and materials in order to ensure that they do not detract from the view.
- 6.78 The prominence of this site in views of the City Centre from the western hills, and in the City Council's protected view cones in particular has been explored by Oxford City Council officers, including the Heritage Officer.
- 6.79 Site visits have informed the Officers conclusion that the three most important view points from which development at Oxpens will be visible are Port Meadow, Raleigh Park, and Boars Hill. These are official view cone points and will be used by Officers in determining the impact of new development at the Oxpens site on the spires and historic landscape.
- 6.80 Another important location for views is Hinksey Golf Course. Although this is not an official view cone location members of the golf course may view Oxford from this location.
- 6.81 Photography of the views from the key view cone points listed above is presented in **Figure 6.5, Oxford Skyline: Photography from View Cone Points.**
- View 1 – view from Raleigh Park;
  - View 2 – view from Port Meadow;
  - View 3 – view from Boars Hill; *and*
  - View 4 – view from Hinksey Golf Course;

### View cone points design considerations:

- 6.82 The Oxpens development should seek to retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, and protect the green backcloth from any adverse impact. Key design responses should include:
- **Broken building lines** to prevent a flat building mass;
  - **Variation in roof lines**, particularly on frontages to key streets – notably Oxpens Road;
  - **Roofscape materials** need to be selected so that they do not appear stark against the landscape and blend with the overall palette of the city although there is the possibility for a special form to perhaps use copper, as many of the spires do;
  - The loss of **trees** that currently contribute to the character of these views will be of particular impact. Where possible existing trees should be retained within Oxpens Meadow; *and*
  - **New trees** should be incorporated where possible in the public and private realm. Oxpens Road and routes within the site are identified as key locations for street tree planting. Street trees and trees within private gardens and communal courtyards will contribute to the green feel and appearance of the Oxpens site. The Development Framework Plan illustrates the location of key tree lined streets.



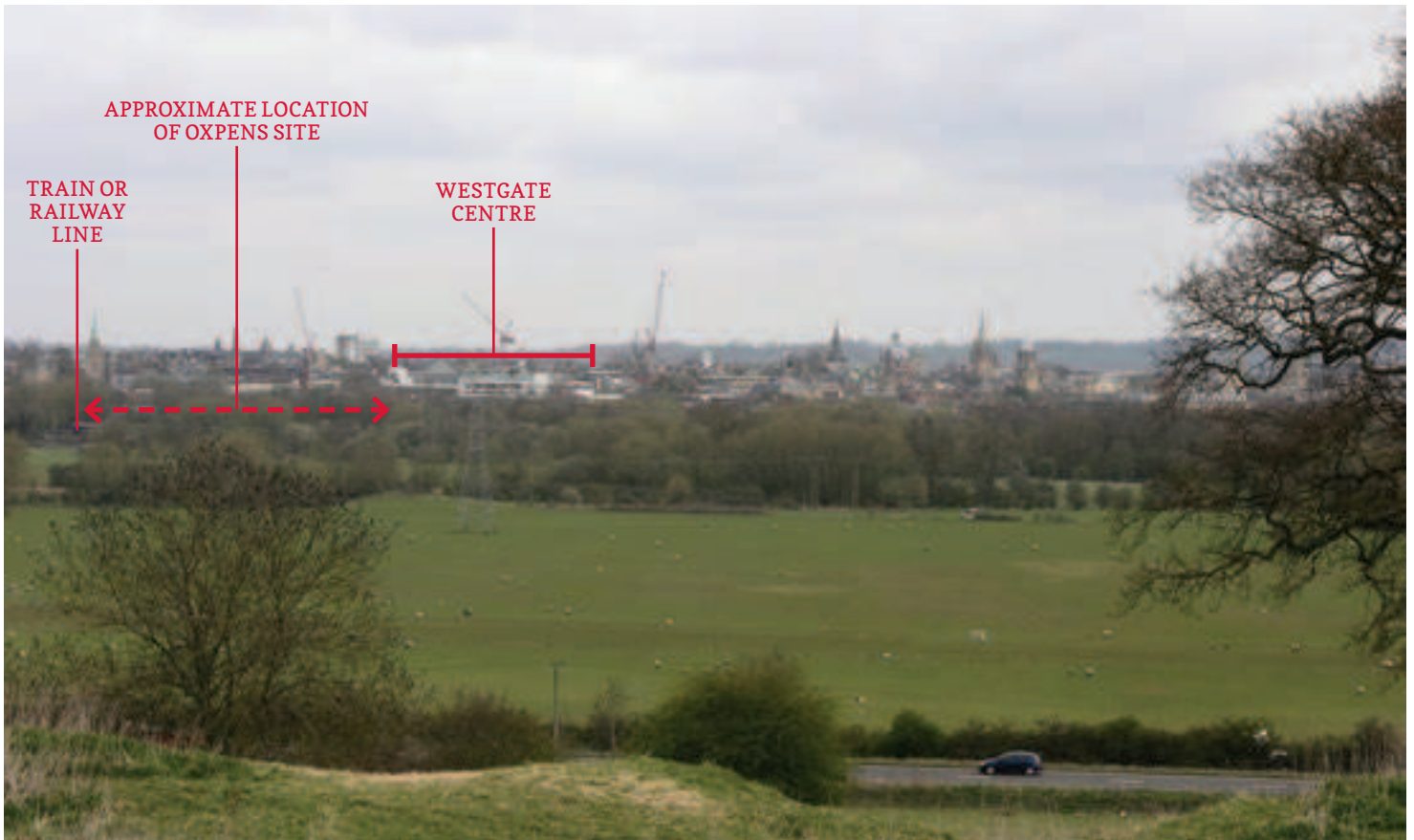
VIEW 1 - VIEW FROM RALEIGH PARK, FACING EAST TOWARDS OXFORD CITY CENTRE



VIEW 2 - VIEW FROM PORT MEADOW, FACING SOUTH TOWARDS OXFORD WEST END



VIEW 3 - VIEW FROM BOARS HILL, FACING NORTH EAST TOWARDS OXFORD CITY CENTRE



VIEW 4 - VIEW FROM HINKSEY GOLF COURSE, FACING NORTH EAST TOWARDS OXFORD CITY CENTRE

## PUBLIC REALM DESIGN: STREETS AND SPACES

6.83 The range of streets and public spaces proposed in the Oxpens Master Plan are presented in a series of illustrations as follows:

- **Figure 6.6, *Indicative Street Hierarchy*** – highlights the location of different street types in the master plan.
- **Figure 6.7, *Indicative Street Sections*** – presents cross section drawings through each of the street types proposed in the master plan, including the enhancement of the Oxpens Road.
- **Figure 6.8, *Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements*** – illustrates the proposed scheme of enhancements to the streetscape of Oxpens Road, including the new Oxpens Public Square. The public square could be tree-lined to reflect potential for some screening, whilst maintaining through visibility.
- **Figure 6.9, *Indicative Visualisation of Mixed Use Street*.**
- **Figure 6.10, *Indicative Visualisation of Residential Street*.**
- **Figure 6.11, *Indicative Visualisation of Mixed Use Frontage including hotel facing Oxpens Road*.**
- **Figure 6.12, *Indicative Visualisation of Residential crescent overlooking Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space*.**
- **Figure 6.13, *Indicative Visualisation of aerial perspective view of residential crescent overlooking Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space*.**

6.84 The design of streets and spaces has been considered with reference to the Oxford West End Area Action Plan Design Code Appendix.

## INDICATIVE STREET HIERARCHY

6.85 The indicative street hierarchy for the Oxpens site is presented in Figure 6.6 *Indicative Street Hierarchy*. It comprises:

### Existing streets with proposed enhancements:

- *Oxpens Road* – to reinforce its key role as a major city thoroughfare whilst transforming the pedestrian experience;
- *Becket Street* – to the north west of the Oxpens site this is an important link between the railway station, Frideswide Square and the Oxford West End, via Oxpens. Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are considering highways schemes for Becket Street which may result in the creation of a two-way vehicular route.
- *Osney Lane* – the northern boundary of the Oxpens site this lower order route requires public realm enhancement to tie in with proposed enhancement works to Oxpens Road. The route may be ‘stopped up’ as a through route if a scheme for Becket Street is brought forward. Pedestrian and cyclist through access will continue but vehicle access may be prohibited at one end, with the potential for new on street parking to compensate for the potential loss of on-street parking in Becket Street.

### New, proposed streets within the Oxpens Scheme:

- *Lower order streets* - The urban block structure set out in the Oxpens Master Plan establishes a clear network of connected streets, providing a choice of routes through the site. Most of the routes will be lower order with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists:

- *Main route through Oxpens* – providing connection between Oxpens Road and the Becket Street (also referred to as the 'Becket Street extension'). This route is defined as a higher order route and will have the capacity to take a proportion of vehicular movements from Oxpens Road and move these through Oxpens to link to Becket Street. This route, its alignment and junctions have been analysed by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. The route must be designed to cope with major flows but also safe pedestrian and cycle facilities. Early pre-application discussion should be held with the county council to discuss emerging street layout and design proposals for any planning application.

### Footways, cycleway and leisure routes

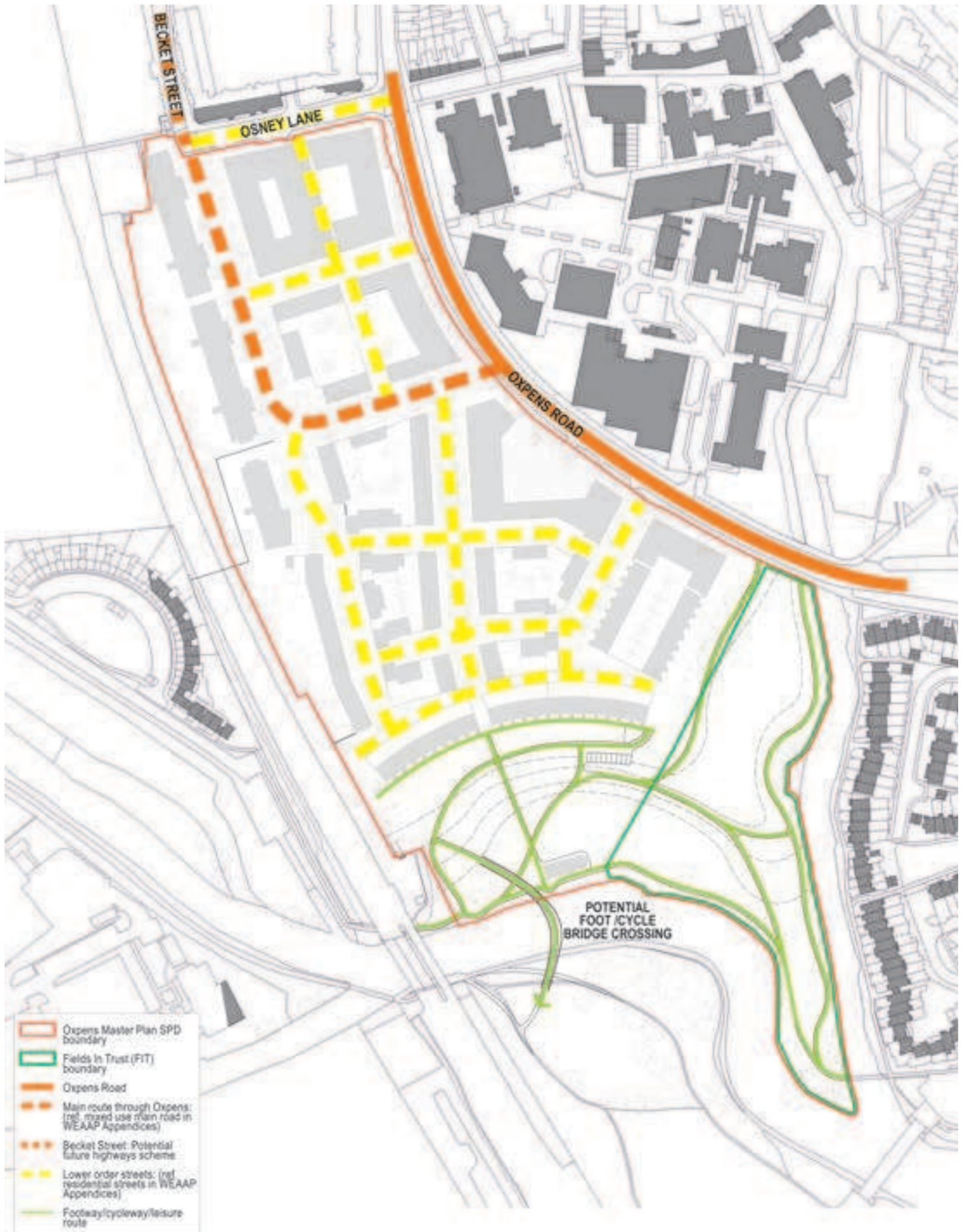
- All proposed streets should include footways to ensure provision for pedestrian access, and cyclists may be accommodated within the carriageways or by way of off-carriageway cycle facilities or "hybrid" cycle lanes.
- Alternatively, some lower order streets may be appropriate for homezone treatment with shared surfaces across the whole street corridor.
- Further leisure routes for pedestrians and cyclists will also be provided through the Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space, with clear direct connection between the Oxpens development and the proposed pedestrian / cyclist bridge crossing over the River Thames / Isis.
- Facilities for cyclists should be considered including electric bike recharging and well spaced cycle stands.
- The needs of cyclists with trailers, tagalongs, electric batteries and three wheels should also be considered in street design.
- Consideration should be given to the different cycle parking needs of employees from shorter-stay users of the site.
- A safe route for cyclists should be provided through the site from Oxpens Meadow to connect with the station area.

### Access & Junctions

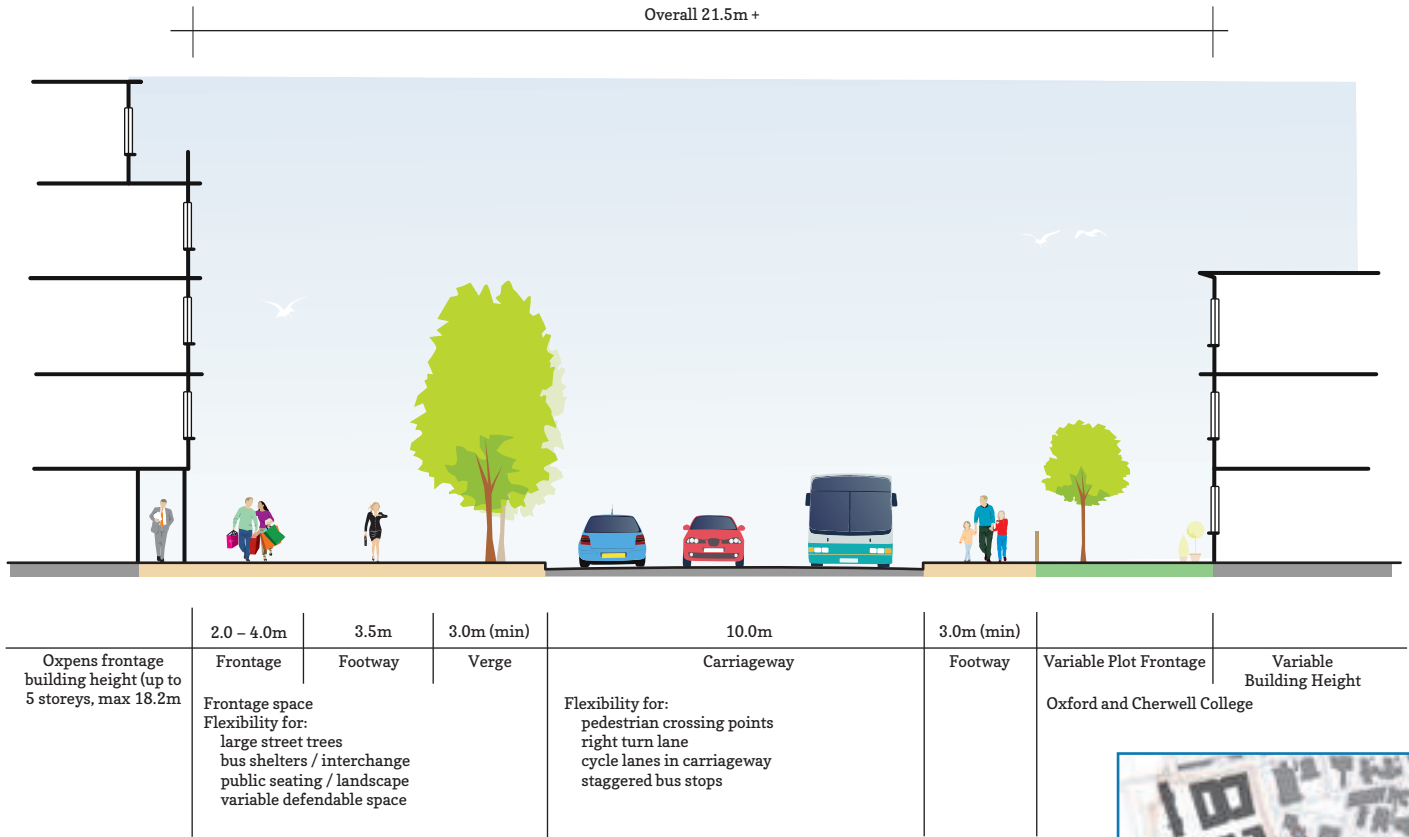
- 6.86 The scheme of streets presented in the Illustrative Master Plan has been prepared in collaboration between Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. The main junction between Oxpens Road and the proposed main route through Oxpens is illustrated as a roundabout on the Illustrative Master Plan: this approach is preferred by the County Council as it may help to reduce 'street clutter' with less signage and columns than a signalised junction.
- 6.87 Designs for a signalised junction between Oxpens Road and the proposed main route through Oxpens have also been considered by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. This approach may be explored further when detailed design schemes come forward.

### Oxpens Road Crossing Points

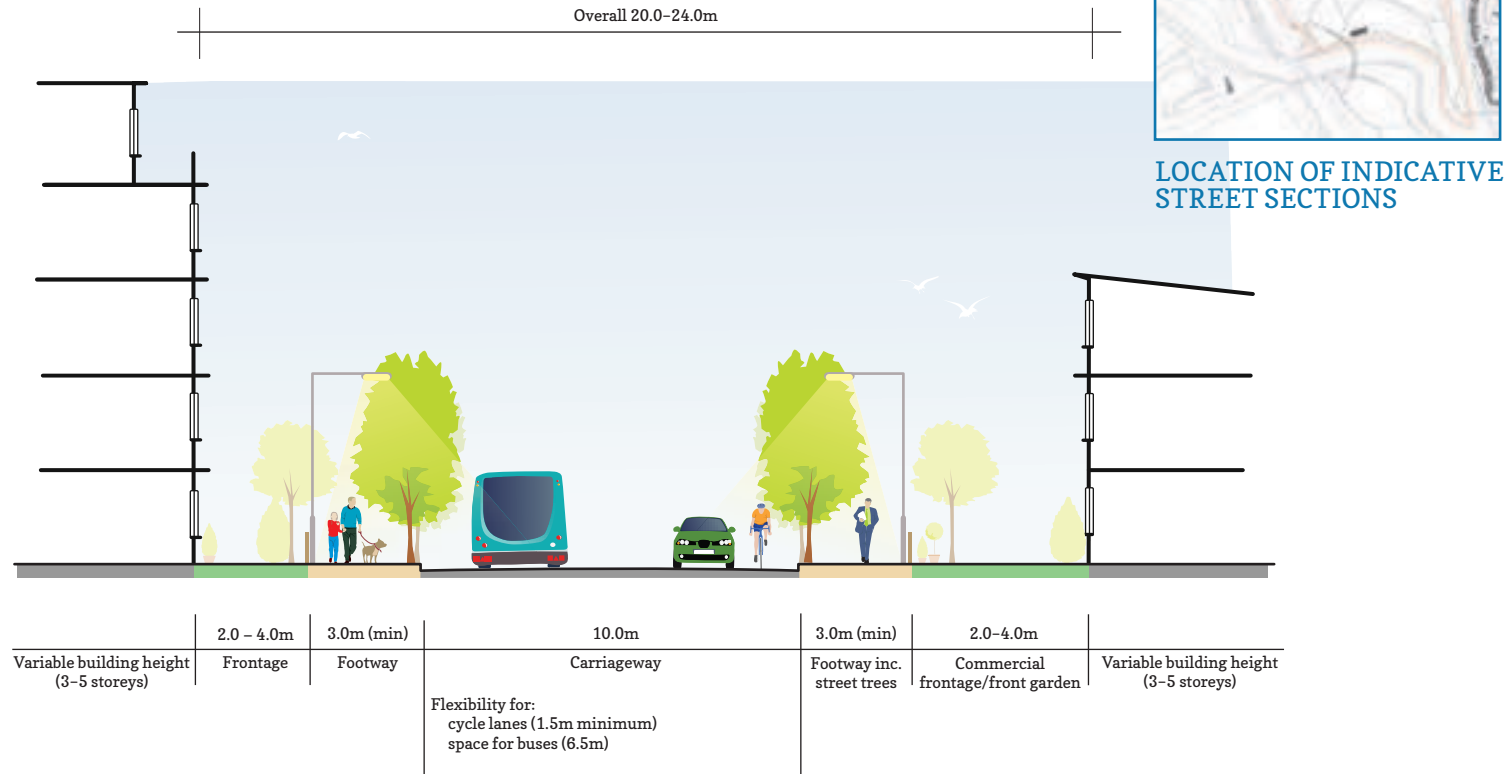
- 6.88 The exact number of crossing points on Oxpens Road will be subject to discussion between Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council at the stage of detailed design. To enhance connectivity for pedestrians between Oxpens and the wider Oxford West End crossings will be required in relation to the Oxpens public square, the key corner of Oxpens Road – Osney Lane, the southern end of Oxpens providing connection between the Ice Rink site, Oxpens Meadow and the proposed Westgate redevelopment. Further crossing points may also be appropriate, subject to detail design discussions.



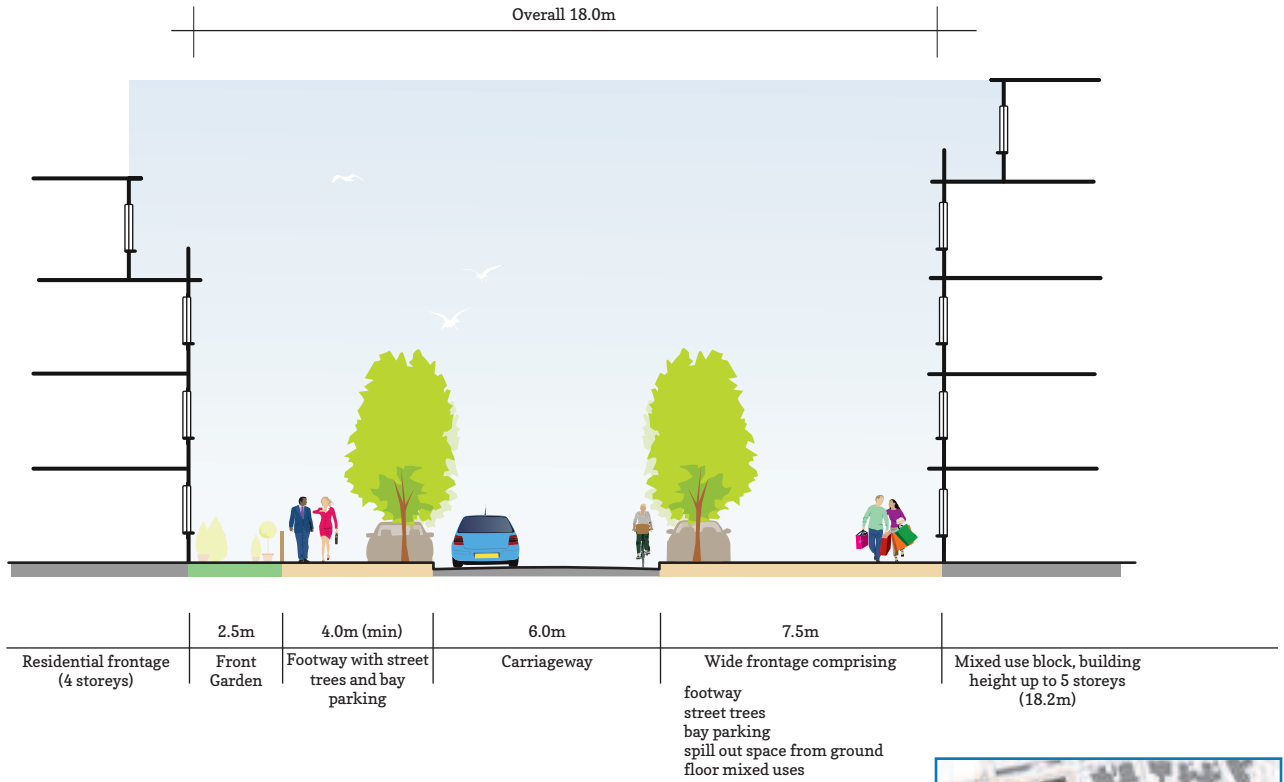
## EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION A-A: OXPENS ROAD: ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING STREET



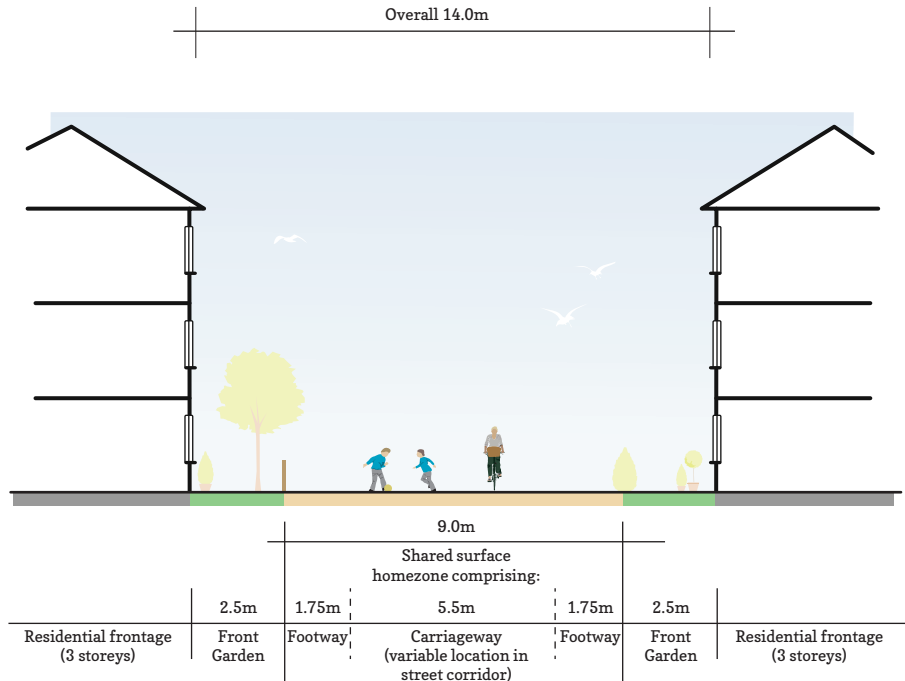
## EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION B-B: MAIN STREET THROUGH OXPENS SITE (REF. MIXED USE MAIN STREET, WEAPP APPENDICES)



**EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION C-C: RESIDENTIAL STREET:  
(REF. RESIDENTIAL STREETS, WEAAP APPENDICES)**

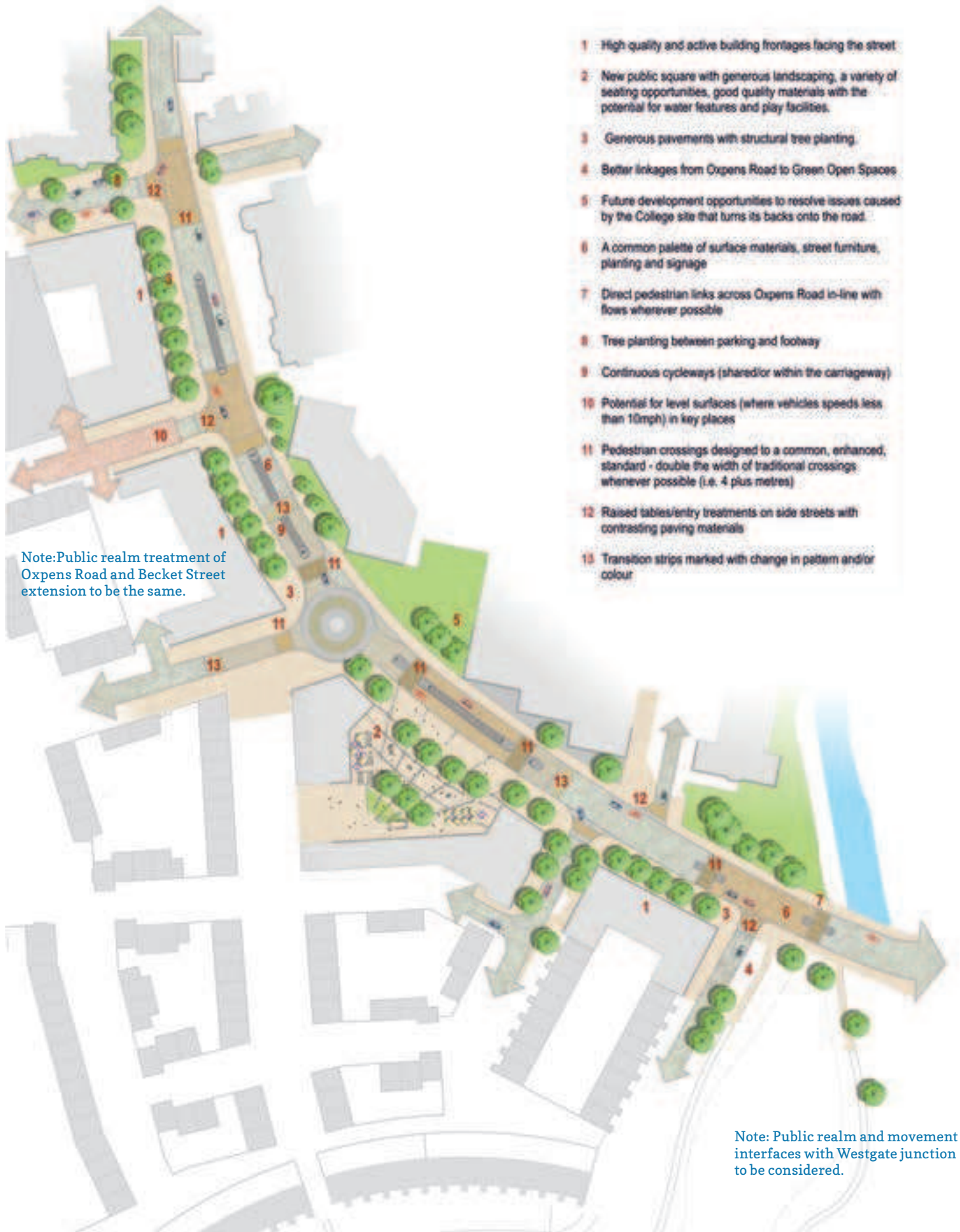


**EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION D-D: RESIDENTIAL STREET:  
(REF. RESIDENTIAL STREETS, WEAAP APPENDICES)**



**LOCATION OF INDICATIVE STREET SECTIONS**





**STREETSCAPE DESIGN: MATERIALS & STREET FURNITURE PALETTE**

6.89 The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*. Public realm and street scene proposals presented in the SPD are indicative, informed by the Illustrative Master Plan.

**Streetscape: Appropriate Materials**

6.90 Materials should be of a family that is consistent across the Oxpens site, with variations as appropriate to the scale of the street. Suggested appropriate materials are listed below, with reference to the *Oxford Street Scene Manual*.

Streetscape Components	Streetscape Materials
<b>Vehicular carriageways</b>	<p>Primary Route through site (<i>ref. to WEAAP Appendices Street Type One: Mixed Use Main Street</i>) + Oxpens Road, and Osney Lane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black asphalt, usually stone mastic asphalt (SMA). Potentially with rolled-in light chipping, subject to discussions with Planning and Highways Authorities.</li> </ul> <p><i>WEAAP Appendices Street Type Three: Predominantly Residential Streets and Lanes</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using either:</li> <li>- Buff asphalt, the Oxford Street Scene Manual advises either hot rolled asphalt (HRA) with buff chippings or buff stone mastic asphalt (SMA);</li> <li>- Concrete blocks including reconstituted stone blocks; or</li> <li>- Granite / porphyry and similar igneous rock in various colours.</li> </ul> <p>Service access routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black asphalt usually stone mastic asphalt (SMA).</li> </ul>
<b>Kerbs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Oxford Street Scene Manual advises concrete blocks including reconstituted stone blocks.</li> </ul>
<b>Footpaths / pavements</b>	<p>Primary Route through site (<i>ref. to WEAAP Appendices Street Type One: Mixed Use Main Street</i>) + Oxpens Road, and Osney Lane: and large public squares to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- York stone and similar honey-toned natural stone. Sandstone and limestone are used extensively in central Oxford. This is the material most associated with Oxford. As per <i>Oxford Street Scene Manual</i>.</li> </ul> <p><i>WEAAP Appendices Street Type Three: Predominantly Residential Streets and Lanes</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using either:</li> <li>- Concrete blocks including reconstituted stone blocks;</li> <li>- Granite / porphyry and similar igneous rock in various colours; or</li> <li>- Blue clay pavers.</li> </ul>
<b>Leisure Routes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gravel (resin bonded or resin bound) as per <i>Street Scene Manual</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Street Trees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Largest street trees e.g. London Plane specified for Oxpens Road frontage.</li> <li>- Smaller species for the streets within the site.</li> <li>- Exact specification subject to detailed landscape scheme proposals to be agreed with officers subject to detailed design proposals.</li> </ul>

**Streetscape: Street Furniture and Lighting**

- 6.91 A consistent palette of contemporary street furniture and lighting should be specified for the whole Oxpens site, including Oxpens Road, Osney Lane, and Oxpens Meadow.
- 6.92 For further guidance refer to the *Oxford Street Scene Manual*.

**Streetscape: continuity in future Oxford West End development**

- 6.93 A common palette of streetscape materials, street furniture and lighting should be continued in future development schemes in the Oxford West End to ensure continuity between different development sites.







Note: Artist's Impression, sketch for illustrative purposes only



Note: Artist's Impression, sketch for illustrative purposes only



Note: Artist's Impression, sketch for illustrative purposes only



## OXPENS MEADOW AND PROPOSED ADJACENT OPEN SPACE: LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL

6.94 An illustration of a proposed landscape design for Oxpens Meadow and the proposed adjacent open space is presented in **Figure 6.14, Indicative Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space - Landscape Design Proposal**. Examples of the envisaged landscape features are illustrated in **Figure 6.15, Oxpens Meadow Open Space Precedent Photographs**. Proposed design features for Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space include the following (*numbers correspond with annotations in Fig. 6.14*).

### Features of the landscape design proposal for Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space:

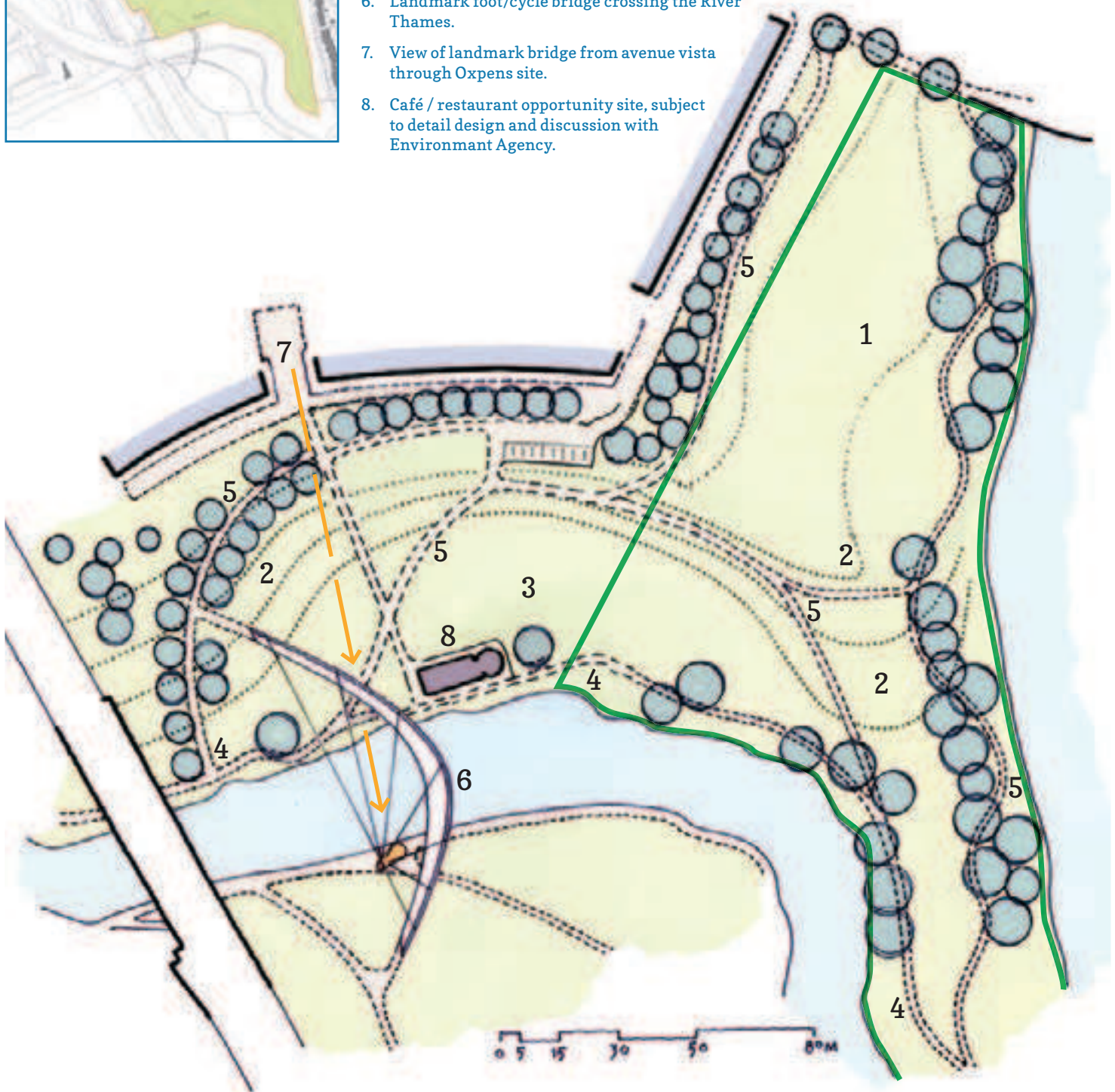
- 1. Fields in Trust (FIT) open recreation space:**
  - Enhancement of the existing large open area of grass for recreation, play and events activities.
  - Large area has potential to accommodate special events and festivals generating interest and activity.
- 2. Land form terracing:**
  - Dashed lines illustrating potential change in level / contours.
  - Land form re-profiled for flood mitigation / water management purposes.
  - Contours shaped in landscape design to create interesting spaces.
- 3. Lower area of level open space / amphitheatre:**
  - Level area of public space at the base of the terracing.
  - Level platform forms a natural 'stage' area for the amphitheatre.
  - Large area with potential to accommodate special events and festivals generating interest and activity.
- 4. Riverside leisure path:**
  - Enhanced leisure path along the riverside public right of way.
  - Path should be wide enough for walking and cycling and accommodate benches and street furniture consistent with palette for the rest of the site.
  - Ecological assets including existing trees adjacent water courses to be retained wherever possible.
- 5. Leisure paths through Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space to the waterfront:**
  - Network of leisure paths for walking and cycling providing access across Oxpens public open space.
  - Path should be wide enough for walking and cycling and accommodate benches and street furniture consistent with palette for the rest of the site.
  - Tree planting along the route of the leisure paths.
  - Leisure routes include:
    - Undulating route running along Castle Mill Stream;
    - Connections from Oxpens Road southward to the River; *and*
    - Links to the proposed bridge crossing.
- 6. Foot/Cycle Bridge crossing the River Thames (Isis):**
  - Landmark bridge as a focal point.
  - Prominent structure to terminate the view from the avenue through Oxpens.
  - Opportunity for design competition to generate interest.
  - An important link to provide access between Oxpens, riverside paths on both sides of the river, access to the Grandpont nature reserve and onward to other parts of the city.
- 7. View of the proposed landmark bridge from avenue vista through Oxpens site:**
  - The indicative location of proposed bridge is aligned with the avenue through the Oxpens site.
  - Creating a focal point view from the heart of Oxpens, south to the river – attracting interest and activity.
  - Clear legibility to aid access and orientation.
- 8. Café / restaurant opportunity site:**
  - Potential to accommodate a café / restaurant on the edge of the Oxpens Meadow.
  - Creation of destination to attract visitors and interest, stimulating activity in the area.
  - Building would need to be raised for flood mitigation.
  - Café parking shared with small public car park located adjacent residential streets for access.
  - Potential for a riverside location subject to detail design and discussion with Environment Agency.

### INDICATIVE OXPENS MEADOW LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL

Note that designs for this area are not fixed and will be developed in consultation with Fields in Trust and the local community. The bridge location is also indicative at this stage.

Design Components of indicative Oxpens Meadow Landscape Design Proposal:

1. Fields in Trust (FIT) open recreation space.
2. Land form terracing - to create flood mitigation protection, accommodate water and create landscape design interest when dry.
3. Lower area of level open space for events - amphitheatre performance space / 'stage'.
4. Riverside leisure path - enhanced along public right of way route parallel to the River Thames.
5. Leisure paths through Oxpens Meadow to the River Thames & Castle Mill Stream.
6. Landmark foot/cycle bridge crossing the River Thames.
7. View of landmark bridge from avenue vista through Oxpens site.
8. Café / restaurant opportunity site, subject to detail design and discussion with Environment Agency.





Amphitheatre and event space



Cafe in public open space



Events and activities in open space



Development frontage to open space



Enhanced leisure routes for pedestrians & cyclists



Performance space



Terrace land form for flood mitigation



Bridge crossing



Landmark bridge structure



Water management rills in landscape

## CAR PARKING

- 6.95 The design of car parking should make reference to the national guidance document: ***Car parking, What works where*** (Design for Homes, EP). This document establishes best practice design guidance for the design of car parking with illustrated solutions for various forms and scales of development.
- 6.96 The Oxford City Centre Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) should be extended through Oxpens. The restricted zone should avoid use of double yellow lines.
- 6.97 **Standards for car parking provision are established in the Oxford West End AAP (Volume 2) Appendix 4: Parking Standards.** The key standards are listed as follows:

### Residential Car Parking Standards

- 6.98 **Maximum** parking provision of 1 space per unit for residential **housing**.
- 6.99 **Flats** have a no general parking allowance, with the **maximum** parking standard stated as disabled parking only.

### Car Parking Standards for Non-Residential Land Uses

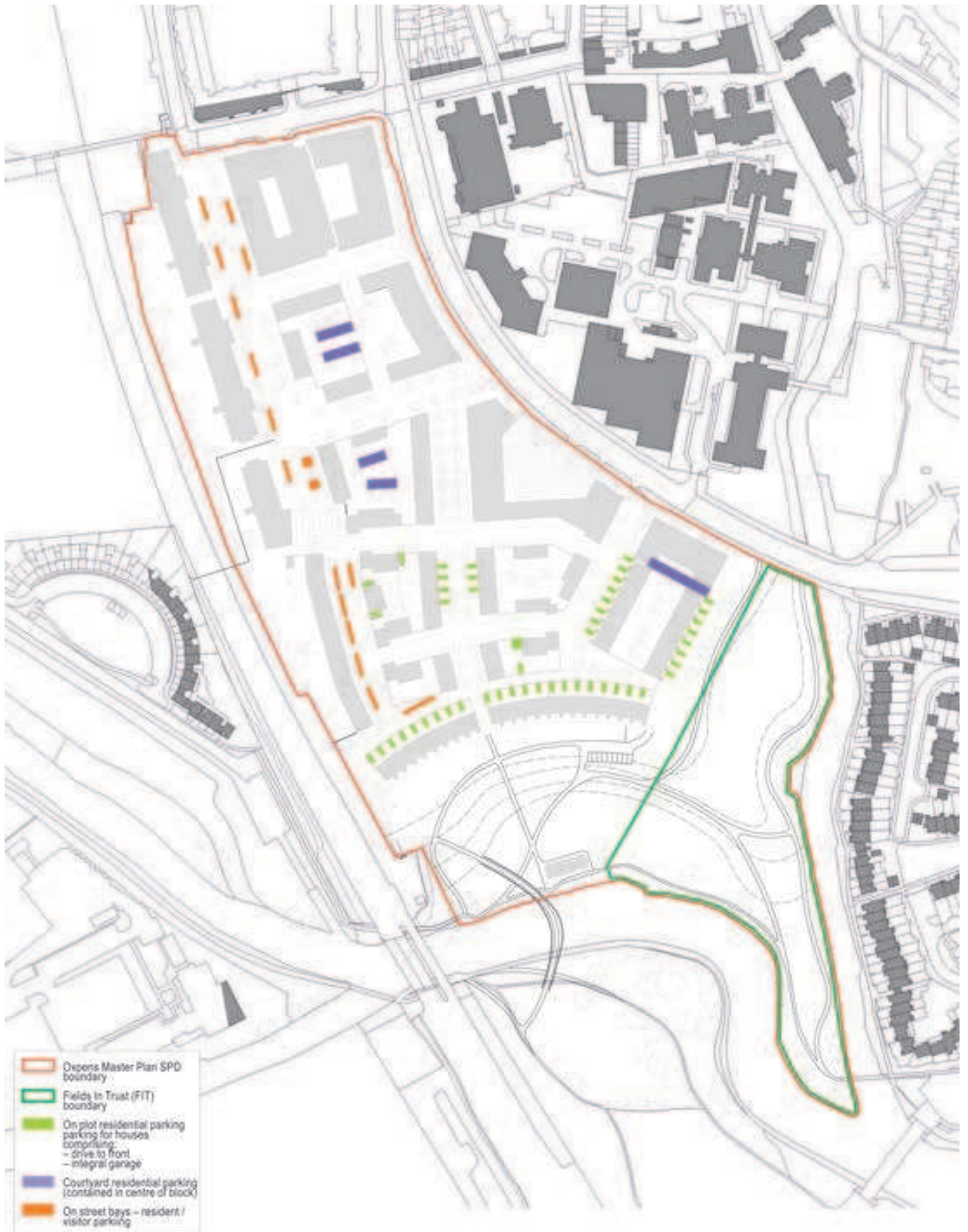
- 6.100 All non-residential development has a **maximum** parking standard of disabled and operational parking only (no general parking allowance). This standard applies to all non-residential development uses proposed in the Oxpens Master Plan.

### Visitor Car Parking

- 6.101 There is no specified standard for visitor car parking, but it is advisable to provide some visitor car parking spaces.
- 6.102 The best location for visitor car parking spaces is bay parking running parallel to the carriageway set, in the verge margin of the street. Street trees can be used to screen such bay parking.

### Car Parking in the Master Plan

- 6.103 The **Indicative Car Parking Plan (Figure 6.16)** demonstrates how the site can accommodate some car parking without dominating the street scene. In line with best practice guidance (including *Building for Life 12* and *Car Parking: What works where*) a range of car parking options is likely to be required. With regard to Car Parking *Building for Life 12* states: “avoid relying on a single parking treatment. A combination of car parking treatments nearly always creates more capacity, visual interest and a more successful place.”
- 6.104 Residential car parking solutions for the site include:
- On plot residential parking for houses, comprising:
    - Driveway to front of plot;
    - Integral garage within the plot;
  - On street parking provided in parallel bays, set in between street trees; *and*
  - Small areas of courtyard parking contained in the centre of development blocks. Courtyard parking is least preferable but in some cases may be necessary. In these instances courtyard parking should be small in scale with secure access.



## CYCLE PARKING

### Cycle Parking Standards

6.105 The WEAAP Parking Standards provide guidance on the cycle parking provision required.

6.106 **Minimum** cycle parking standards are summarised below for the proposed land uses at Oxpens:

Development	MINIMUM cycle parking standard
Residential dwellings	2 spaces per residential unit
Student accommodation	1 spaces per 2 resident students plus 1 space per resident staff
Hotels / Guest houses	1 space per 5 non-resident staff (or other people) plus 1 space per resident staff
Shops (A1) other than non-food retail warehouses, finance and professional services (A2)	1 space per 113sqm
Businesses (B1)	1 space per 35sqm or 1 space per 5 staff (or other people) plus visitor parking provision 1 space per 40sqm public floorspace plus 1 space per 5 staff (or other people)
Food and drink (A3-5)	1 space per 40sqm public floorspace plus 1 space per 5 staff (or other people)

### Cycle Parking in the Public Realm

6.107 In addition to provision of parking related to particular land uses additional cycle parking should be provided in the public realm. Cycle parking stands should be sensitively integrated into the public realm design of public spaces and streets, as illustrated in the precedent photographs presented in **Figure 6.17, Cycle Parking – Precedent Photographs**.

6.108 Cycle parking stands should be specified to complement the design and appearance of other street furniture components.

### Facilities for Cyclists

6.109 Detailed building design proposals must also integrate facilities for cyclists. The WEAAP guidance on Cycle Parking includes the statement that: “*Shower facilities will also be sought in the West End, as set out in the Local Plan.*” This reference to shower facilities relates to the need to provide such facilities in new buildings, for instance in new commercial buildings to cater for employees who wish to cycle to work.



Consistent comprehensive palette of street furniture



Cycle parking integrated into block design



Cycle parking at key entrance points



Cycle stands sensitively integrated into streetscape

## INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY

6.110 Sustainable design principles should be integrated throughout the proposals for Oxpens. The SPD Master Plan demonstrates how sustainability can be incorporated throughout the structure and detail of the scheme. Illustration of this is presented in **Figure 6.18, Indicative Oxpens Cross Section highlighting Sustainability Features**. Important sustainability considerations for Oxpens are as follows:

### **Physical Sustainability Considerations include:**

#### **Physical Sustainability: A sustainable location for development**

6.111 Oxpens is a sustainable location for mixed use development, benefiting from a central location that has many local facilities within walking distance including the railway station, heart of the city centre and University Colleges.

6.112 With the exception of the Oxpens Meadow the majority of the Oxpens site is brownfield land – previously used urban land that has the potential to be redeveloped. It is efficient to make best use of brownfield land as priority, to support urban regeneration and realise the potential value of existing urban sites.

#### **Physical Sustainability: improving connections**

6.113 Development of the Oxpens site has the potential to improve connections in the Oxford West End - as illustrated in **Figure 5.4 Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End**. Public realm enhancements to Oxpens Road, Osney Lane, creation of new access routes through the Oxpens site will help to improve the ease of movement for all modes of transport in the Oxford West End.

6.114 Leisure routes for walking and cycling can be extended through the built area of the site, into and through Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space. Improvements should include the construction of a new bridge crossing for pedestrians and cyclists improving access across the River Thames (Isis) and facilitating better movement along the river and between the banks of the river. Leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space should use permeable surfaces.

#### **Physical Sustainability: Sustainable Building Design**

6.115 Built form at Oxpens should be developed to meet the sustainable building design standards at the time of detailed design proposals. Proposals should seek to maximise sustainable building design to provide a flagship precedent scheme for future developments in the Oxford West End to learn from.

6.116 Sustainable building design should incorporate:

- Maximum thermal efficiency;
- Energy efficiency;
- Water efficiency; *and*
- Explore the potential for opportunity for integration of micro generation.

#### **Physical Sustainability: Energy**

6.117 The Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) SPD (Oxford City Council, adopted 2006) sets a policy requirement for provision of 20% on-site renewable energy. One way in which the Oxpens site could meet this target is to incorporate an Energy Centre as part of the development proposals. Indicative locations and identified on the Illustrative Master Plan and Energy Centre design considerations are stated under *Possible Land Uses*.



### Physical Sustainability: Sustainable Urban Drainage

6.118 Principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be incorporated in the development of Oxpens. SUDS features that should be incorporated include:

- Incorporation of **Oxpens Meadow** protected from development and retained as a green public open space, performing both flood mitigation and recreation facility functions. This area of open grass provides a large area for water infiltration, and drainage to the local watercourses. However, SUDS features should not be incorporated into the flood mitigation area;
- **Urban drainage systems** integrated into the public realm including rills which may incorporate public art (see **Figure 5.2, A Sustainable Scheme - Precedent Photographs**);
- **Roads and parking areas should be constructed using porous materials;**
- Car **parking areas should be constructed using permeable paving** solutions, for instance block work / sets that have space gaps for grass to grow permitting natural water infiltration;
- Leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space should use permeable surfaces; *and*
- Buildings to incorporate **soft landscape areas of private amenity space** – private gardens for houses and communal gardens for apartments.

### Physical Sustainability: Green / Brown Roofs

6.119 All buildings should consider the use of green and brown roofs on all or part of the roofscape. Such soft landscape additions can provide valuable ecological assets and habitat opportunities. Green and brown roofs can also enhance physical appearance by helping built form to blend in with adjacent landscape settings: this is particularly important for the potential café / restaurant building that could be located within Oxpens Meadow or the adjacent proposed open space.

### Physical Sustainability: Ecological Assets

6.120 Ecological assets, especially the landscape features in Oxpens Meadow, notably adjacent the watercourses of the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should be enhanced. The enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow will improve public access to these landscape assets and improve the visual and ecological landscape assets. By improving existing, but also by adding new habitats, we can expect an increase in biodiversity in the area adding additional amenity value to the development. Flood mitigation works will require some land re-profiling and landscaping works but the reshaped Oxpens Meadow will be supplemented by new landscape features including new tree planting. Enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow to access landscape features, such as the watercourses, should also be carefully located to avoid harm to high quality habitats and protected species along the watercourses. Disturbance could reduce biodiversity value of these areas and their function as corridors within Oxfordshire.

6.121 The West End Area Action Plan provides further details of ecological considerations in the Oxford West End.

6.122 Further information is also provided in the *Ecological Constraints Report (Atkins, September 2011)* that BRBR commissioned for their land holding within the Oxpens site.

### Physical Sustainability: Integrating Cycling

6.123 Oxford has a rich culture of cycling which should be promoted and encouraged in the Oxpens site. Measures to integrate cycling include:

- **Cycle routes** incorporated in the proposed movement network:

- Dedicated space for cyclists provided in the corridor of primary and secondary streets (this could be a raised kerb, white line, colour surface treatment or other appropriate design solution);
- Tertiary streets / home zones to accommodate cyclists within their corridor by creating shared surface to balance access for all means of transport;
- **Leisure routes** for walking and cycling extended through Oxpens Meadow and the proposed adjacent open space and along the banks of the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream;
- **Cycle storage integrated into residential development** – preferably to the front of plot for ease of access (see photo precedents in **Figure 5.2, A Sustainable Scheme - Precedent Photographs**);
- **Cycle parking** accommodated in all other forms of development – visitor cycle parking to be provided close to the main entrance of buildings;
- **Cycle parking provided in public realm**, located in highly visible locations for maximum natural surveillance and ease of access (see photo precedents in **Figure 6.14, Cycle Parking – Precedent Photographs**).

#### ***Social Sustainability Considerations include:***

#### **Social Sustainability: providing city centre housing**

6.124 The development of the Oxpens site can make a significant contribution to social sustainability by providing valuable city centre homes. Residential development should provide a balance of family housing and apartments. Affordable housing will be provided at a minimum level of 50% of the total residential units. Provision of housing will provide homes for existing and new residents, helping to support the local economy.

#### **Social Sustainability: appropriate land uses**

6.125 An appropriate range of land uses should be developed on the Oxpens site, as illustrated in **Figure 6.2, Possible Land Uses**, and **Figure 6.3, Illustrative Master Plan**. Delivering a balanced mixture of land uses will help support the new community at Oxpens and provide facilities for the wider community of the Oxford West End.

#### **Social Sustainability: car club**

6.126 The Oxpens site is of sufficient scale to support a car club on the site. Dedicated parking spaces for car club vehicles should be allocated in highly visible central locations, for ease of access and maximum presence.

#### **Social Sustainability: wider benefits for the city centre**

6.127 The range of proposed land uses in the Oxpens Master Plan can provide multiple benefits for the wider community of the Oxford West End and City Centre, creating new jobs, providing new housing stock and providing a range of community facilities including:

- An enhanced new public open space (Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space);
- A new public square;
- Event / performance space within Oxpens Meadow / adjacent proposed open space; *and*
- Cafés, restaurants and retail opportunities.

***Economic Sustainability Considerations include:*****Economic Sustainability: employment opportunities**

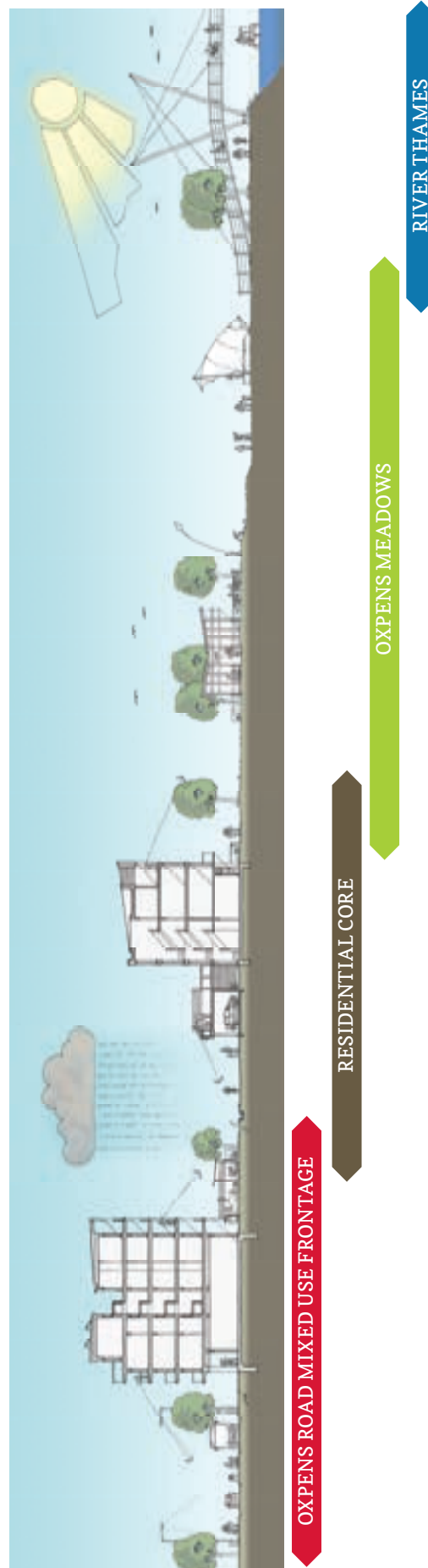
6.128 The Oxpens site must comprise more than one use and can provide accommodation for new business opportunities including those listed below:

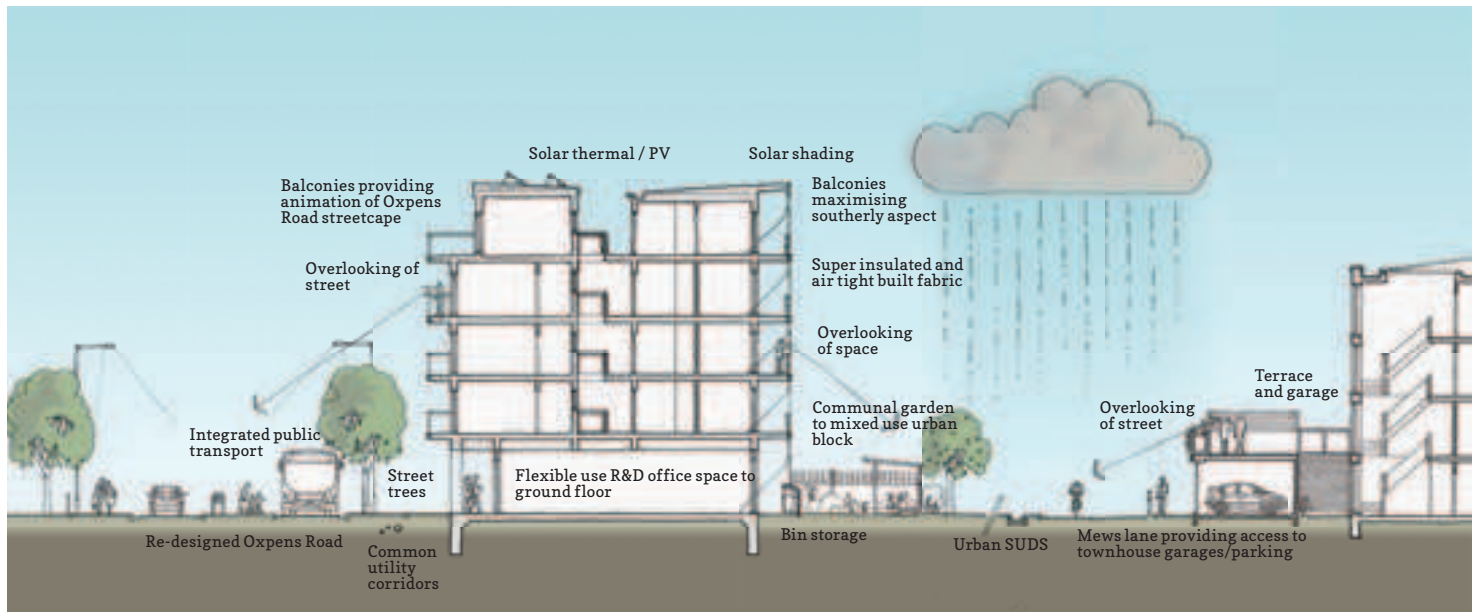
- Offices;
- Research & Development;
- Hotel and conference facilities; *and*
- Jobs in A1-A5 land uses (retail, eating/drinking, professional services).

6.129 Creation of commercial floorspace will allow new businesses to develop and expand, providing space for business start ups, innovation, and for existing city businesses to move into and grow.

**Economic Sustainability: supporting vitality of the West End and City**

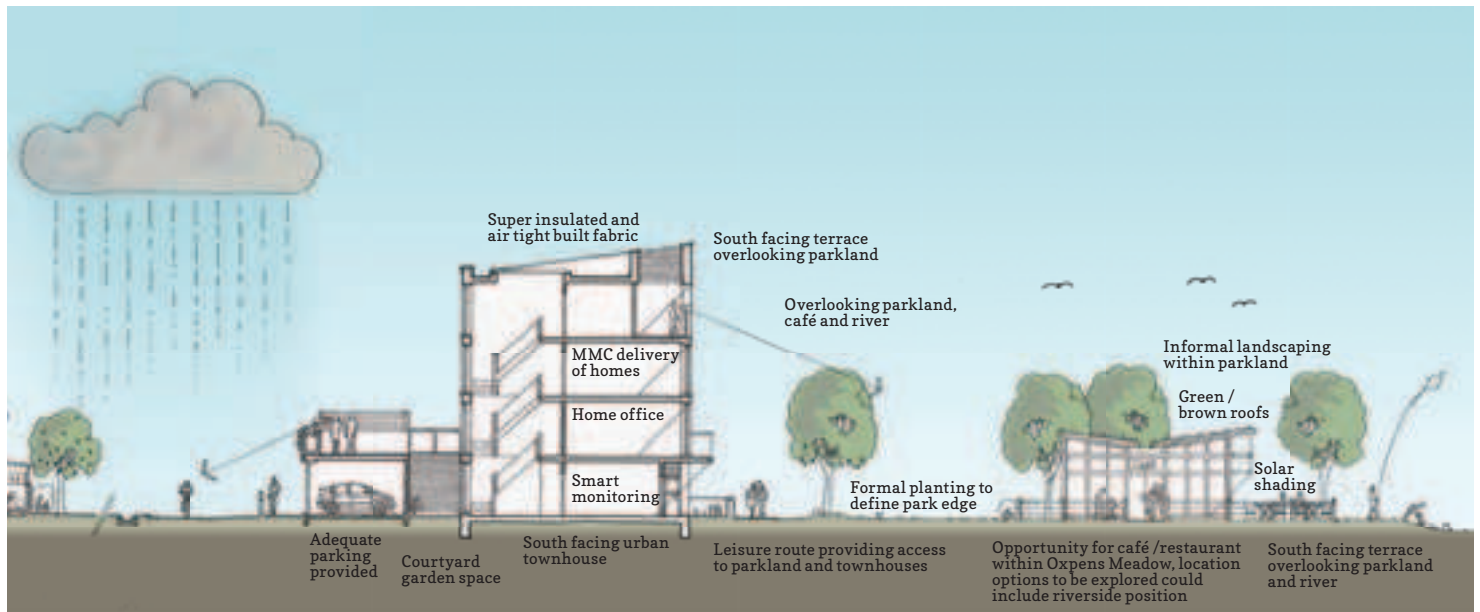
6.130 Development of the Oxpens site will provide a catalyst for the regeneration the wider Oxford West End, creating a positive precedent for other opportunities sites in the area. High quality development at Oxpens will provide a flagship development scheme in the West End, to compliment the future proposed redevelopment of other key sites including the Westgate Centre and the Railway Station.





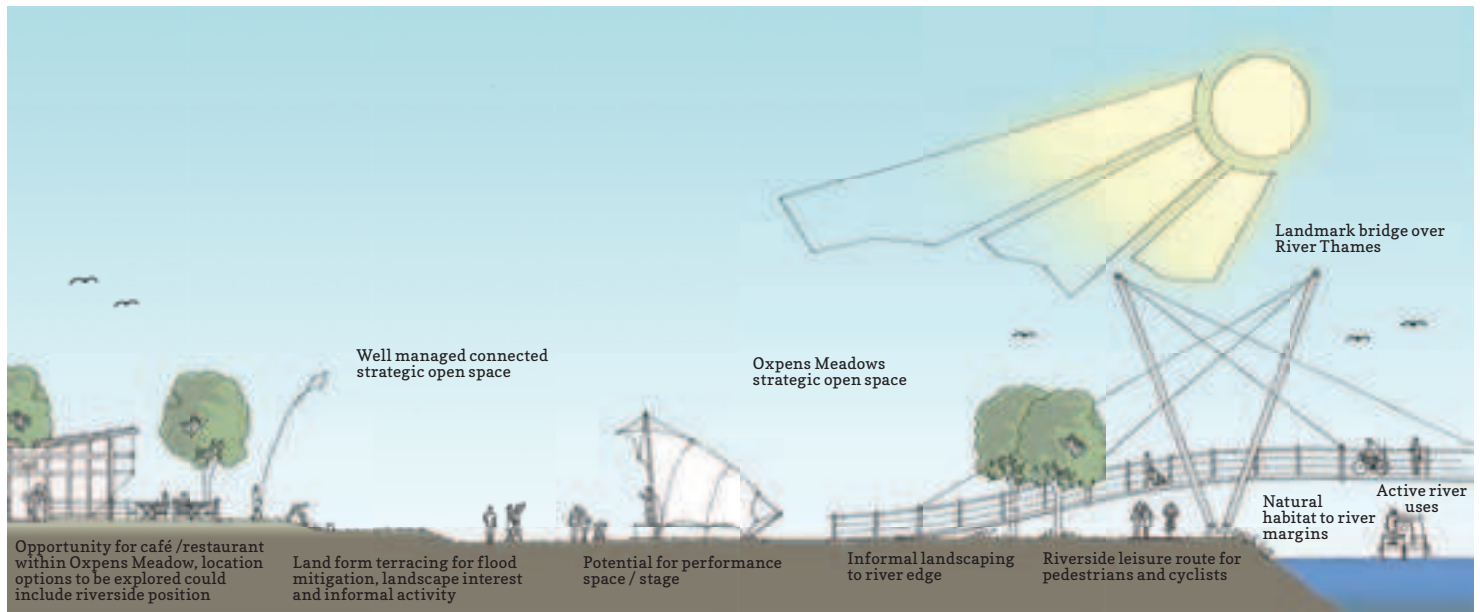
## OXPENS ROAD MIXED USE FRONTAGE

## RESIDENTIAL CORE



RESIDENTIAL CORE

OXPENS MEADOWS



## OXPENS MEADOWS

## RIVER THAMES

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# Chapter Seven

## DELIVERY

## 7 PHASING & DELIVERY

- 7.1 This chapter presents an indicative phasing strategy and outlines delivery considerations including development contributions.

### COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

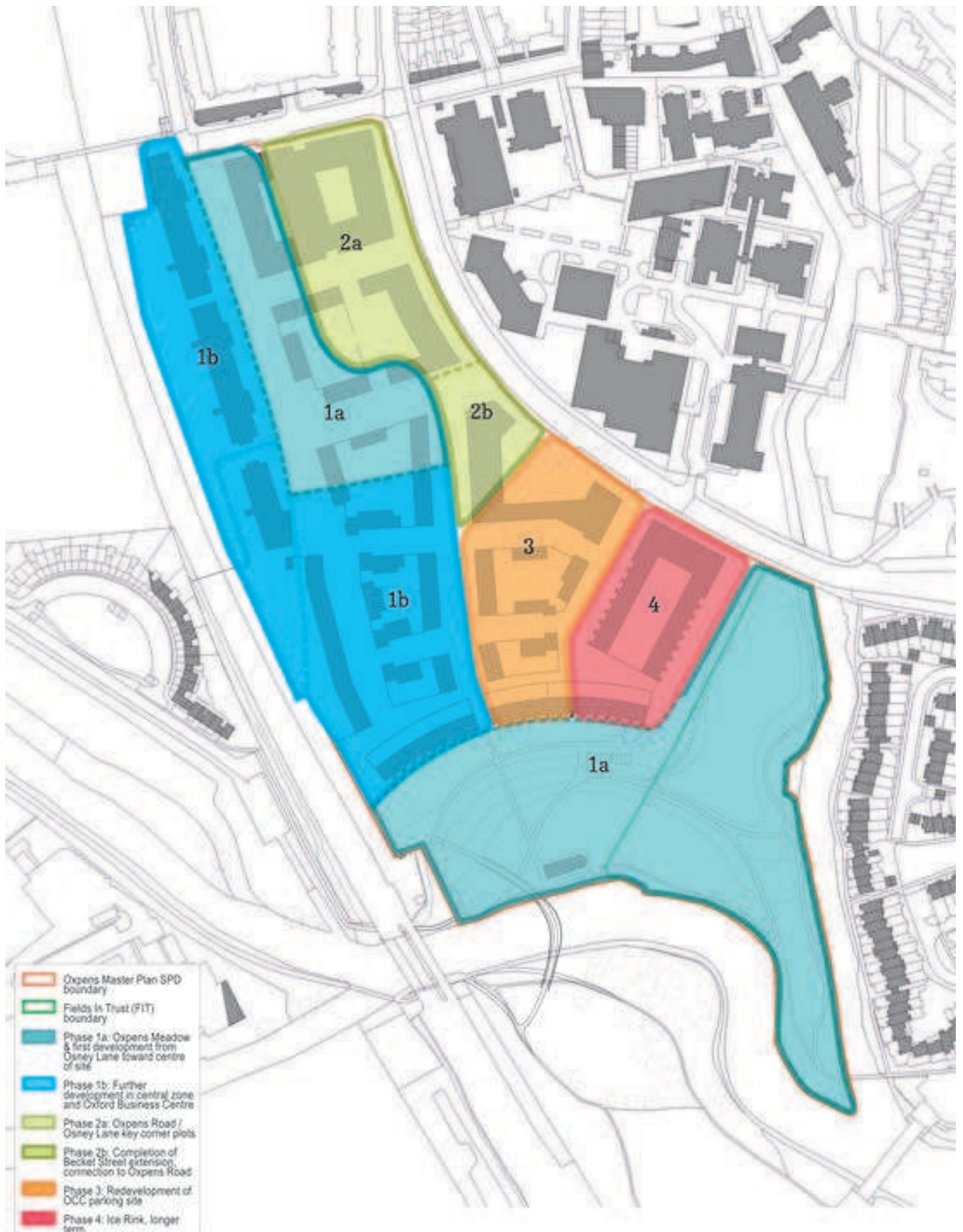
- 7.2 Oxford City Council would like to see a comprehensive master plan scheme and will work with other landowners, investors and agencies to bring the site forward.
- 7.3 A comprehensive redevelopment is sought for the Oxpens site. Although development may proceed in phases each phase will be expected to conform with the principles set out in the SPD and to make a shared contribution towards overall site infrastructure.

### PHASING IN RELATION TO OTHER WEST END DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.4 As stated in the Site Context section of this SPD Oxpens is one of a number of opportunity sites and development proposals within the Oxford West End. The phasing of the Oxpens site will need to take into account other developments including:
- The Westgate Centre, including the potential need to accommodate temporary car parking;
  - The Oxford Railway Station Area Master Plan SPD;
  - Proposed streetscape design and highways engineering schemes including:
    - Becket Street – creation of two-way traffic route;
    - Osney Lane – possible changes to the through route and on-street parking;
    - Frideswide Square – public realm enhancement of important civic space gateway.

### PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT AT OXPENS

- 7.5 The Oxpens Master Plan established in the Development Framework Plan creates a clear structure of urban blocks that provide flexibility for phased delivery of development.
- 7.6 The **Indicative Phasing Plan** for Oxpens, presented in **Figure 7.1**, illustrates a flexible phasing sequence, with phases as follows:
- Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space & first development from Osney Lane toward centre of site;
  - Phase 1b: Further development in central zone and possibly Oxford Business Centre;
  - Phase 2a: Oxpens Road / Osney Lane key corner plots;
  - Phase 2b: Completion of Becket Street extension, connection to Oxpens Road;
  - Phase 3: Redevelopment of Oxford City Council parking site;
  - Phase 4: Oxford Ice Rink site
- 7.7 The phasing plan shown in **Figure 7.1** is indicative and subject to flexibility in order to respond to lease constraints, site and funding opportunities and market conditions.



## INDICATIVE PHASING SEQUENCE

7.8 **Figure 7.1 Indicative Phasing Plan** illustrates the indicative sequential development of the Oxpens site. The proposed phases of development relate to site constraints and land ownership. The broad phases of development are as follows:

### **Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space & first development from Osney Lane toward centre of site;**

7.9 Phase 1a indicative timing: *from 2015 onwards*.

7.10 The first phase could comprise work at Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space to prepare flood mitigation and associated landscape enhancement and initial development from Osney Lane towards the central core of the Oxpens site.

### **Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space – Flood mitigation and landscape scheme**

7.11 A detailed scheme for flood mitigation and a landscape scheme for Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space should be prepared and implemented prior to the occupation of any development on which would be at risk of flooding. This scheme will need to be consulted upon with all relevant stakeholders including the Environment Agency, Fields in Trust and the local authorities,

7.12 Whilst undertaking the landform works a landscape scheme for Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space should be constructed in line with the landscape design proposal, so that the changes in level required for flood mitigation can be formed to create the appropriate setting for other landscape features proposed.

7.13 *Note: the proposed bridge and cycle paths etc. related to the Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space are proposed from 2016 onwards.*

### **Phase 1a: Initial development from Osney Lane**

7.14 The first new development on site could be accessed from Osney Lane, seeking to develop plots between Osney Lane and the central core of the site currently owned by BRBR.

7.15 The development plots could provide the 'enabling development' to generate capital required ensure viability contributing to the funding of the flood mitigation and landscaping scheme at Oxpens Meadow.

7.16 The development will include creating part of the proposed Becket Street extension route.

7.17 Whilst redevelopment and construction work could progress in parallel to the flood mitigation and landscape scheme, no occupation of the area of redevelopment would be permitted until the flood mitigation scheme has been completed, to protect the Oxpens site from more extreme flood events.

### **Phase 1b: Further development in central zone and possibly Oxford Business Centre**

7.18 Phase 1b indicative timing: *from 2015 onwards*.

7.19 This phasing zone comprises the potential for some development on the site of the current Oxford Business Centre. The greater proportion of the Business Centre site is owned by Milton Property Investments Ltd and may be available for development alongside the core area.

- 7.20 The master plan has taken account of the Oxford Business Centre parcel by designing a specific response to this site, proposing student accommodation, and ensuring the design of the rest of the master plan is capable of integrating with the redevelopment of the Business Centre site at a later stage, so that the whole site reads as one. Other land uses may also be possible in this location including employment or a hotel.
- 7.21 Further development shown in Phase 1b is the continuation of development through the central core of the site (currently owned by BRBR) extending from the Phase 1a development area to connect to the southern area of Phase 1a that includes Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space.
- 7.22 An important consideration for this area is the change in levels within the BRBR land, particularly the change in levels between the (lower) BRBR land and the (higher) Oxford City Council land. The master plan assumes a comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the whole of Oxpens with ground levels being aligned to create a level development platform. Should this area be phased at a different time to the land identified in phase 3 the change in levels will need particular attention to develop solutions for the ground levels.

### **Phase 2a: Further development in central zone + Oxford Business Centre**

- 7.23 Phase 2a indicative timing: *from 2016 onwards*.
- 7.24 Phase 2a comprises the development of plots in the north east corner of the Oxpens site, adjacent to Oxpens Road and Osney Lane. Plots fronting the street and at the corner of Oxpens Road / Osney Lane are key development opportunities with high visibility and high standard of design is required to provide high quality architectural frontage to the public realm.
- 7.25 Redevelopment of the Royal Mail site will be wholly dependent on the relocation / reprovision of the Delivery Offices so that it can comply with its statutory duties.

### **Phase 2b: Completion of Becket Street extension, connection to Oxpens Road**

- 7.26 Phase 2b indicative timing: *from mid 2017 onwards*.
- 7.27 This phase is for a relatively small area of land, currently occupied by light industrial units and club, in Oxford City Council land ownership. When this phase comes forward for redevelopment the route of the Becket Street extension scheme can be completed, connecting the main route through the Oxpens site to Oxpens Road.

### **Phase 3: Redevelopment of Oxford City Council parking site**

- 7.28 Phase 3 indicative timing: *from 2017 onwards*.
- 7.29 This phase focuses on the redevelopment of the Oxford City Council land that is currently in use as surface parking for cars and coaches. The relocation of the Coach Park from the Oxford City Council land is critical to the redevelopment of Oxpens.
- 7.30 Oxford City Council are investigating the potential to accommodate a temporary car park on this site to provide parking capacity to offset capacity lost during the proposed redevelopment of the Westgate Centre.
- 7.31 When the temporary car park is no longer required the land could come forward for redevelopment.
- 7.32 Note the change in levels between the Oxford City Council and BRBR land – see points raised under phase 1b.

**Phase 4: Oxford Ice Rink site:**

- 7.33 The master plan accommodates the potential to retain the Ice Rink whilst ensuring that the rest of Oxpens-site can be redeveloped.
- 7.34 Redevelopment of the neighbouring land should provide a reasonable set back from the Ice Rink to ensure the facility can continue to function. In this respect the master plan and constraints mapping illustrates the functional site boundary of the Ice Rink, which not only includes the Ice Rink building but also immediately adjacent land that ensures sufficient space for the exposed external structural support of the building, access to the building, servicing access, fire escapes and easements.
- 7.35 The indicative phasing plan illustrates how the master plan can be delivered whilst retaining the Ice Rink as a longer term site feature.

## DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

7.36 Developer contribution considerations include the following:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Planning Obligations / Section 106 Contributions; *and*
- Section 278 agreements with Oxfordshire County Council.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.37 The City Council is the Charging Authority for CIL in Oxford. It is responsible for setting the charge and collecting CIL in the City. In setting the charge the City Council needs to demonstrate that there is an infrastructure funding gap to justify the adoption of a CIL charge and that the CIL charge will not make too many potential developments unviable.

7.38 Development at Oxpens will be subject to CIL. When submitting an application of a building, developers will now have to submit a Liability Notice, which will allow the Local Planning Authority to assess how much CIL is due. A CIL form will soon be required as part of the validation checklist for an application. CIL becomes chargeable on implementation therefore phasing should be thought through carefully.

7.39 CIL will operate alongside a scaled-back system of Section 106 agreements. CIL adoption is anticipated for October 2013 after which the City Council will not use Section 106 agreements as the principal means to provide for the necessary infrastructure to support development.

7.40 Planning obligations will cover only site-specific obligations and affordable housing.

### Oxford City Council Draft Charging Schedule

The CIL rates	Development type	CIL Rate/m2
A1	Shops	£100
A1	out of centre shops	£100
A2	Financial and professional services	£100
A3	Restaurants and cafés	£100
A4	Drinking establishments	£100
A5	Hot food takeaways	£100
B1	Business	£20
B2	General industrial	£20
B8	Storage or distribution	£20
C1	Hotels	£20
C2 and C2A	Residential institutions and Secure Residential Institution	£20
C3	Dwelling houses*	£100
C4	Houses in multiple occupation	£100
	Student accommodation	£100
D1	Non-residential institutions	£20
D2	Assembly and leisure	£20
<i>All development types unless stated otherwise in this table</i>		£20 standard charge
C3 includes self contained sheltered accommodation		

## Planning Obligations

- 7.41 As a result of the introduction of CIL, planning obligations through Section 106 agreements (and potentially Section 278 agreements) will be scaled back to cover the provision of affordable housing and site specific measures required to mitigate the impact of development. In circumstances where a development proposal directly results in the loss of an existing facility that is used by the public, or an important site feature such as a habitat of high biodiversity value, the City Council may require the replacement of that facility or site feature either directly by the developer or through a financial contribution that would be set out in a planning obligation.
- 7.42 For further information see the emerging Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations SPD which will in time replace the Planning Obligations (2007) SPD.

## Other sources of funding - Growing Places Fund

- 7.43 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has received an initial allocation of more than £9 million for its Growing Places Fund.
- 7.44 It may be possible to seek LEP support for future Growing Places Fund Bids. Greater prospect of support exists if bids are directly linked to the delivery of key infrastructure elements such as link roads that need to be provided to enable development to take place and deliver housing and jobs.
- 7.45 Following the award of funds through Round 1, the Partnership is now launching Round 2, where £4 million will be available to support a range of infrastructure including transport, utilities and broadband, other enabling works or facilities such as **business incubators or small business premises or new homes as part of mixed use developments**. The infrastructure items listed here are notable for their correlation with the proposed uses in the Oxpens Master Plan.
- 7.46 Priority is likely to be given to proposals that demonstrate clear contributions to local priorities identified in spatial and economic strategies. The Oxpens Master Plan SPD is a mixed use scheme which includes research and development employment and uses associated with providing employment, based on identified local needs and therefore it is likely such proposals, in keeping with the SPD, will be given priority in funding allocations.



## INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

7.47 List of infrastructure requirements to serve the proposed development is set out below. Reference should also be made to the City Council's CIL Regulation 123 list.

OXPENS INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS	PHASING - <i>Indicative timing of infrastructure requirements</i>
<p><b>Flood mitigation works on Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space</b></p> <p>See <b>Figure 3.5, Flood Mitigation – Left Bank Option</b></p>	<p>First Phase (see Indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Upfront cost required to mitigate potential flood risk.</li> <li>- Required as first phase to protect the site from more extreme flood events;</li> <li>- Flood mitigation work must be complete prior to occupation of new development at Oxpens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape design</b> scheme for the Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of public event space;</li> <li>• Formal open space / recreation area;</li> <li>• Amphitheatre;</li> <li>• Leisure routes – network of foot/cycle paths;</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.13, Indicative Oxpens Meadow Landscape Design Proposal</b></p>	<p>First phase (see Indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landscape design scheme to be delivered in tandem with the as part of the reprofiling of Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space for flood mitigation.</li> <li>- The land form works to create flood protection should be designed and to create a new landscape for Oxpens Meadow.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bridge crossing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The bridge crossing proposed at the southern end of the proposed open space adjacent to Oxpens Meadow is to provide access across River Thames (Isis) for pedestrians &amp; cyclists.</li> </ul>	<p>Could be later phase of development.</p> <p><i>Note: the proposed bridge and cycle paths etc. related to the Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space are proposed from 2016 onwards.</i></p>
<p><b>Oxpens Road:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- public realm enhancements</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.8, Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements</b></p>	<p>To be delivered in tandem with the phases of development that address the Oxpens Road to ensure a high quality environment and setting for maximising the value of new development.</p>
<p><b>Oxpens Square</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new public square on Oxpens Road frontage</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.8, Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements</b></p>	<p>To be delivered in tandem with the development of blocks that address the public square.</p> <p>Depending upon detail design proposals potential overlap in phases 1b / 2b and 3 (see Indicative Phasing Plan).</p>
<p><b>Osney Lane:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- public realm enhancements, especially the crossing of Oxpens Road.</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.8, Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements</b></p>	<p>To be delivered in tandem with the phases of development that address the Osney Lane to ensure a high quality environment and setting for maximising the value of new development.</p> <p>(see Indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a, 1b and 2a):</p>

## MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

7.48 There are two options for the long term management of public space (streets and open spaces) – adoption of streets and spaces by the local authority to maintain in public ownership, or an alternative form of dedicated private management company.

### Public Adoption

7.49 The roads, verges and footpaths within the development which are to be offered for adoption will be constructed to the requirements of the relevant Highway Authority.

7.50 Other access roads or private drives which are to remain private will be designed to accord with the requirements of the Building Regulations or the appropriate standard/specification and will be maintained by the landowner.

7.51 Street furniture and lighting should be appropriately positioned around Oxpens, in discussion with the relevant Highway Authority.

### Private Management

7.52 An alternative approach for the upkeep of public streets and spaces is for future private developer(s) to establish a private management regime. In this scenario all public realm, comprising all streets, public open spaces, squares, footways, cycleways, leisure routes and landscaping would be maintained by a private management company for the benefit of the whole.

7.53 This model would require private finance, most commonly through a management tariff imposed on new residents and businesses.

7.54 In this scenario full public access must be afforded and the development must not be gated.

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