

Foreword

We live in a fast-changing world, where how we communicate, do business, work and shop are evolving more rapidly than our predecessors thought possible. But some things do not change – the need for a secure home, a job that brings dignity as well as a means of support, the opportunity to bring up a family, to make and keep friends, all in a place that offers the opportunity to live, not merely to exist.

Oxford is a wonderful city, with a beauty and a history that brings visitors here from all over the world. We are a centre of learning and innovation on a global scale, and we have much of which we can be rightly proud. But we are also a city where inequality is stark - where decent and affordable housing is out of reach for so many of our citizens, and where poor air quality damages the lives of many more.

We need to make sure that Oxford continues to be a successful and attractive city; a place that people enjoy living and working in, as well as visiting. Oxford's Local Plan is a vital document that sets out the shape of our city, and how it will look and feel in years to come. It will guide and shape new developments, so that they respect the past and present of Oxford, while improving its future by supporting our city's people and their environment.

This new Local Plan will determine the homes, jobs, community facilities and infrastructure for the next twenty years, striking the right balance between the different pressures that Oxford and its people face. It also sets out our priorities as a city. It makes a priority of providing affordable housing, and good quality jobs. It focuses growth and development on district centres, not just on the city centre, to make sure that facilities and services are close to home and more convenient for local residents. It prioritises walking, cycling and public transport to help tackle congestion and pollution on our streets.

A Local Plan needs to respect the city of previous generations while shaping the city of the generations to come. That is what this Local Plan aims to achieve.

Introduction

Strengths, challenges and vision for Oxford

Oxford is an attractive place to live, work, study and visit. Its success means there is a high demand for land, with knock-on consequences for prices and infrastructure provision. The pressures of success can be seen in the high house prices, congestion and poor air quality in certain areas. The vision of the Plan is to build on the positive aspects of Oxford and deal positively with the issues.

Oxfords Strengths and Role:



Economy, knowledge, and research

Oxford is in a fortunate and positive position, having a broad, diverse and active economy. The city has one of the highest concentrations of knowledge intensive businesses in the UK. Oxford's role in the regional and national economy is vital. It is the 'service centre' for the Oxfordshire economy, having the fastest growing and best educated workforce, and also being the main centre of research and spin-outs in the county. Positive indicators of the strength and success of Oxford's economy include the very low levels of unemployment, the good rate of new companies being set up, and that established employers are keen to move into the city.



Retail and tourism

Oxford's high streets are full and active and the vacancy rates are low. The market is confident for the future with significant investment planned and being delivered, such as the new Westgate centre. Oxford is a major draw for visitors from overseas, domestic tourists and day visitors. It attracts approximately 7 million visitors per year, generating £780 million of income for local Oxford businesses.



Life, culture, health, and well-being

Oxford offers the opportunity for a high quality of life for its residents. It is a desirable place to live. The population is diverse and youthful giving the city life and vibrancy. The range of amenities, facilities and services available in Oxford mean it punches well above its weight for a city of this size. Oxford has excellent museums and cultural opportunities and hospitals offering cutting edge research and treatments.



History and urban environment

The wealth of historic and architectural assets in Oxford is a significant draw for investors, visitors, and those looking to locate in the city. Beyond the world renowned historic core, Oxford is made up of a series of communities with clear and distinct identities and character that bind those that live there.



Natural environment

Oxford is a city with a rich natural environment; the two rivers and their valleys and areas of real significance in terms of landscape and biodiversity are located in close proximity to large parts of the community. Areas for informal and formal recreation are easily accessible, and are important for people's health and wellbeing. They provide a vital green lung to the compact city, and provide space for formal and informal recreation.



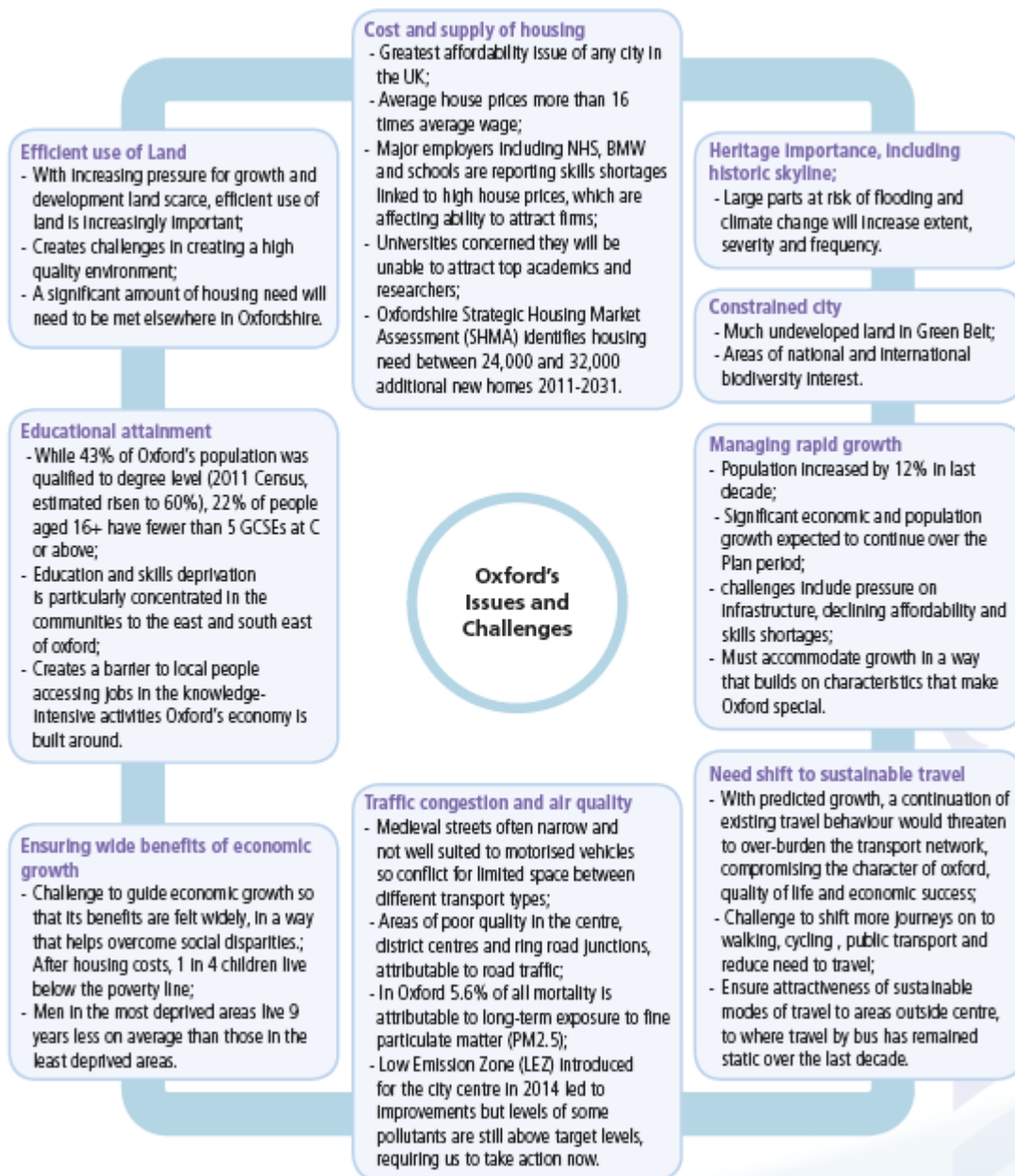
Travel

Oxford is a compact city with a well-established pattern of sustainable travel. Cycling rates are high, bus services are comprehensive and frequent, and rail services are expanding and being improved. Consequently the population of the city is less reliant on the private car than in most other British cities.



Environmental responsibility

The City Council has pledged to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions within the second half of the century. It intends to maintain its position as a leading UK Local Authority in tackling climate change and intends that by 2050 it will use only 100% renewable energy.







Vision

Oxford's Local Plan vision is linked to the City Council's Oxford's Vision 2050. Vision 2050 brings together people's aspirations and hopes for the city in the future. In that vision Oxford will be a global centre for the knowledge-based economy, and all residents will benefit from the strong economy. Deprivation and inequality will be reduced, Oxford's diverse communities will have a strong sense of togetherness and people will be able to live fulfilled, happy and healthy lives. Oxford will be an affordable place to live. It will also have an attractive, clean and healthy environment, where heritage and the natural environment are protected.

The Oxford Local Plan 2036 looks ahead 20 years and beyond, giving consideration to how it can best address the pressures and challenges Oxford faces. Oxford will continue to grow and develop. This growth will be associated with a liveable and sustainable environment that balances economic, social and environmental needs, ensuring that the city remains a highly desirable place to live, work and visit.

We want Oxford in 2036 to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be at the forefront of research and innovation;</i> • <i>be a global centre for research, education and healthcare;</i> • <i>be home to high-tech firms and start-ups;</i> • <i>have a well-educated workforce; and</i> • <i>have an appropriately skilled local workforce which provides a pool of talent to support businesses and institutions</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>continue to have a diverse, globally competitive economy led by innovation;</i> • <i>have low unemployment;</i> • <i>have used training, skills, and apprenticeships to address the divide between the prosperous and the deprived parts of the city; and</i> • <i>see the benefits of being a high-performing, smart economy, such as a clean, well-designed city with quality infrastructure</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be an exemplar of low carbon development;</i> • <i>have made progress towards the Council's commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Oxford this century;</i> • <i>have led the way in developing and adopting new technologies to help create a clean and green environment;</i> • <i>insist on high levels of energy efficiency;</i> • <i>produce energy from local, renewable and low carbon sources;</i> • <i>be resilient to the impacts of climate change;</i> • <i>have reduced private car travel and a good network of safe and accessible cycling and walking routes; and</i> • <i>have greatly reduced vehicle emissions through the use of zero emission vehicles, including buses</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>benefit from high quality new architecture and public realm which integrates well with the existing historic environment, townscape and landscape character;</i> • <i>access to high quality green spaces, cultural and community facilities;</i> • <i>have a network of open spaces rich in biodiversity offering multiple benefits to health and wellbeing through their social, environmental and recreational value;</i> • <i>accommodate its visitors successfully, particularly in the city centre, having reduced conflicts between different users; and</i> • <i>inspire people to find joy in their surroundings and interaction from their environment</i>

 <p>A strong community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have reduced inequalities;</i> • <i>offer a range of housing types, sizes and tenures to suit the varied needs of our population;</i> • <i>provide a wide range of facilities and services within easy access;</i> • <i>provide spaces and opportunities for social interaction bringing people together;</i> • <i>be made up of diverse yet cohesive communities; and</i> • <i>engender a sense of civic pride</i>
 <p>A healthy place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>offer the opportunity for healthy lifestyles;</i> • <i>provide homes and environments that offer good living standards;</i> • <i>offer access to excellent healthcare;</i> • <i>support high participation in sport and recreation;</i> • <i>provide healthy travel choices;</i> • <i>benefit from significant improvements in air quality</i>

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

A Sustainability Appraisal is an appraisal of the economic, environmental, and social effects of a plan. The intention is that it is undertaken from the start of the preparation of a plan to help ensure decisions lead to sustainable development. In June 2016 we published a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This identifies baseline information regarding, economic, social and environmental issues within Oxford and identifies other plans and guidance, to European level, that have a bearing on the formulation of plans within Oxford. This is summarised in the Sustainability Appraisal.

The Sustainability Appraisal assessed the policies and objectives of the Oxford Local Plan 2036, against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, in order to confirm general consistencies between the two sets of objectives. The SA was produced alongside the Local Plan 2036 to predict and evaluate the effects of the document. It ensures that all aspects of sustainability were properly considered and suggestions were made for improving sustainability. These have been incorporated into the policies where appropriate.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is a process used to assess the impacts of policies against the conservation objectives of a European site and to determine whether they would adversely affect the integrity of that site. The City Council undertook a screening process to determine whether or not the proposals of the Local Plan will have a significant effect on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was required to assess the potential impacts of the Local Plan on the SAC; alone and in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment concluded that the policies of the Local Plan can be implemented without having an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.

Chapter 1: **Spatial Strategy**

Overarching Strategy

This Plan will support the vision of Oxford as a growing and developing city. This growth will be associated with a liveable and sustainable environment that balances economic, social and environmental needs, ensuring that the city remains a highly desirable place to live, work and visit.

Addressing the housing issue is a key priority and this Plan will aim to provide more homes while protecting and enhancing the Oxford's unique historic and natural environment. The Plan seeks to support the growth in the Oxford economy in key sectors linked to its economic strengths and contributing to advancements in learning and innovation locally, nationally and globally. The focus of new development will be on intensifying development on previously developed land, as this is not only best practice, but essential in a constrained urban environment like Oxford.

The Oxford Local Plan 2036 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development incorporating clear policies as to how this presumption is to be applied to development across the city.

Policy S1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants to find solutions jointly which mean that applications for sustainable development can be approved where possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with Oxford's Local Plan (and, where relevant, with neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and unless:

- a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- b) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted

Spatial application of the strategy

This Plan supports the role and function of the City Centre, district centres and transport nodes, as the most sustainable locations for new development. Oxford is made up of several main centres (see Spatial Strategy Diagram). These areas act as centres for the local community, and also function as transport hubs. These centres are vibrant places to be, with a mix of uses and people working, learning, shopping, meeting and visiting for leisure. It is important to build on the opportunity for activities to cluster together, such as offices, student accommodation and the universities, or medical research and clinical practice.

These centres are well connected to their surrounding residential areas by public transport, walking and cycling networks. Directing new developments that attract lots of people to these existing centres, reduces the need to travel because of the variety of facilities in one place and it also maximises the opportunity to use existing routes and networks to travel by walking, cycling and public transport.

Oxford has developed at the confluence of two rivers in a 'green bowl'. Its built heritage, especially its dreaming spires, is iconic. The connection between the built environment and Oxford's setting within the wider landscape is part of Oxford's special character. The network of green fingers that extend from the surrounding countryside along the river and canal corridors and into the heart of the city are a vital part of Oxford's character.

City Centre

The role of Oxford city centre as a primary focus for shopping, employment, leisure, education and cultural activities as well as a major tourist destination is vitally important to the overall success of Oxford. This varied role and mix of uses mean that it draws people in from all over the city, the county, and much further afield. It is performing very successfully against a range of measures, the range of services and amenities it offers is high, retail vacancies are low and visitor numbers are high. This success has however led to problems with congestion, air quality and over-crowding of the pavements and public realm. **To address these problems and to accommodate some of the growth predicted it will be important to manage the competing interests in the city centre.**

Much of the city centre is covered by the central conservation area and contains the medieval core of the university. The city centre also includes the West End, which is the area of the city centre with the main opportunity for growth. This area is considered as an Area of Change in Chapter 9. The Central Area Conservation Appraisal has identified principal issues in the central conservation area, which are:

- pressure on public space in the core area streets from pedestrian saturation and buses
- lack of accessible squares and green space
- controlled access to green space
- uncertain retail future
- design of new buildings
- managing the setting
- conservation area boundary on the western side

There are opportunities to manage the competing interests in the city centre. This may be possible through a review of the access and transport arrangements (for example by removing unnecessary trips/miles journeyed); providing opportunities to access "town centre uses" in alternative locations (for example providing for more facilities in district or local centres); and reviewing the role of specific streets/areas of the city centre to provide for different needs (for example a restaurant district or tourist focused area) and increasing the public realm and capacity of streets. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies opportunities to enhance the conservation in ways that would sustain the city's cultural, economic and social prosperity:

- rebalance the space within streets from vehicles to pedestrians
- identify sites for a new network of 'micro parks' where people can stop and dwell in streets
- increase public access to existing green spaces and the waterways
- promote development of opportunity sites in ways which contribute to and celebrate the characteristics of the city that make it so distinctive and special

Cowley Centre

Cowley Centre (including Templars Square and the John Allen Centre) is second in Oxford's hierarchy of centres as the Primary District Centre. This recognises the special qualities and features of the Cowley Centre that elevate its status above the other District Centres. These include the scale of retail and service provision (it scores much higher in national rankings of shopping centres than the other District Centres), the range of retail on offer (especially strong on comparison goods and low vacancy rates) the size of the catchment area and its importance to users (many of whom would visit the Cowley Centre in place of the City centre), its role as a public transport interchange, and its capacity to accommodate growth and opportunities for redevelopment.

Planning permission was granted for a large-scale redevelopment scheme in 2017 which represents a significant investment (£60 million) in the quality of the buildings and public realm and a strengthening of the range and quantity of facilities provided (including residential development). This reinforces the status of the Cowley Centre and its importance in the hierarchy of centres. Beyond this scheme, there continue to be opportunities for redevelopment of adjacent sites within and around the District Centre. The City Council will encourage schemes which make more efficient use of the sites available and strengthen and diversify the range of services and facilities on offer to the local community and its wider catchment area.

East Oxford-Cowley Road District Centre

The Cowley Road is the main centre for a large and diverse population of East Oxford, including many students; it provides for the convenience shopping needs for the local area but generally plays a less important role in terms of the retail provision than other District Centres. It is however particularly strong in terms of leisure and service provision. It is a vibrant, diverse and dynamic street which is an important part of its character and one that is treasured by local residents, city wide and visitors alike. An important part of its identity is the role it plays in the evening economy with the O2 Academy, Ultimate Picture Palace Cinema and a wide range of restaurants, bars, cafes and takeaways. In addition there are large community facilities such as the East Oxford Health Centre and Oxford Central Mosque, and community features such as the farmer's market and annual Cowley Road Carnival which add to vibrancy and community feel.

The Cowley Road is a busy arterial route into St Clements and the city centre at one end, and Oxford Business Park and BMW at the other. It runs through a highly populated area and the character of the district centre reflects this.

Headington District Centre

Headington District Centre is focussed on the main arterial of London Road. The majority of retail and services are concentrated around the crossroads of London Road with Windmill Road and Old High Street. The centre provides a range of convenience retail facilities but fewer comparison shops. It does however, have a good range of retail services including banks and a local market. A large proportion of the food and drink offering is independent. As a centre it primarily provides for its local resident population, having its own library in Bury Knowle Park and St Andrew's CoE Primary School to the eastern edge of the district centre.

A distinctive feature of Headington is the large potential catchment from local institutions and businesses. The district centre is very close to the John Radcliffe Hospital and to the Oxford Brookes University campus. These are both sites with large numbers of workers, students and visitors and

whilst in recent years each of those sites has invested in their own town centre use facilities, there is an opportunity to try and capture more of this potential market. As the Headington Hospitals grow and develop there is an opportunity for better physical connections between them, and the district centre will be key to facilitating this.

Summertown District Centre

Summertown District Centre is focussed on the main arterial of Banbury Road and on the adjacent South Parade. The retail balance in Summertown District Centre is more in favour of comparison shopping and it benefits from some independent retailers and higher end national chains. There is a strong representation of services and community and leisure facilities with the Ferry Sports Centre, including a swimming pool, and the North Oxford Centre. There are also many schools in the Summertown area, both state and private.

The centre has an attractive feel with interesting shops, coffee shops and a weekly farmers market. Summertown is an attractive location for employers and employees; there are a significant number of office developments in the district centre and around the fringes. It offers good public transport, clustering benefits with other office and service uses, and a vibrant centre for lunchtime and after work browsing.

Blackbird Leys District Centre

Blackbird Leys District Centre provides some small scale convenience retail facilities for the local community; however the stronger aspect is the range of community facilities including the leisure centre, swimming pools, community centre, library, college and public house. These collectively provide a strong heart for the local community; along with open space and playing fields. In the case particularly of the college and the pools, they also attract people from a much wider area to use their facilities.

Surveys showed that users of the Blackbird Leys District Centre expressed a strong preference for accessing the Cowley Centre for their comparison shopping rather than making the trip to the city centre, this emphasises the importance and role of the Cowley Centre Primary District Centre.

There are significant redevelopment opportunities at the Blackbird Leys District centre.

Areas of change

As well as the district centres there are other areas of the city where significant change is expected or best directed. These are discussed in Chapter 9 and each has a site allocation within it. The other areas of change are:

Cowley Branch Line

This area already contains the Oxford Business Park and Science Park and the BMW Mini plant. This area is suitable for intensification of employment uses and for new and increased density residential development.

The Old Road area, Headington

This has traditionally housed hospitals and more recently has become an important centre of medical research. There is increasing and extremely beneficial cross-over between research and

medical practice. The long-term existence of hospitals in this area, and their co-location, also brings benefits in terms of there being an established infrastructure network. Therefore, this area is a key focus for new medical research facilities and medical use.

Osney Mead and the West End

This area to the west of the city centre provides the main opportunities for growth of the city centre and for growth in a central location of innovation and industry, particularly linked to the main university campus.

Marston Road/Headington Hill

This area contains some significant academic sites, including Oxford Brookes' Headington Hill campus and sites opposite and acquired by the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. The institutions have aspirations of growth at these sites, which needs to be managed carefully in this sensitive area.

Northern Gateway/Oxford North

This site has already been allocated, and is the subject of the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan, which forms part of the Oxford Development Plan. The AAP makes provision for 90,000m² of employment land (restricted to the science, research and development fields) and 500 new homes. This site will come forward for development during the Local Plan period and will have a significant impact on the supply of specialised employment floorspace and deliver one of the largest housing sites in the city. Therefore whilst it is not subject to an allocation in this Local Plan, it will nonetheless constitute an area of change in the context of the vision for the city.

Barton

Similarly the Barton site, located in the north east of the city between Barton and Northway, is the subject of an Area Action Plan which forms part of the Oxford Development Plan. The AAP makes provision for up to 800 new homes, a primary school, some retail and associated uses. Work has commenced on the early phases of the development, and whilst the site is not an allocation in this Local Plan, its development over the plan period will also constitute an area of change in the context of the vision for the city.

Spatial Strategy Diagram



Legend

- Potential Cowley Branchline Stations
- Cowley Branchline
- Park and Ride
- Key Sustainable Travel Routes
- community/transport hub



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 Ordnance Survey 100019348.
 Scale: (A0)



Key elements of the Local Plan strategy

Building on Oxford's economic strengths and ensuring prosperity and opportunities for all

Objectives

- to build on Oxford's economic strengths as a global centre for research, learning and health care
- to remain at the heart of the Oxfordshire economy and an important net contributor to the national economy through its key strengths in the knowledge intensive businesses (such as education, health, science and technology) and as a leading environmentally sustainable city
- to reduce inequalities across Oxford, particularly in employment, health and education
- to provide a diverse range of employment opportunities to meet the needs of the city's businesses and residents, allowing Oxford to grow and function sustainably, and with a skilled workforce ready to fill the employment opportunities that arise

Oxford is in a fortunate and positive position, having a broad, diverse, active and growing economy. The Local Plan seeks to help support Oxford's role as a fast-growing city, generating economic growth for the local and national economy. The Local Plan **protects the most important employment sites**; however no new employment sites are identified. Instead the policy approach seeks to make the best use of all existing sites through **intensification and modernisation** to accommodate the forecast demand for new employment floorspace over the plan period. Site allocations in Chapter 9 aim to ensure best use is made of important employment sites such as the Oxford Business Park and Science Park, as well as maximising the potential for health sites to diversify to provide linked research and development. Planned employment growth including that at Northern Gateway aims to ensure that the **forecasted economic growth** envisaged in the economic strategy, Housing and Growth Deal and the Local Industrial Strategy can be accommodated.

The city has one the **highest concentrations of knowledge intensive businesses** in the UK. It has the fastest growing and one of the best educated workforces in the country and is the main centre of research and spin-outs in the county. Oxford has real strengths in the knowledge economy. There is a wealth of research and development being undertaken directly and indirectly linked to the universities and medical research organisations. This has resulted in many other companies being attracted to the city owing to the quality of the workforce and clustering effect. The **Local Plan supports the growth of these sectors** and puts in place measures to manage the effects of success.

Whilst Oxford has real strengths in the knowledge economy, other B1 office uses and B2 industrial uses make an important contribution to the economy of Oxford, offering a range of employment opportunities for all residents. Through the use of employment site categories the plan seeks to balance these uses to ensure that this **diverse employment base** is maintained.

The Plan seeks to **secure opportunities for local employment, training and businesses** from large developments to share the benefits of growth. Due to the nature of most housing growth in Oxford through small scale sites, most school provision will need to be made by growing existing schools.

The Local Plan takes a clear approach to **restrict the future growth of private colleges and language schools** to ensure that land is available for more important uses to be developed such as housing and student accommodation for the universities or B1 office use.

A pleasant place to live, delivering housing with a mixed and balanced community

Objectives

- to deliver as much housing as possible whilst balancing other important needs of the city's residents and businesses
- to deliver affordable housing and ensure that it meets the requirements of those in need
- to plan for an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of existing and future residents as far as possible

Addressing the need for housing is the number one priority of the City Council. The Council will make full use of the range of tools and mechanisms at its disposal to ensure housing is delivered to meet the needs of the city. In the Local Plan this has involved allocating or allowing for housing development on as many sites as possible including some that are greenfield land and Green Belt, as well as increasing densities and building heights where possible to make the most efficient use of land. The Local Plan places the greatest priority on the development of housing. The policy approach on site allocations has been to **allocate as many sites as possible for housing** where deliverable.

There is not the capacity within Oxford's administrative boundary to meet all housing need. As far as possible, this need should be met within Oxford or very close to its boundaries, as this will enable new development to be connected to areas of employment and other facilities by sustainable modes of transport. Any urban extensions to Oxford will therefore be well integrated into the city and will maximise the benefit of existing infrastructure. Discussions with the other Oxfordshire districts regarding Oxford's unmet housing need are progressing positively; three of the neighbouring districts have agreed to accommodate an element of this need and are progressing with their own Local Plan reviews to facilitate this. The next stage is to work collectively across the county in the production of the Joint Strategic Spatial Plan which will identify broad areas for the accommodation of Oxfordshire's growth in the next round of Local Plans.

In Oxford there is a chronic shortage of Affordable Housing which can take many forms. The Local Plan strongly supports the provision of housing that is affordable in perpetuity, that is permanently affordable. **Social rented housing is vital to provide homes for those in particular housing need** and the Local Plan continues to prioritise this.

The Local Plan introduces a new policy approach aimed at **helping key employers in the city to make housing provision to help meet the need of their staff**. In recognition of the issues that employers face in recruiting and retaining staff due to the unaffordability of housing in the city, the Local Plan

allows in some circumstances employers to meet their own need and add to the overall supply of housing in the city.

Provision of good quality, well managed student accommodation will continue to be required in Oxford. However it often competes for sites with general housing and a wide range of organisations seek to deliver it. The Local Plan therefore places **restrictions on the locations suitable for student accommodation and limits its occupancy to students at one of the two universities** on academic courses of over a year. This balance supports the two universities and continues the prioritisation of general housing.

Given the need and lack of affordability of housing in Oxford, it is important that innovative approaches to housing provision are pursued, to enable a broad range of supply. **Private rented housing is likely to be the most achievable option for many.** Ways to deliver this affordably so that attractive housing can be found for workers needed to support the functioning of the city's economy will be important. Shared housing, including co-housing and **new purpose built HMOs** will also be important ways to ensure delivery of new housing. While a small contributor to Oxford's overall housing provision, there is an increasing demand created by those choosing to live on our waterways. The Local Plan commits to protect existing provision and to explore opportunities to increase moorings and services.

The Local Plan seeks to ensure that developments are of a high quality and provide for their occupants needs into the future with the necessary flexibility as lifestyles, behaviours and technologies change. The Local Plan **incorporates the national space standards, the optional building regulation on accessible homes and standards for outdoor amenity space** to ensure that designs provide adequate space for occupants, maximise useable space and provide scope to adapt for future requirements.

Making wise use of our limited resources and securing a good quality local environment

Objectives

- to ensure new homes are adaptable to the changing needs of the population and to climate change, as well as being energy efficient to help reduce further climate change
- to achieve improved air quality and high levels of energy efficiency, renewable energy provision and water conservation, maximising Oxford's potential in low carbon technologies
- to ensure efficient use of land by seeking opportunities for facilities to be multi-functional and by maximising efficient use of scarce land
- to manage water flow and to help protect people and their property from the impacts of flooding
- to achieve significant progress towards its net zero greenhouse gas emissions aspiration across Oxford, with the City Council leading by example by continuing to reduce its own emissions and increase its use of renewable energy

The Local Plan recognises that **addressing climate change** is one of the core land use planning principles and the Local Plan contains policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008.

New development is expected to **incorporate sustainable design and construction principles** of the highest environmental standards in order to reduce carbon emissions, conserve water, minimise waste and flood risk and also incorporate measure to enhance biodiversity.

The focus of new development will be on intensifying development on previously developed land. This consolidating approach to developing the city in future is not only best practice but essential in a constrained urban environment like Oxford. The Plan will seek to identify sites that are underused for example with low-rise buildings and unused spaces, or in a use that does not make most efficient use of land, such as large surface-level car parks. The redevelopment of such sites will help to accommodate the development needs of the city in a sustainable and efficient way; locating new development alongside existing uses, facilities and public transport connections. Land is a finite resource and Oxford is particularly constrained. **Due to the limited amount of development space, intensification of uses on sites will be an important way to accommodate growth.** This will need to be delivered to a high quality and include consideration of density, indoor and outdoor space standards and heights.

A large area of the city is at some risk of flooding and a lot of development already exists in the high risk areas which do not incorporate features such as SuDs, which help to mimic the natural drainage arrangements of the site. The Local Plan policy approach is to allow very careful **re-development of existing brownfield sites in Flood Zone 3b to make the best use of existing sites in sustainable locations.** The flood alleviation scheme will help to convey water away from development infrastructure and help to reduce flooding in the most at risk areas.

The City Council wants to **promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities and reduce health inequalities.** Developments which help to deliver these aims will be supported. For major development the Council will require a HIA which would provide details of implementation and monitoring.

Most air pollution in Oxford comes from diesel and petrol powered modes of transport, although domestic and employment emissions will become more significant over the lifetime of the Plan. In addition to contributing to air pollution, transport also contributes to carbon emissions. The ability to reduce harmful emissions will depend on a variety of measures. These include **reducing the need to travel, promoting development that can be accessed by sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling, measures that discourage car use, such as minimizing public and private parking and providing infrastructure to support low emission vehicles and sustainable modes of travel, such as bike parking and electric charging points.** It is important in areas of poor air quality, that development is located and designed to minimize the potential negative impacts of air quality on its inhabitants in addition to ensuring the development itself does not contribute to air pollution.

Protecting and enhancing Oxford's green setting, open spaces and waterways

Objectives

- to protect and enhance a network of multi-functional green spaces and ensure easy access to high quality green space
- enhance green spaces so they deliver multiple benefits to health and wellbeing, are rich in biodiversity, and help the city adapt to climate change

Green spaces are particularly valuable in a compact city such as Oxford, and will become more important with the population increasing. Oxford's waterways are a fundamental part of Oxford's character, landscape and setting. The green and blue network brings a multitude of benefits including environmental (biodiversity, water management and air quality) to social (wellbeing, heritage and sense of place) and economic (direct jobs, tourism and creating an attractive business environment). The Local Plan focuses on **ensuring that green spaces are as high-quality and as multi-functional as possible, with public access** particularly valued, as well as ensuring a network of green spaces connecting wildlife corridors and green accessible routes. **Along all of Oxford's waterways, new development that preserves these functions and in particular that enhances the recreational value, transport value and setting of these areas is to be encouraged** This network will be protected and enhanced where possible and a positive approach to the sensitive development of residential and temporary visitor moorings adopted, in recognition of the contribution made to Oxford's housing supply by lawful opportunities to live on our waterways..

The most important sites and species for biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected. The City Council will require assessment of a proposals impact on biodiversity, where appropriate on-site mitigation measures and then compensation measures to off-set any loss. The Local Plan will ensure that there is **no net loss in biodiversity**.

The City Council considers that exceptional circumstances exist to justify a Green Belt boundary review due to the need to support Oxford's economic success and its dependence on the delivery of additional housing to meet housing need. This Local Plan de-designates X sites and allocates them for housing development. This Local Plan reiterates that **planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt**.

Enhancing Oxford's unique built environment

Objectives

- to preserve and enhance Oxford's exceptional built form with its legacy of archaeology and monuments, historic buildings, modern architecture, important views and distinctive townscape characteristics
- to ensure that all new development delivers a high quality of urban design, place making, architecture and public realm, integrating the historic environment with modern needs

New development in Oxford will be expected to be of a high design quality that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located and draws from this to create an individual character drawing on the context. Developments should be easy to understand and move through, be capable of adaptation for alternative uses, and help create an attractive and expanded public realm. This Local Plan identifies key areas for change where multiple sites in close proximity offer an opportunity to apply good placemaking principles on a wider scale.

Oxford's long history is reflected in its outstanding buildings and features. This vast number and wide range of historic assets is a real benefit and advantage to the city and it is fundamental to the national identity of the city. The Local Plan seeks to deliver new development in a way that respects

and compliments this rich history, the historic buildings, parks and gardens; waterways, conservation areas, archaeology and areas of distinct local character and townscape. The emphasis of the plan is on the **positive management of change, reflecting the city's capacity to move forward while preserving its irreplaceable heritage**. New development should be of a quality that upholds the city's international reputation and adds the next layer of Oxford's future heritage.

There are important views of Oxford's world famous and unique skyline from within the city, from the surrounding meadows and hillsides and across the city. The views of the skyline of the historic centre are fundamentally important to Oxford and must be protected. Development of new higher buildings in the right locations is an important part of accommodating growth over the plan period. **New interventions in the historic skyline must make a positive contribution** if they are to be supported alongside views of Oxford's 'dreaming spires'.

The public's main experience of buildings is from streets and public spaces. This Plan puts in place a series of policies and approaches designed to **ensure that the quality of the public realm in Oxford is enhanced**; this includes requiring high quality design that creates attractive and pleasant spaces designed with the needs of all users and offering choice; adjusting the balance between road users in favour of pedestrians and cyclists and using ensuring that street furniture and materials are attractive and will stand the test of time. It will be important in Oxford that the best use is made of every public space, particularly in the city centre and in the district centres where more development is anticipated. Opportunities for the creation of new public spaces, particularly in the city centre where people can gather socially and rest should be explored.

Ensuring efficient movement into and around the city

Objectives

- to ensure growth in the proportion of people walking and cycling to access jobs and facilities
- to provide enhanced facilities for walking and cycling, ensuring they are the primary modes for travel around the city
- to ensure walking and cycling routes are complemented with well managed and attractive public transport routes, and that car use is minimised

The approach of the Local Plan is to ensure that new development is located on established sustainable transport networks. The spatial **focus for new development that attracts large numbers of people is on district centres and the city centre**. This is to help ensure these developments are easily reached by sustainable means of travel and that linked trips are maximised. Reducing the need to travel into the city centre by locating facilities and services in district centres will relieve pressure on the arterial roads.

Walking is an essential component of almost all journeys and it has many advantages over other modes. Oxford's compact nature makes it a very walkable city. The spatial strategy expressed by the Local Plan **encourages walking because of the co-location of facilities, safeguarding of routes and connections** through new developments and positive design of the pedestrian environment. Oxford's established cycling culture and the relatively compact and flat urban area mean that cycling levels are already high. The Local Plan seeks to encourage more cycling and in particular more

people to cycle by providing for more safe cycle routes (especially off-road through development sites and parks, where appropriate) and more cycle parking and changing facilities.

Over the Plan period there are likely to be improvements to Oxford Rail Station, to the links with Oxford Parkway Station and the potential reopening of the Cowley branch line for passenger trains. The Local Plan recognises the opportunities these bring and **safeguards the land needed for new stations** and land needed for improvements to the line. The majority of public transport journeys in Oxford are made by bus, and so the City Council will work with the County Council and bus companies to **improve bus routes and facilitate bus rapid transit** as set out in the Oxford Transport Strategy, particularly where they improve accessibility or have public realm benefits.

Opportunities for successful car free housing and workplaces are high in Oxford because of the number of Controlled Parking Zones, the availability of walking and cycling routes, and excellent public transport options. The Local Plan (along with additional measures proposed through the Local Transport Plan) will effect **a reduction in the provision of residential and workplace parking** through improvements to alternative modes, parking restrictions and management measures, and the encouragement to redevelop car parks for higher value uses. Over the plan period it is anticipated that improvements in technology, the growth of the sharing economy and the attitude to car ownership are anticipated to enhance this approach.

Most air pollution in Oxford currently comes from diesel and petrol powered modes of transport. The Local Plan sets out and supports a variety of measures to reduce emissions and therefore improve air quality including **reducing the need to travel, promoting walking and cycling, discouraging car use through minimizing public and private parking and providing infrastructure to support low emission vehicles and sustainable modes of travel**. In addition, **new development will be expected to provide electric charging points**.

Cycling in Oxford is an important and growing mode of transport. The City Council wishes to continue **to encourage this active and sustainable form of travel** and will seek to ensure that new developments provide secure and convenient cycle parking.

Providing communities with facilities and services and ensuring Oxford is a vibrant and enjoyable city to live in and visit

Objectives

- promote district centres as the hubs for local community focus and identity, with transport interchange and activity and providing a range of social, leisure, sport and cultural facilities appropriate to Oxford's diverse communities alongside housing and employment opportunities
- to ensure that development is supported by the appropriate infrastructure and community facilities
- maintain the regional role of Oxford city centre as a primary focus for shopping, employment, leisure and cultural activities, with district centres playing an increased and complementary role

Oxford has an established network of centres (see Spatial Strategy Diagram) with the city centre at the heart supported by the district centres. The strategy of the Local Plan is for **district centres to play an extended role in accommodating growth and developing their function as ‘hubs’ for the local communities**. This approach offers the opportunity to provide facilities more locally for communities, reducing the need to travel and easing the pressure on the City Centre. The Local Plan seeks to build on the strengths of each of the district centres (whether that is a focus on employment, community facilities, retail or the evening economy for example) and the opportunities they provide for public transport connections and provision of other infrastructure and facilities.

The Local Plan also makes provision for **district centres to play an enhanced role in accommodating a wide range of town centre uses**, complementing those provided in the City Centre. Whilst the city and district centres will still play an important role in providing the city’s retail facilities (in the shopping frontages), changing shopping patterns and the need to locate a wide range of facilities in accessible locations means that the Local Plan provides for a move away from the traditional retail focus to a new approach for the high street with increased employment, entertainment and cultural uses and more housing developed on the upper levels and outside of the core shopping frontages.

Tourism is an important element of Oxford’s economy. The city is world famous and attracts an increasing number of visitors and overnight stays; it is a top ten destination of the national tourism industry. The Local Plan seeks to **manage the negative impacts of day visitors** through the management of coaches and congestion of the arterial roads and public realm of the city centre; **and encourage tourists to stay longer** through granting permission for short-stay accommodation and tourist attractions in locations where they are easily accessible through sustainable modes and where they can be good neighbours.

Oxford has a rich infrastructure of cultural and social activities and venues, from theatres, museums, cinemas, galleries, sports and music venues to restaurants and pubs. These uses help to **keep the centres vibrant and active and add greatly to the local quality of life**. The Local Plan seeks to encourage the development of the uses within the city and district centres and **protect them from being lost through redevelopment to other higher land value uses**.

A wide range of community, leisure, sport, recreation and cultural facilities appropriate to Oxford’s diverse communities are supported. The Local Plan seeks to **retain existing facilities, unless suitable and accessible alternatives are proposed**. New facilities that support the growth of the city and enhance its sustainability, such as state schools, primary healthcare facilities and community centres will be supported; **new development that actively supports and sustains community wellbeing** is to be welcomed.

The scale of housing need in Oxford is so large that even if every site came forward for housing, we would still not satisfy it. A similar challenge exists for economic development; there are many and diverse needs and pressures on the city. A strong and healthy city is characterised by its ability to cater for the needs of its residents, workers and visitors. Given this it is important to allocate or protect sites for employment, retail, education, health, recreation and range of other uses alongside those for housing. The Local Plan seeks to **strike the right balance** between providing for these competing uses whilst making as much significant progress towards accommodating more homes.

Delivering the Strategy

In order to deliver the Vision for Oxford 2036, the spatial strategy and plan objectives, the provision of infrastructure will need to be funded and delivered in a timely manner to support development.

It is important to ensure that roads, local services and facilities can cope with the increased demand resulting from the new development proposed to deliver the spatial strategy, objectives and the vision for Oxford 2036. Effective demand management, (for example, SMART metering and other mechanisms for managing the demand for energy and water efficiency, and travel planning), and making better use of existing infrastructure, will play an important part in supporting the delivery of new development required to deliver the spatial strategy for Oxford in 2036.

Where new development creates a need for new or improved infrastructure, contributions from developers will be sought to make the development acceptable in planning terms. New development should also make best use of infrastructure demand management. In some cases, the cumulative impact of individual applications may be considered when assessing infrastructure requirements, taking account of other planning obligations such as affordable housing. Contributions from a particular development will be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the contribution to the cumulative impact from the relevant scheme; and if necessary address any immediate unacceptable short term problems.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tariff in the form of a standard charge on new development, which Oxford, as a CIL Charging Authority, sets to help the funding of infrastructure. The principle behind CIL is for those who benefit financially from a planning permission to pay towards the cost of funding the infrastructure needed to support development. Since most development has some impact on infrastructure, it follows that it should contribute to the cost of providing or improving infrastructure.

S2: Development Contributions

Developer contributions will be sought where needs arise as a result of new development.

Developer contributions will be used to ensure the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure is in place to support development. Contributions will be used to mitigate the adverse impacts of development (including a proportional contribution to address the cumulative impact of development proposals). The City Council will, where appropriate seek to secure such measures through planning obligations. Pooled contributions will be used, where appropriate, to facilitate the necessary infrastructure in line with the development.

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