

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 June 2022  
**Report of:** Head of Planning Services  
**Title of Report:** Draft West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To ask Cabinet to formally approve the Draft West End SPD to go out to public consultation
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Pursue a zero carbon Oxford Support thriving communities Deliver more affordable housing Enable an inclusive economy
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	This SPD seeks to provide further detail and advice on the implementation and delivery of key West End policies within the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036.
<b>Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:</b>	
1.	<b>Approve</b> the Draft West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to go out to public consultation; and
2.	<b>Authorise</b> the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the SPD prior to going out to public consultation.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Draft West End Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Appendix 2	Spatial framework
Appendix 3	Design guide
Appendix 4	Risk Assessment

## Summary and background

1. The spatial framework and design guide for the West End and Osney Mead area were prepared by consultants, Levitt Bernstein, and provides the evidence base for this supplementary planning document (SPD). The purpose and status of an SPD is to provide further detail and advice on the implementation of existing adopted policies. The Oxford Local Plan 2036 includes a number of key policies in the West End area of the city, which includes the designation of the area as an 'Area of Change' (Policy AOC1), which sets out the principles for the development of the area, together with Policy SP1 which supports mixed-use developments and the delivery of housing on key sites. Policy SP2 allocates Osney Mead for a mixed-use development including employment and academic uses, as well as some housing and student accommodation.
2. The detailed contextual analysis shows that there are significant development and regeneration opportunities but also that there are key infrastructure needs in order to fully realise these, which will require a holistic view of the whole West End and Osney Mead area. The principal aim of the SPD is therefore to help ensure development takes place in a cohesive way that contributes to the wider vision for the area. West End and Osney Mead is a large and sensitive area on the edge of the city centre that has a great deal of potential.
3. The West End and Osney Mead SPD provides an overarching spatial framework, which will help to co-ordinate public realm improvements, infrastructure, design and movement across the area, as key sites are brought forward by developers over time. It allows for the wider vision for the West End as a whole as an innovation district with a mix of uses and homes as part of a strong and sustainable community to be fully considered and planned for.
4. The SPD summarises and explains how to use and apply the place-making and design principles of the Spatial Framework and Design Guide (which will be included as appendices to the SPD, and which are appended to this report as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3) to develop and assess new development proposals. The SPD explains what is needed in different areas, or types of areas, in the West End and Osney Mead in order to meet the individual strategies, and aspects from the Design Guide. For all sites this can be used to identify the parts of the strategy and design guide advice that is most relevant to each part of the area.
5. A programme for consultation with the public, key stakeholders and landowners is set out in this report, which is guided by the legal planning Regulations for preparing a Supplementary Planning Document and the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The public consultation is intended to start at the end of June and run for a period of 6 weeks. At the end of that period, a summary of the consultation responses will be prepared and published and a report taken to Cabinet, which will include the summary of comments together with the proposed changes considered necessary to the SPD in response and following careful consideration by Cabinet to seek its adoption.

6. The City Council appointed consultants, Levitt Bernstein, to undertake work on a spatial framework for the West End and Osney Mead, which is attached as Appendix 2. In addition, Levitt Bernstein produced a Design Guide for the area, which is attached as Appendix 3. The Council ran an initial consultation on the issues that needed to be considered in developing an SPD for the West End early in 2021<sup>1</sup>. As part of the preparation of the Spatial Framework by the consultants, a stakeholder workshop consultation on the vision and scope of this work also took place in 2021. In preparing the spatial framework the consultants work, and in particular, the vision, has been informed and developed through stakeholder meetings and workshops and extensive collection and interrogation of an evidence base. These pieces of work are set out in the appendix to the Spatial Framework.
7. The Spatial Framework (Appendix 2) is based on significant contextual analysis, including on policy, emerging developments, historic context, demographics, activity, character, public realm, movement and flooding. This concludes with an identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the West End.
8. This analysis shows that there are significant development and regeneration opportunities, but also that there are key infrastructure needs in order to fully realise these, which will require a holistic view of the whole West End and Osney Mead area. The principal aim of the SPD is therefore to help ensure development takes place in a cohesive way that contributes to the wider vision for the area. The West End and Osney Mead is a large and sensitive area on the edge of the city centre with a great deal of potential.
9. The Spatial Framework sets out the place-making principles for new development, which seek to achieve a vibrant community, a creative place, a global enterprise and an accessible and connected place. There are three golden-threads that run through the spatial framework and the SPD that are important to every aspect of the built and natural environment. These are the sustainability strategy, social value strategy and economic strategy.
10. The Spatial framework and the SPD include strategies for individual aspects of development in the area, such as enhancing the green and blue network, public realm and movement. The Design Guide adds more detail on what aspects to consider in design terms within these strategies in order to ensure high quality and cohesive design across the area. These pieces of work help to consider the area cohesively and ensure the various developments coming forward are set within a holistic overarching framework.
11. A Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out to assess the alternative options against the Sustainability objectives that were assessed previously as potentially being impacted by the SPD. This has built on the Sustainability Appraisal Screening and Scoping Report that was published last year. This work has informed the drafting of the SPD. The Sustainability Appraisal will be published alongside the draft SPD and also available for consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> Consultation report:

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7691/west\\_end\\_spd\\_and\\_osney\\_mead\\_spd\\_consultation\\_report](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7691/west_end_spd_and_osney_mead_spd_consultation_report)

## The purpose and status of the SPD

12. The purpose and status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide further detail and advice on the implementation of existing adopted policies. There are many adopted policies in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 that are likely to be relevant to new development. The SPD is intended to give detail to show how and where these should be applied to development within the West End and Osney Mead area. Of particular importance to the West End are the following policies:
  - **Policy AOC1:** which designates the West End and Osney Mead area as an 'Area of Change' and sets out principles for development in the area including that it creates high-density urban living that makes efficient use of land, maintains a vibrant mix of uses and maximises the area's contribution to Oxford's knowledge economy, following the intention of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to create an innovation district.
  - **Policy SP1:** that supports mixed-use developments across the West End with the aim to deliver at least 734 homes across key sites which include Oxford Station / Becket Street; Student Castle, Osney lane; Worcester Street car park; Land between Park End and Hythe Bridge Street (Island site) and Oxpens; and
  - **Policy SP2:** which allocates Osney Mead Industrial Estate for a mixed use development including employment and academic uses, as well as affordable housing, employer-linked affordable housing, open market housing, and student accommodation.
13. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (paragraph 8(3)) states that: '*Any policies contained in a supplementary planning document must not conflict with the adopted development plan.*' The SPD gives greater detail to policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 explaining how to meet the policy requirements in the West End, setting out in more detail what is expected. The SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application made on sites in the West End.
14. The continued success of Oxford's economy is critical to the creation of more diverse, cleaner, greener and better paid jobs for its residents, and those of the wider region. It is also vital to the success of the national economy, supporting globally significant innovation and a supply chain that benefits the wider UK economy. The city centre is a very suitable location for this activity, integrated into the heart of the city, and the region, with activity at all times of day and with sustainable transport links. As such, the creation of an innovation district in the West End will support the resilience of Oxford and Oxfordshire's economy for the benefit of local communities and UKPLC. The need for Oxford to build on its economic strengths and make its contribution to the national and local economy aligns with the key objectives for both the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019), the Draft Oxford Economic Strategy and City centre Strategy.
15. The West End and Osney Mead SPD provides an overarching spatial framework, helping to co-ordinate public realm improvements, infrastructure, design and movement across the area, as key sites are brought forward by developers over time. It seeks to ensure that the wider vision for the area as a whole is fully

considered and planned for by setting out strategies for different aspects of development such as public realm, green infrastructure, movement, built form, etc. Each of these strategies is underpinned by the golden threads of sustainability (including reducing and adapting to climate change), social value and building an inclusive economy on the route to zero carbon. As such, the SPD helps provide greater certainty for the public and developers and will help to inform applicants on the design principles of place-making. The SPD then highlights some of the key issues from the spatial framework and Design Guide that are particularly relevant for the development of key sites within the West End to help guide and inform the schemes that come forward.

### **How to use the SPD**

16. The SPD summarises and explains how to use and apply the principles of the Spatial Framework (Appendix 2) and Design Guide (Appendix 3) in helping to develop, design and assess new proposals. The SPD explains what is needed in different areas or types of locations in the West End and Osney Mead in order to meet the individual strategies, and pulls in the relevant details from the Design Guide. For all sites this can be used to identify the parts of the strategy and design guide advice that is most relevant to each part of the area.
17. The SPD then picks out some key development sites, including Osney Mead, the 'Island site' between Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street, Oxpens and the Station and goes into more detail about the design principles and the interventions that need to take place. This does not replace for these the general sections sites contained in the Spatial Framework and Design Guide but should be read alongside them.
18. Some further advice and guidance is provided on the key infrastructure priorities and delivery requirements needed to implement the individual place-making strategies and for the major development sites.

### **Objectives of the SPD**

19. The key objectives and intended benefits of the SPD are to:
  - Set out the scope and parameters for development proposals;
  - Set out a clear Vision and show how it can be realised;
  - To help decision makers assess planning applications in terms of their contribution to achieving the vision for the area of change in Policy AOC1;
  - Help to unlock sites by identifying infrastructure needs generated by the cumulative developments of the area and setting out how they can best be delivered;
  - Setting out guidance and a framework to enable a comprehensive masterplan for Osney Mead in accordance with Policy SP2;
  - Provide continuity.

## **Public consultation to be undertaken**

20. The Council ran an initial public consultation on the issues that needed to be considered in developing an SPD for the West End early in 2021. As part of the preparation of the Spatial Framework by the consultants, a stakeholder workshop consultation on the vision and scope of this work also took place in 2021. The vision for the area which informed this work was to transform the West End into a vibrant mixed use area including new homes, as well as a globally recognised Innovation District, and went on to set out some initial thoughts in terms of themes on what should be included in the SPD to best guide development in the area.
21. The Council has legal planning requirements for the preparation of a supplementary planning document (SPD). These are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Part 5) provide the statutory framework for this project. In addition the Statement of Community Involvement 2021 provides some advice on how the public, key stakeholders and landowners will be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents.

The following consultation methods will therefore be used to seek public, stakeholder and landowner comments on the draft West End and Osney Mead SPD:

- A press release;
- A press advert
- Notification by email (or letter where no email available) to all those listed on the existing planning policy database and who responded to the previous round of consultation;
- Publicity and documents made available on the planning policy pages of the Council's website;
- Publicity through social media; and
- A poster on community notice boards to inform the public and stakeholders where the SCI can be viewed electronically, with a web link and a person who can be contacted by telephone at the City Council if someone wishes assistance.

## **The next stages**

22. The Draft West End and Osney Mead SPD will go out to public consultation towards the end of June for a 6 week period.
23. On completion of the public consultation a summary of the comments received and the officer response to those comments will be prepared; together with the changes considered necessary to the SPD. A statement of public consultation will be published which will explain how the consultation has been carried out together with a summary of the comments received.
24. A report to Cabinet will then be prepared which sets out the comments received from the public and key stakeholders together with the changes proposed to be made to the SPD. Cabinet will be asked to carefully consider the public comments made and the changes in response and approval of the SPD will be sought.

## **Climate change / environmental impact**

25. The spatial framework, which provides the evidence base for this SPD includes amongst its 'golden threads' running through the whole document, a sustainability strategy. So in considering each individual themed place-making strategy showing how it responds to climate change and the environment is an important consideration that is fully taken into account.
26. Some particular themes such as green and blue infrastructure include an in depth analysis, both in the spatial framework and summarised in the SPD, on the environmental impacts of key issues such as flooding and how new developments need to positively respond to green and blue infrastructure needs together with their impacts, links and mitigation measures to the network. This approach to sustainability is reflected in the SPD as well, which includes a brief summary to show how each individual strategy and key development sites will be required to positively respond to these important issues.
27. The council is committed to addressing the effects of, and reducing our contribution towards, climate change. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and has committed to a series of actions. The most relevant to the West End and Osney Mead SPD project are: raising energy efficiency of new homes and community buildings; cutting transport emissions; boosting renewable energy installation; and expanding biodiversity. This has been considered in developing every strategy, as well as the Design Guide, because all aspects of development in the West End and Osney Mead must be viewed in the context of the need to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency.

## **Financial implications**

28. The SPD has been prepared internally by Planning Policy officers and represents a succinct document that sets out the key design principles that will be used to shape the future development of the West End and in particular some of the major sites.
29. The document itself will therefore not require any additional funding other than internal staff time used in making any further changes to the SPD in response to the public, stakeholder and landowner comments. This public consultation is a task that forms part of the programmed work for the Planning Policy team, the staff resources and other costs such as printing and mailing have already been incorporated in the existing budget.

## **Legal issues**

30. Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the SPD to be prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme and in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement. Section 19 further sets out what the Local Planning Authority must have regard to in preparing an SPD, including: national policies, advice and guidance, other adopted Local Development Documents, the resources likely to be available to implement the proposals, and other matters prescribed by the Secretary of State in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations). Regulation 10 sets out additional matters to which the SPD must have regard, including the long term need to maintain appropriate safety distances between establishments and residential areas. Part 5 of the

Regulations sets out the procedures around public participation and the adoption of an SPD.

### **Level of risk**

31. The SPD does not propose new planning policies or identify new development sites, but seeks to provide the opportunity for the public and key stakeholders to provide comments on the content of this document and suggest proposed changes.
32. The City Council as the Local Planning Authority have a legal requirement to prepare an SPD in accordance with the Regulations. Failure to follow this procedure could present legal risks for the adoption of this document, and subsequently in being able to afford due legal status to the SPD as a material consideration in determining planning applications.
33. There is a risk associated with the scale and type of public consultation responses from the public, stakeholders and the landowners. The earlier results from the 'visioning' workshop undertaken by the consultants were recorded and helped to shape the spatial framework. If however a significant public consultation response is received this could take more time to assemble, summarise and review the comments and make changes to the SPD as considered necessary.
34. The risk register is attached as Appendix 3.

### **Equalities impact**

35. 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 in connection with the production of the draft SPD the view is taken that the duty is met. The SPD seeks to ensure opportunities for participation in the local planning processes, including for equalities groups. The Statement of Community Involvement provides detailed advice and guidance on how the City Council will actively engage in public consultations on planning policy documents, such as this SPD. The golden threads of the SPD include an inclusive economy, meaning the aim of achieving inclusiveness underpins the proposals. It is acknowledged that the duty is an on-going one and due regard will be had to the duty throughout the SPD process.
36. An Equalities Impact Assessment is at Appendix 5. This concluded that the strategies, guidance and proposals that form the contents of these documents have been developed in order to be in accordance with the Local Plan and its objectives. The local plan through its development has been assessed with respect to potential impacts on equalities, and as adopted it has been designed to make efforts to improve the relevant equality strands where possible, and to otherwise have a neutral impact. It is therefore expected that the spatial framework and SPD will also each have a similar impact on equalities. It is not anticipated that there will be a direct impact on equality issues related to gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, or religion and beliefs as a result of the strategies and guidance contained within them; whilst it is considered that these strategies and resulting development patterns are likely to have some positive effect on the age and disability equality strands.

## Conclusion

37. This report sets out the background to the preparation of this supplementary planning document (SPD) for the West End and Osney Mead area and its important intrinsic relationship to the spatial framework and design guide. The purpose and status of an SPD is to provide further detail and advice on the implementation of existing adopted policies relating to the West End area set out in the Oxford Local Plan 2036.
38. The report explains how the SPD should be used and applied both throughout the West End Area and specifically to inform, design and assess proposals that will come forward on major development sites. The SPD will be an important material consideration in determining planning applications.
39. The Draft West End and Osney Mead SPD as set out in Appendix 1, if approved by Cabinet, will go out for public consultation towards the end of June for 6 weeks according to the programme provided to meet the requirements of both the legal planning regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement for the preparation of planning policy documents.

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**Background Papers:** None

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