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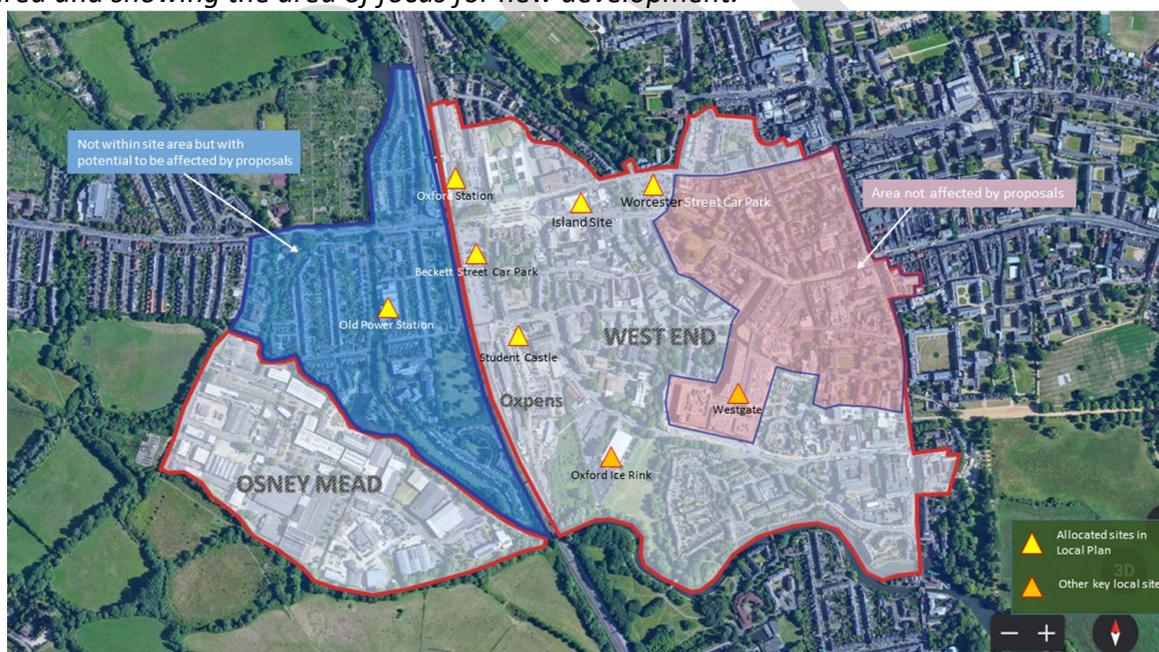
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### The West End and Osney Mead area

1. The West End and Osney Mead presents an exciting once in a generation opportunity to bring transformational benefits to this area to include new mixed-use developments that seek to complement existing uses in the city centre. The area already contains a wide variety of buildings and uses including retail, residential, community, cultural and evening economy uses, City of Oxford College, University of Oxford colleges and the Said Business School, offices, a community centre, and the city's key areas of public transport provision and interchange, including Oxford Station and Gloucester Green bus and coach station. The area must continue to provide these facilities and functions, whilst also maximising opportunities for regeneration. The map shows the site area considered in this document.
2. Whilst much of the West End area falls within the current city centre boundary, the greatest potential for regeneration and transformational change is in the western part of the area and at Osney Mead. There are multiple landowners across the area, and development will come forward on individual sites at different times. Some development sites comprise more than one landowner, which will require co-ordination and co-operation between different parties to realise a holistic vision.

Figure 1: Map showing the West End and Osney Mead site allocations, key sites within the area and showing the area of focus for new development.



### Status of the SPD

3. A Supplementary Planning Document gives detail and advice on the implementation of existing adopted policies. There are many adopted policies that are likely to be relevant to development on the site in Oxford Local Plan 2036. The SPD is intended to give detail to show how these should be applied in the West End and Osney Mead

area. Many of the Policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 will be relevant to schemes across the West End and Osney Mead area, but particularly relevant are:

- Policy AOC1, which designates the 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
  - Policy SP1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 supports mixed use development across the West End, aiming to deliver at least 734 homes across five named sites: (a) Oxford Station / Becket Street; (b) Student Castle, Osney Lane; (c) Worcester Street Car Park; (d) Land between Park End and Hythe Bridge Street known as the ‘Island site’; and (e) Oxpens.
  - In addition, Policy SP2 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.
4. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (paragraph 8(3)) state 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 and how policy requirements can be met in the context of the West End. It does not and cannot override the policies of the Local Plan.
  5. The SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application made on sites in the West End. The Spatial Framework and Design Guide, Appendix 1 and 2, form part of this SPD. Once the landowners are ready, detailed plans for the sites can be drawn up based on the guidance in this SPD. The West End and Osney Mead SPD provides an overarching spatial framework, helping to co-ordinate public realm improvements, infrastructure and design across the area, as sites are brought forward by developers over time. It ensures that, even as sites come forward at different rates, the needs of the West End and the wider vision for it as a whole are fully considered and planned for. As such, the SPD helps provide greater certainty for the public and developers and will help applicants to inform on design principles of place-making.

### How to use this SPD

6. The City Council appointed consultants, Levitt Bernstein, to undertake work on a spatial framework for the West End, which is attached as Appendix 1. In addition, Levitt Bernstein has produced a Design Guide for the area, which is attached as Appendix 2. The Spatial Framework sets out the principles for development and 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 an overarching framework. Prior to this public consultation,

they have been informed by stakeholder meetings and workshops and extensive collection and interrogation of an evidence base. These pieces of work are appended to the Spatial Framework, found in Appendix 1 of the SPD.

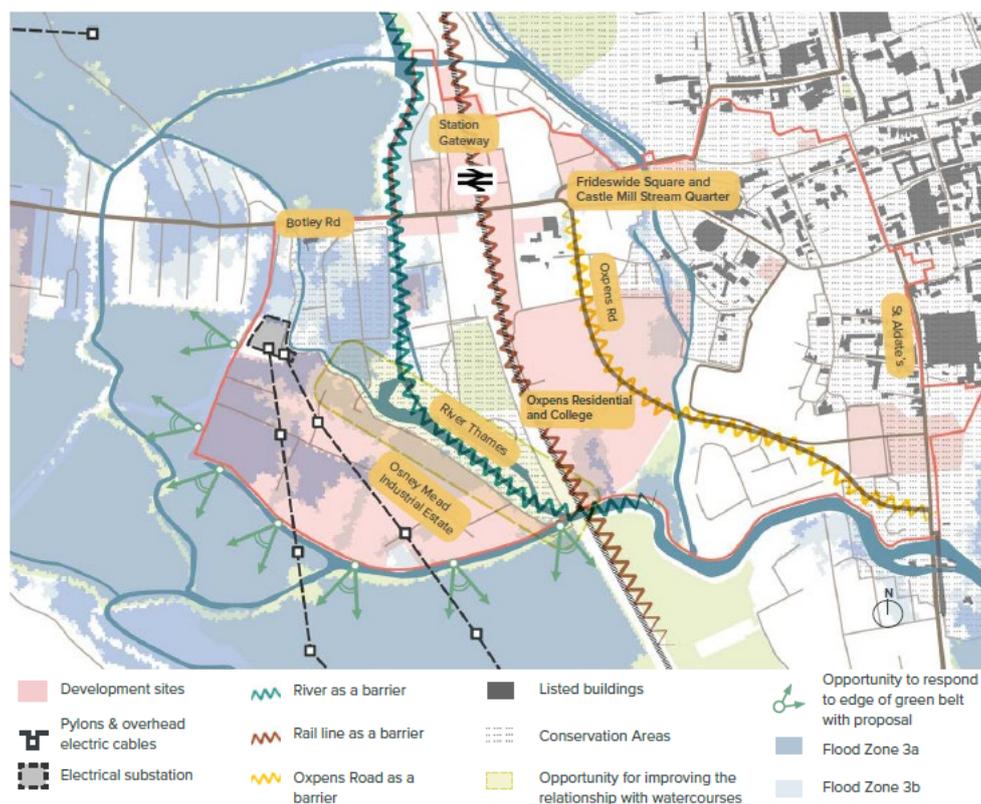
7. The main body of the SPD summarises and explains how to use and apply the principles of the Spatial Framework and Design Guide in developing and assessing proposals. The SPD explains what is needed in different areas or types of area in the West End and Osney Mead in order to meet the individual strategies, and pulling in the relevant details of 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. The SPD then picks out some key sites and goes into more detail about the interventions expected there. This does not replace the other sections for these sites but should be read alongside them.

### Objectives of the SPD

8. The key objectives and intended benefits of the SPD are to:
  - Setting 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.
9. The Spatial Framework attached as Appendix 1 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.

*Figure 2: Diagram showing key threats and opportunities*

## West End and Osney Mead SPD



10. This shows that there are significant opportunities but also that there are significant infrastructure needs in order to fully realise these, and that these will require a holistic view of the whole West End and Osney Mead area. Therefore, the principal aim of the SPD is 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.
11. The West End and Osney Mead area is capable of accommodating significant additional development, which would help transform the area, but there are challenges to achieving successful development in the West End. Beyond environmental constraints such as large areas of flood risk, challenges also result from the fact that the West End and Osney Mead is a large area with a variety of landowners, as well as the need to continue to provide city-wide functions such as Oxford station and significant through-routes for traffic and buses. To realise the regeneration potential of the area it will be important to strike the right balance of uses, which extends the City centre, making the best and most efficient use of land, by delivering a series of new mixed-use neighbourhoods that complement existing uses and established communities.
12. Furthermore, redevelopments in the area are at various and differing stages. This SPD offers the opportunity to ensure these different developments, by different landowners, are not designed in isolation and that they all contribute to the transformational benefits for the area that are part of the vision. The SPD provides specific advice and guidance for major development sites in the West End and Osney Mead area and in addition requires developers and landowners to respond to the

## West End and Osney Mead SPD

key strategies set out in detail in the spatial framework and through the broader design guide principles.

13. The potential of the area, the importance of its existing uses and its significance to the city means that it is vital that any redevelopment of the sites is carefully managed from the outset. The SPD is a way of managing these developments, helping to unlock development sites and to ensure development that is piecemeal nevertheless comes forward cohesively, within a clear spatial framework.

### **This consultation**

14. The City Council has prepared a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to set a framework for future developments in the West End and Osney Mead area of Oxford. This follows the consultation on the vision and scope that took place in 2021. This earlier consultation set out a vision for the area to transform it into a vibrant mixed use area including new homes, as well as a globally recognised Innovation District, and went on to set out our initial thoughts on what we should include in the SPD in order to best guide development in the area.
15. Since the early consultation informed development of the scope and vision, consultants have lead work on a Spatial Framework and a Design Guide for the area. Stakeholder workshops informed this work, which is now incorporated into the draft SPD.

16. Your comments are invited on the draft SPD. Please send comments to [CONSULTATION DETAILS INCL DATES](#)

### **Next steps**

17. We will collate comments, make any changes necessary to the draft SPD document and publish a consultation report.

## **2. VISION**

18. The transformation and redevelopment of the West End and Osney Mead area will see significant change in one of the busiest parts of Oxford. The City Council and its partners wish to see the area transformed from an underperforming, underdeveloped edge of city centre location, to a liveable quarter of the city where innovation as part of Oxford's knowledge economy is integrated with a strong community and a vibrant mixed use quarter. The West End and Osney Mead area includes the residential communities of St Ebbe's and St Thomas', with a diverse existing population including families. We wish to strengthen and grow this community, and the development of the area will therefore contain high quality housing at an appropriate density that responds to the historic and environmental context of the West End.
19. New residential development in the area will make an important contribution to Oxford's high housing needs, and will need to integrate both with existing

communities, and with the range of other new uses coming forward in the area. Housing will be provided that meets a variety of needs. Policies in the Oxford Local Plan require that at least 50% of housing should be affordable, including a total of 40% of housing being provided as social rented housing, although the requirement for First Homes has meant this has had to be amended, as set out in the First Homes Policy Statement, to require 25% of Affordable Housing to be First Homes, 5% intermediate and 70% social rented<sup>1</sup>. Residents, both new and old in the West End will need to be supported by good amenities and facilities. Student accommodation will also help to meet needs in this city centre location, where it is particularly well suited, and help to reduce pressure on existing housing stock elsewhere in the city.

20. Oxford Station will be subject to major infrastructure investment, supported by enabling development to create a new and improved gateway to the city. This investment will provide an improved public transport hub as part of the railway station development (providing both east and west frontages) and will be a significant upgrade for the city. Its' early delivery will help to set a new transport / movement context that will promote more pedestrian, cycling and use of buses creating a multi-modal hub to support the development of key sites within the West End. The new Station would facilitate the re-opening of the Cowley branch line to passengers linking this area to the large residential communities in south and east Oxford, as well two of the city's other major innovation hubs at the Oxford Science Park and Oxford Business Park. The planned multi-modal improvements at the Oxford station, being detailed in a forthcoming masterplan, will cement the already unrivalled accessibility of the West End, and therefore its position as the most sustainable employment location in Oxfordshire. Such connectivity is a key priority for R&D firm's when choosing a location.
21. The continued success of Oxford's economy is critical to the creation vibrancy and 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 at the West End and Osney Mead will support the resilience of Oxford and Oxfordshire's economy for the benefit of local communities and UKPLC.
22. Innovation Districts are a relatively new concept for revitalising industrial and city centre areas for creating research and development spaces. These uses have often tended to be concentrated in inward-facing business parks peripheral to cities and city centres. Innovation Districts seek to reverse this trend, recognising that innovation in technology happens when professionals in different fields collaborate in pleasant working environments and where talent and entrepreneurs want to live, work and play. They host a variety of residential solutions, from homes to student housing and hotels. They have a defining focus on quality of life and enabling social

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7907/tan\\_16\\_first\\_homes](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7907/tan_16_first_homes)

interaction outside the formality of the working environment. A wide range of focal points, facilities and amenities encourage people to dwell and create a dynamic and compelling place.

23. The opportunities in the West End and Osney Mead to create an area of collaboration, where research and developments helps find solutions to significant global issues such as climate change and pandemics, in the accessible heart of the city, are unmatched. The West End and Osney Mead should be an environment where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. Innovation districts help to revitalise and regenerate city centres by encouraging entrepreneurship as well as in Oxford's case providing an opportunity to build on the city's key strengths in research and development, alongside the retention of existing assets and delivery of new housing and other city centre uses.
24. The innovation district will: *"provide a flagship, gateway development into the innovation ecosystem, providing a new district for business growth and innovation as an extension of Oxford's city centre encompassing A-Grade office space R&D HQ facilities for spin-out companies across multiple sites, so forming the largest scale mixed use development project in generations. This project is focused on delivering a sustainable, integrated and connected district encompassing Osney Mead, Oxford National Railway Hub and Station, Oxpens, and other development sites with retail, hotel, university, lab and office, and residential spaces"* (Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy Investment Plan, August 2020).
25. An 'inclusive economy' seeks to provide a wider range of job opportunities, promote more skills and training prospects for local people, require the supply chain to offer greater potential for local firms and support well-paid employment, which in turn helps to promote greater equality and opportunities for all and realise added social value. This may be achieved within the West End and Osney Mead area by providing opportunities for a range of businesses, including start-ups, studios, collaborative workspace and meanwhile uses, within the area; together with community skills plans prepared by the developers of major sites that offer new training and skills prospects for local people. The opportunity for land owners across the West End to co-ordinate on this is also encouraged.
26. The innovation district will need to provide spaces for social interaction including wherever possible maximising the opportunities for collaboration across different fields. These could be formalised areas such as shared workspaces, coffee shops or food halls; childcare; public open space; or leisure facilities. These uses will also ensure that the West End remains a vibrant extension of the city centre outside of standard working hours, providing services and attractions for visitors and residents within and nearby the area.
27. These new uses will be supported by a transformation of the public realm and key infrastructure in the area. The West End is also strategically located on several movement corridors, notably occupying a significant portion of land between the

station and main retail centre. Introducing a mix of uses, including residential, will help create an area that is active beyond the working week and make these routes more attractive for pedestrians and cycling. It is important that the area can be easily accessed, and also that it can be enjoyed. Integrating this range of uses with the wider city centre, which will provide activity and footfall throughout the day and into the evening, will also support the existing businesses and cultural & leisure attractions in the city, providing greater economic resilience.

28. The public realm strategy will help ensure that rather than it being experienced as just a transport corridor, opportunities are realised for an enhanced public realm and green infrastructure network, making it an area in which to wander, stop and relax. The public realm strategy will transform the currently unattractive routes through the West End and provide for good wayfinding throughout the area. These will connect a series of new public open spaces with opportunities to find tranquillity and access to rivers and the natural environment. These open spaces will also contribute to net gains for biodiversity and form part of the area's and city's climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy.
29. The design guide and Spatial Framework will ensure new development is sensitively designed to conserve the rich historic environment of the area, and wider skyline of Oxford. Policies in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 already provide a general toolkit to ensure high quality design that is informed by the local context. However, the SPD's design guide provides specific guidance for the area, to make sure that it works as a whole and has an identity, whilst also reflecting the local character.

*Figure 3: The Spatial Framework in Appendix 1 is based on this vision. It encapsulates it in this diagram, which sets out key principles:*

## West End and Osney Mead SPD

### 'A Liveable Quarter of the City'

Living together, working together, playing together

#### A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

- Multi-tenure neighbourhoods
- Easy access to community facilities and local jobs
- Food growing opportunities
- Play and recreation for all age groups
- Inclusive streets and spaces
- Low carbon lifestyles
- Affordable housing and workplaces

#### A CREATIVE PLACE

- Compatible uses and creative industries, encouraging a balanced mix of creative industries, arts, science and culture
- Integrating green - blue infrastructure
- Urban greening
- Restaurants, cafés and mobile eatery/venues to activate primary public spaces
- Innovative future mobility solutions - mobility hubs, electric vehicle sharing, micro-mobility, or even autonomous connected vehicles
- Innovative mix of land uses - bringing homes closer to work opportunities
- Enhance local biodiversity and ecology
- Innovative meanwhile interventions to help unlock sites and work with local communities

#### A GLOBAL ENTERPRISE

- Mixed use innovative urban typologies
- A wide range of housing tenures/typologies to support economic growth
- Multifunctional outdoor spaces - ranging in scale, character and hierarchy
- A place which fosters research, innovation and technology
- Active ground floor uses to encourage street animation
- Enhanced public transport solutions, including rapid transit, integrating this with active travel and new forms of mobility (e.g. e-scooters)

#### AN ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED PLACE

- Major expansion of railway station, include 2 new railway lines and platforms, doubling capacity and unlocking potential connections to Cambridge and Bristol, as well as more trains to London and the north
- A legible, permeable, and direct active travel network accessible to all
- Integrated travel - charging stations; cycle-hire; cycle and scooter storage; electric vehicles for deliveries and servicing; and future for connected autonomous vehicles.
- Water connectivity through water taxis and leisure boards
- High quality public realm - prioritising pedestrians and cyclists
- Digital infrastructure to create safe, inclusive and resilient environments.

## Golden threads

30. The Spatial Framework also sets out three golden threads, which run through each of the strategies because of the important part they play in every aspect of the built environment. These golden threads include the:

- Sustainability Strategy;
- Social Value Strategy; and
- Economic Strategy.

31. 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 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, 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.

32. Social value has also been considered in the development of all of the strategies. All strategies and interventions should create social value in order realise the vision. Consideration of this as a golden thread throughout the development of the strategies in the Spatial Framework ensures this will be the case. Linked to this, the draft Oxford Economic Strategy and its delivery plan has been considered throughout.

33. The economic strategy recognises the vision for the West End which has regional and national importance, as set out in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019) and is a key component of the Oxfordshire – Cambridge Arc. This approach is taken forward in Oxford’s Draft Economic Strategy (2022), which provides a new focus for the city’s economy that introduces measures to promote an ‘inclusive’ economy, to build on its global strengths and support the transition towards ‘zero carbon’.

### 3. STRATEGIES TO INFORM DESIGNING AND ASSESSING PROPOSALS

#### 3.1 Green and Blue Network strategy and natural spaces

34. Green infrastructure includes natural features such as trees, meadows and hedgerows and blue infrastructure is water features such as rivers, streams and canals. These are particularly beneficial in networks and they form part of ecological systems and provide important benefits such as flood management, shading, biodiversity, food production, better air quality and healthy soils, as well as being important for people’s general sense of wellbeing. The West End is an area of ecological value with its proximity to the Green Belt and the River Thames. Preserving and enhancing the ecosystem will make the area resilient in the face of changing temperatures, weather events and other effects of the climate crisis.
35. The Green and Blue Network strategy diagram in the Spatial Framework (page 62) shows a vision for green and blue infrastructure across the West End, which includes greening of existing corridors and also proposed new streets. The Thames and Castle Mill Stream are key existing green corridors. New development alongside existing corridors should lead to enhancements including to public access.
36. The following summary shows what is expected in different types of locations across the West End:
- **Development with new streets and along existing streets:** Tree planting is expected where feasible, and greening along major routes. Street trees should be well integrated into the design and consideration given to the character of the street and wider area. Also, consideration should be given to integrating sustainable drainage into the green and blue network.
  - **On large new development plots of Osney Mead and Oxpens** new streets should be strategically designed to have a hierarchy of green and blue routes. Green and blue infrastructure should underpin the development plots. It should be multifunctional, incorporating SuDs to mitigate flood risk, providing public spaces and enhancing biodiversity. The green and blue network on these sites will need to be highly effective in flood mitigation, promoting ecology and providing amenity space for the community using the site. The riverside should become a place of activity, leisure and play.
  - **Developments alongside waterways** should ensure the waterways are made more accessible, enjoyable and safe for pedestrians as well as considering biodiversity needs such as the need for buffers or bank restoration.

- **Where developments include new or existing green spaces** these should be designed with the community in mind, taking opportunities for community food growing and making improvements to existing spaces and where possible creating new playspaces.
- **On all development sites** nature should be present and opportunities for planting should be maximised such as through installations of green, blue and brown roofs. Further details of what’s expected in designing for nature are included in the nature section of the Design Guide (page 30).

**Key infrastructure priorities are:**

- Establishing a green and blue network on Osney Mead
- Activation of the riverside edge at the Thames and Osney Lock
- Urban greening along major routes.

37. Most of the Green and Blue Network Strategy and infrastructure needed to achieve it will be delivered by careful design of new developments. In some cases, contributions will be needed to enhance the green and blue infrastructure on routes that pass along and beyond sites.

*Table 1: Key infrastructure priorities in relation to the green and blue network*

Strat	Key Priority	Detail of Priority	Known Infrastructure Cost
Green and Blue Landscape	1. Establishing a green and blue network on Osney Mead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New green and blue elements introduced to Osney Mead’s existing routes will need to precede comprehensive development and will work to unlock the site for development</li> <li>• Green and blue infrastructure effective for flood mitigation, promoting biodiversity, and amenity space</li> <li>• Designs must consider works from the Oxford Flood Alleviation scheme (OFAS) and ongoing works to watercourses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Osney Mead and Thames improved cycle paths - £4.9m – delivery 2021–23</li> </ul>
	2. Opening up the Thames riverside and Osney Lock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for the Thames riverside to be a key place of activity, biodiversity, flood mitigation, leisure and play</li> <li>• Works must respond to the different characters present on the River Thames and the nearby Castle Mill Stream</li> </ul>	
	3. Urban greening along major routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greening and rationalising of movement on key roads such as Oxpens, Ferry Hinksey, and Botley Road</li> <li>• Ensuring streets and surrounding development sites contribute positively to active travel, biodiversity, and active street frontages</li> </ul>	

**Golden threads**

38. Promotion of a Green and Blue network throughout the area has important sustainability benefits. Integration of sustainable drainage into green infrastructure helps adaptation to greater flood risk. The shading and cooling effects of green infrastructure are likely to be increasingly important. Green infrastructure adds social value as it can be a place for community interaction and play, it can provide peace and opportunities to exercise, all of which contribute to health and wellbeing. For these reasons, and because of the added value and desirability it brings to a place, the green infrastructure network also helps to achieve the economic aims.

**3.2 Heritage strategy**

39. Oxford benefits from a rich heritage of assets. This strategy seeks to ensure that heritage assets are retained and conserved, but also ensure that their value is promoted to fully realise the important contribution they can make to help define the distinctive character of the area and create a ‘sense of place’. Heritage assets can play a key role in helping people to navigate their way around the West End Area,

and together with the use of appropriate signage can re-enforce the distinctive character of the West End area.

40. The heritage of an area includes both key assets but also local places, features and associations, minor buildings, paths and open spaces, view points and events. The history and heritage of the West End are important to those who live and work in the city and contribute to a sense of belonging and ownership.
41. **Key principles of heritage strategy:** to celebrate diverse heritage by enhancing and opening up their settings, conserving heritage using sensitive design and refurbishment, using the character of the assets to promote a sense of place and character, use heritage as a tool for wayfinding, and to retain and recycle the built form recognising the contribution this can make to sustainability principles. The map on page 107 provides a vision for where these principles could be used and shows how they relate to existing heritage assets.
42. **Application of principles:** How and where these principles should be applied and what is expected in different types of locations across the West End:
43. **Development adjacent to the River Thames:** the heritage strategy seeks to re-establish the historic relationship of the River Thames to its heritage assets. By opening up the remnants of Osney Abbey and Osney Mill Cottage with public realm improvements, new connections and activity along the riverside. This seeks to bring the river back into the heart of the Osney Conservation Area. The potential for opening up of the EA depot and its bridge connection to the public would significantly improve accessibility from Bridge Street to the river and should be explored as part of any proposals.
44. **On existing streets which have a strong heritage and character value:** the strategy seeks to protect and mitigate the effect of increased footfall and traffic on heritage assets. The following areas therefore need to be protected:
  - Osney Mead's Bridge, East, West and South Street;
  - Becket Street and the surroundings of St Thomas the Martyr Church;
  - Osney Mead's Cemetery; and
  - Walking routes across the green belt to North Hinksey village.
45. **On new or existing areas of public realm: in conjunction with the public realm strategy, the heritage strategy seeks to celebrate key assets with improved settings.** the strategy seeks to make improvements to or create new areas of public realm to significantly improve the settings of heritage assets. This could include using key assets / buildings as a focal point for new development to respond to, or re-purposing heritage assets with community uses and meanwhile uses for example. Interventions may be landscape improvements and making greater and more active use of the public realm, creating attractive areas for people to sit, dwell and enjoy or enabling them to learn about the heritage of various assets.

Key areas where public realm improvements could benefit heritage assets are:

- Osney Abbey and Lock

- St Thomas the Martyr's Church
- St Frideswide's Church
- Nuffield College Sites
- Oxford Castle

46. **New development which may impact on views of key spires and or structures of height:** The strategy considers that key heritage assets in the West End are important in themselves but equally for their setting and how they provide a focus for people to move and navigate their way around the area.

47. The heritage strategy requires new development to show that it:

- does not restrict short views of key heritage assets, such as Nuffield College, the Castle Mound and Tom Tower at Christ Church College;
- positively responds to the setting of heritage assets; and
- does not restrict long views of the city, for example of particular significance are the proposals for Osney Mead Industrial Estate and Oxpens, and their impact on the historic view from Raleigh Park.

48. **New development within the Core Area of the City centre:** the proposed height of new development needs to be sensitive and respond to existing heritage assets. It should comply with Policy DH2 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036, and proposals should be well designed to respect key heritage assets within the West End, which include:

- St Thomas's Church and proposals on Becket Street
- Nuffield College and Castle Mound and proposals on Nuffield College Sites
- Christchurch Old Buildings and proposals on Osney Lane
- Rewley Abbey Scheduled Monument and proposals on
- Rewley Road Fire Station and Oxford Station depot site.

49. **New development on Osney Mead:** Osney Mead has few heritage assets, but its massing and urban form will need to be considered in relation to its impact on longer distance views.

50. **Development comprising existing buildings and or structures:** The Heritage Strategy encourages proposed schemes to re-use, recycle or retain the existing built form wherever possible and integrate this into the new urban fabric of the emerging new destinations. This could be retaining a historic wall within a piece of public realm, re-using bricks from a demolished building within the public realm, or using an old warehouse for a new vibrant activity. This has benefits for carbon (embodied) as well as heritage.

51. **Key infrastructure priorities**

- Opening up of Osney Mill and Osney Lock to public: Osney Mill square recognising heritage of Osney Abbey
- Bulstake stream: new street lower in the hierarchy with a focus for its use by residents and for access
- Green belt routes: connections from existing network into Osney mead / Oxpens

- St. Thomas Church, Becket Street: enhanced public realm to enable better appreciation of the heritage asset

### Delivery

52. Requires working in partnership with key landowners and the local highway authority to develop schemes in collaboration with the local community and sourcing of funding, through for example funding opportunities arising from comprehensive developments.

### Golden threads

53. Sustainability is achieved by retaining and recycling the built form. Social value is delivered by making greater and more active use of the public realm and riverside settings. Economic benefits are derived through conserving and enhancing heritage assets and their settings.

### 3.3 Movement strategy

54. The overarching aim of the movement strategy is to reduce vehicular dominance in the West End and support car free developments and reductions in car parking at key sites within the West End. Currently the West End area is quite constrained in terms of movement and connectivity, with streets which are poor in quality with limited connections through the area and beyond and a reliance on constrained streets and towpaths. There are, however, significant opportunities to improve movement and connectivity in the future which can be tied into wider strategies to improve walking and cycling links; bus connections and movements, and to deliver a net zero carbon Oxford. There is also the opportunity to integrate the West End's development with the wider aspirations for the railway station as a key gateway into the area.
55. The Movement Strategy diagram in the spatial framework (page 71) sets out a vision for how people should be supported to move around the West End area, including how they walk, cycle, drive and travel by bus. It sets out the importance of supporting low carbon and active lifestyles, the need for a clear hierarchy of streets and routes, and the importance of physical connections and strategic land use placement in order to support movement. The strategy also pays special attention to how more significant barriers such as the River Thames and the railway ought to be improved upon.
56. The following summarises what is expected in relation to movement in different types of locations across the West End:
  - **On all proposals where interventions are to be made within the streetscape** active transport options should be prioritised, with pedestrian and cyclist friendly design measures maximised to ensure that all users are safe and comfortable within the movement network.

- **On larger plots, or where proposals include the creation of new streets and routes** care should be given to defining the intended street hierarchies and the scale of movement they may sustain, with particular attention paid to supporting the transition to zero carbon travel. New east-west links should enable improved movement within the West End between existing and new sites as well as centres of activity. The Design Guide (pages 14 to 20) sets out expectations for what would be expected on streets/routes at different levels of the street hierarchy (primary, secondary and tertiary routes).
- **On sites adjacent to waterways and the railway line** attention should be paid to the barriers to movement that these features present and opportunities sought to improve or support connections across them. The SPD sets out an analysis of routes across the River Thames and railway. Some of these are existing with opportunities to open up further, others, like the Oxpens River Bridge, are entirely new bridge connections.
- **On all development sites, particularly those with proximity to key routes connecting into the station**, opportunities should be sought to build upon the re-development of the Oxford station, supporting its establishment as a key gateway into the city. The central location and strategic importance of the station should be capitalised upon with a focus towards establishing seamless onwards connections by walking and cycling within the West End to areas such as Osney Mead, Oxpens and the core of the city centre.

Key infrastructure priorities in relation to movement are:

- Railway Station gateway
- Oxpens River bridge
- Opening up the EA depot & Osney Lock for access
- Oxpens Road

57. Many of the principles set out within the Movement Strategy will be delivered by careful design of new developments. Due to the interconnected nature of the topic of movement and connectivity, attention will also need to be paid to planned interventions in the locality that may already be in place as well as having regard to supporting strategies/frameworks that address these issues more broadly across the city (such as the Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan LCWIP<sup>2</sup>, Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4, Oxford Transport Plan, emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan & Central Transport Area Strategy / Core Schemes that will supercede LTP4 & OTS. Additional funding may be required to deliver some of the infrastructure priorities.

58. The majority of the key infrastructure priorities benefit from some level of external funding to ensure their delivery. In some cases, contributions will be needed to support other larger interventions and pieces of infrastructure where an alternative

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<sup>2</sup> Link to LCWIP on this page: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/active-and-healthy-travel>

delivery body has responsibility for the project and where funding has not been secured.

*Table 2: Key infrastructure priorities in relation to movement*

Movement	4. Railway station gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening Oxford Railway station as a local and regional transport hub through public realm and infrastructure improvements</li> <li>Improving east-west connectivity to sites such as Osney Mead and Oxpens through pedestrian and cyclist prioritisation</li> <li>Creating a new sense of arrival at the station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford Station West side improvements - £80-160m</li> <li>Oxford Station East side improvements - £350-550m</li> <li>Connecting Oxford - £60-100m- new and improved bus services and associated bus and cycle infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becket St to Oxford railway station Rd pedestrian / cycle bridge - £10m-16m – delivery by 2028</li> <li>Cowley branch line reopening - £50-150m – required by 2028</li> </ul>
	5. Oxpens bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating an important new connection between the developments at Osney Mead and Oxpens</li> <li>Improving access and improving value to the area around Grandpont Nature park, Thames riverside and the green belt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Osney Mead to Oxpens pedestrian and cycle bridge - £6m – delivery in 2023</li> </ul>	
	6. Opening up the EA depot & Osney Lock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving public access to the River Thames</li> <li>Opening up key route through the EA depot connecting Osney Town and Osney Mead and introducing new permeability between the two banks of the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> </ul>	
	7. Oxpens Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interventions could include tree planting, cycle infrastructure, building frontages, swales, and a central reservation</li> <li>Oxpens road as a holistic site for delivery of infrastructure, from Frideswide Square to St Aldate's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero Emission Zone - £2m – delivery dependent on Connecting Oxon</li> <li>Connecting Oxford £60-100m – new and improved bus services and associated bus and cycle infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> </ul>

### Golden threads

59. Facilitating movement through the West End as well as to and from the area will have a range of sustainability benefits. Supporting people to take up active travel (walking and cycling) has social benefits in respect of physical and mental health but also encourages social cohesion and interaction with other people. Supporting active travel as well as a shift away from private car to travel by public transport options like bus and rail will support the decarbonisation of the transport network, with additional benefits for air quality, noise and congestion on the roads too. Enabling better connections and mobility through the West End can also support economic objectives, enabling more people to enjoy and spend time in the area, discovering and accessing local businesses that they may not have used before. The future programming, management and maintenance of the public spaces will need to be fully considered as part of the infrastructure delivery and implementation plan for major new development sites.

### 3.4 Public Realm strategy

60. The West End and Osney Mead area is limited in terms of high quality public space, but its redevelopment offers the opportunity to invest into existing spaces and to create a range of new interconnected spaces throughout the area. Public realm is considered to be just as important as the design of the buildings themselves, investing in high quality public spaces such as streets, squares and green areas can encourage people to move through the West End more actively, build social cohesion and a sense of community, as well as inspire a true sense of place and identity.

61. Whilst some of the strategies set out in the SF are fairly independent, much of the guidance within the public realm strategy is supported by and closely related to other strategies in the SF. These other strategies often take a greater focus on particular elements or features which are intrinsic to a successful public realm,

including the arts and cultural strategy, green and blue infrastructure, movement and heritage; as such it is recommended that these should be read in conjunction with it. The Design Guide (pages 21 to 29), goes on to set more specific advice and guidance for practical measures that ought to be implemented by developers and infrastructure delivery partners within the public realm of the West End.

62. The public realm strategy diagram in the Spatial Framework (page 86) sets out a vision for how public spaces should be designed and includes six principles/characteristics that need to be embedded in all areas of the West End. These principles, including the need for spaces to be comfortable, characterful, enjoyable, resilient, flexible, and connected, are then analysed in more detail with practical examples set out for how each principle can be successfully incorporated into design proposals.
63. Whilst much of the guidance on public realm will apply everywhere, the SF goes on to set out some specific expectations for the public realm in different scenarios, across different locations and types of development within the area:
64. **New public spaces** should take opportunities to connect up existing spaces and establish gateways, which will be important for attracting activity into the area, improving legibility and wayfinding, and making it easier and more pleasant to navigate and move through.
65. **All routes** should be designed as spaces that are friendly for pedestrians and cyclists and should incorporate significant greening in order to support people to take up active travel and to make the experience positive and encouraging. Existing streets like Botley Road; Oxpens Road and St Aldate's are often dominated by vehicles, and are not friendly to those travelling on foot or bike, but various interventions could support people to shift away from the car.
66. **Proposals along watercourses** should improve public realm to create a high quality destinations within the West End that can significantly boost Oxford's riverside character. The SF identifies points of focus such as that running to the north-east of the Osney Mead Regeneration site, the public realm by the northern section of Castle Mill Stream, located adjacent to Worcester car park and routes along the Osney Mill Marina. These spaces offer multi-faceted opportunities, not only for creating spaces for social interaction and engagement with nature, but also movement corridors to the wider city and flood mitigation.
67. **All public realm** consideration should be given to how these spaces might form part of the setting for heritage assets and celebrate heritage and also how the wider historic character of the area might potentially be integrated or repurposed within the design of such spaces. As the Arts and Culture strategy highlights, this can be an important means of establishing character and sense of place for the area, alongside other creative measures.

68. **On all developments between Osney Mead and the city centre**, opportunities should be sought to create or improve east-west connections for pedestrians from Osney Mead to the city centre as this is likely to become a critical link for future residents and users of the site for work or pleasure. Key public spaces such as Oxpens Meadows; Grandpont Nature Park; Oxpens new public square and the new improved riverfront at Osney Mead regeneration site could be linked up via these connections including via new or improved routes over/along the river, including the provision of Oxpens Bridge.

### Key infrastructure priorities

69. A range of localised interventions spread across three categories (routes, exceptional public spaces and junctions) are identified in the public realm strategy section of the Spatial Framework via a map and table (pages 98 to 101). These should be considered as part of design proposals for sites in their proximity as they come forward. Aside from these, the Spatial Framework also identifies a number of more major priorities:

- Station gateway
- Oxpens Bridge
- Oxpens Road
- Becket Street Link
- Frideswide Square/ Castle Mill Stream sites
- Opening up the riverside
- Osney Mead riverside square

70. Many of the principles set out within the Public Realm Strategy will be delivered by careful design of new developments. Some of the key infrastructure priorities benefit from some level of external funding to ensure their delivery, others have remaining costs to be identified in part or in the whole. In some cases, contributions will be needed to support other larger interventions and pieces of infrastructure where an alternative delivery body has responsibility for the project and where funding has not been secured.

*Table 3: Key infrastructure priorities in relation to the public realm*

## West End and Osney Mead SPD

Strat	Key Priority	Detail of Priority	Known Infrastructure Cost	
Public Realm	8. Station gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening Oxford Railway station as a local and regional transport hub through public realm and infrastructure improvements</li> <li>Public realm improvements to all surrounding streets and spaces including Frideswide Square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford Station West side improvements - £80-160m</li> <li>Becket Street to Oxford railway station pedestrian / cycle bridge - £10m-16m – delivery by 2028</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford Station east side improvements - £350-550m</li> <li>Cowley branch line reopening - £50-150m – required by 2028</li> <li>Connecting Oxford - £60-100m</li> </ul>
	9. Oxpens Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a consistent public realm experience from the station down to new developments at Oxpens and Osney Mead</li> <li>Improved public realm connecting Oxpens and the adjacent meadows to Westgate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> <li>Zero Emission Zone - £2m – delivery dependent on Oxford Station East side improvements - £350-550m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting Oxford £60-100m – new and improved bus services and associated bus and cycle infrastructure</li> </ul>
	10. Becket Street link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rationalising the bus network necessary to determine the character of Becket Street and its relationship with its surroundings</li> <li>Considering the sensitive context of St. Thomas the Martyr Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becket Street to Oxford railway station Botley Road pedestrian / cycle bridge - £10m – delivery by 2028</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> </ul>
	11. Frideswide Square/Castle Mill Stream sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public realm improvements along Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street will be critical in unlocking the site</li> <li>Consideration of the station as a gateway and how the site can contribute to this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> </ul>	
	12. Opening up the riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making the most of the West End's natural resources to create high quality public space</li> <li>Opening up the Thames riverside from Oxpens meadow to the EA depot site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> </ul>	
	13. Osney Mead riverside square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new riverside square to activate Osney Mead as a new activity hub and innovation quarter</li> <li>Meanwhile uses during early phases of development may aid delivery and the fostering of community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West end public realm and movement interventions - £500k – to design and development of project proposals</li> </ul>	

### Golden-threads

71. Sustainability is achieved by positively responding to climate change and seeking to balance the issues of the natural environment, such as flooding, with the need to support sustainable development. Public realm helps to provide the connections and links that access an area and the space to enjoy it. It draws on the distinctive local character of the area, its buildings, streets and public spaces. Social value is created by providing and improving public realm to support well-being and peoples' ability to access and enjoy spaces. Economic benefits are derived from providing better access / connections to the West End generating activity and making it easier to navigate through the area for visitors, workers and local community.

### 3.5 Arts and cultural strategy

72. The redevelopment of the West End area is an opportunity to put culture and art at the heart of the community and to use it as a means to galvanise positive economic and social change.

73. The Arts and Culture Strategy diagram in the Spatial Framework (page 112) sets out the vision for how investment in art and culture can garner multiple socio-economic benefits for the West End and the wider city, as well as countering the negative impacts that the Covid-19 Pandemic has had on this sector over the last couple of years. The vision in the Spatial Framework highlights the importance of aiming to establish a strong sense of identity and belonging through culture and establishing a community led environment with a culture of innovation and strong partnerships that can drive regeneration and revitalisation of the West End.

74. Arts and culture can be encouraged through a wide variety of spaces, and the Spatial Framework highlights a selection of uses including:

- Creative workspaces
- Rehearsal studios
- Recording studios
- Production studios
- Artist and maker spaces
- Cinemas
- Sports and leisure venues
- Galleries and museums
- Heritage buildings
- Performance venues
- Libraries
- Community spaces
- Artistic installations in the public realm

75. The following summarises what is expected in how arts and culture should be incorporated within developments across the West End:

76. **Promote arts and culture through establishing vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods** by ensuring that buildings can accommodate a mixture of uses alongside more typical residential and employment spaces, for example by mixing co-working and leisure uses side-by-side.

77. **Make space for culture to thrive, a place where people can share in and experience it** thus establishing the West End as a destination for the enjoyment of art and culture. Ensuring that there are a range of spaces that are affordable and allow for a diverse range of stakeholders to come together to collaborate and create. Such spaces should not wholly necessitate creation of new buildings, but could also make use of existing buildings repurposed for a mixture of functions. There are a number of under-utilised spaces within Osney Mead's Industrial Estate and within vacant shop units within the city centre that could play an important role in realising this vision.

78. **Incorporate the public realm as a contributor to the cultural identity of the area**, ensuring that the spaces between buildings can act as a channel for people to experience artistic and cultural endeavours. Existing space and new spaces can act as an important venue for hosting permanent and temporary public art, performances and other community-led projects and the Design Guide (page 28) includes further guidance on how this could be implemented in a successful and inclusive way. The SF identifies a couple of key areas in the West End that are envisioned to serve as focal points for culture including the waterfront square in Osney Mead and the area surrounding Oxpens Meadow.

79. **Celebrate the cultural heritage of the West End area** designing in a way that is sympathetic to and enhances the rich heritage of the area. The heritage strategy has further guidance on how heritage should be treated, but it should be recognised that features such as historic buildings can make an invaluable contribution to the cultural identity of the area which is difficult to replicate. Repurposing old buildings

where appropriate, enhancing their setting and celebrating the heritage of the area through smart design choices are all to be encouraged in helping to promote a strong sense of belonging and place.

80. Most of the Arts and Culture Strategy will be delivered by careful design of new developments. A key part of the design process will be the need for it to be underpinned by strong and meaningful engagement with the local community and other key stakeholders.

### Golden threads

81. Sustainability and social value are both achieved through the creation of a strong sense of identity and belonging and by promoting active partnership working between the local community and partners on agreed projects. Economic benefits will be realised by encouraging greater use of buildings and spaces for arts and cultural activities that will serve new and existing uses, the community and the local economy.

### 3.6 Meanwhile use strategy

82. The West End has a number of vacant and under-utilised areas of land and buildings. Meanwhile uses and the introduction of new uses for spaces can play an important role in stimulating activity and help change the feeling of an area. The Spatial Framework (page 116) identifies some key opportunities to help unlock sites, create better footfall through and to areas and attract investment in strategic locations. The strategy seeks to generate social value, build resilience and create a long legacy for the area.
83. The key principles of meanwhile uses require collaboration between public and private partners with a shared vision; using meanwhile uses as catalysts for change; introducing new uses to buildings and spaces to generate activity; and using meanwhile uses to positively change the perception of areas within the West End. The map on page 117 provides a visual representation of where these meanwhile uses could take place in the area. The temporary nature of these 'meanwhile' uses provides activity and interest, whilst longer-term proposals for a site are being developed.
84. **Application of principles:** How and where these principles should be applied and what is expected in different types of locations across the West End:
85. **On existing walking and cycling routes and where new links are created to promote active travel:** Better connectivity is required to support new uses in the area. Meanwhile uses will then be able to positively improve the footfall, attractiveness, activity and legibility of the area. These new links could potentially include the east-west route of Woodins Way; key crossings at Oxpens and Botley Road; and the Botley Road underpass.

86. **Under-used buildings on Osney Mead and other new development sites:** could provide the opportunity for the creation of new hubs of activity for local business and enterprises to be supported. This could include for example community space, exhibition space, studio space and local food and drink businesses.
87. **On spaces on Osney Mead and other new development sites:** meanwhile uses can help to develop and foster a new community by setting up new events and use of spaces can help bring residents, visitors and workers together. The role of the local community will be key in developing meanwhile uses and activities.
88. **In vacant buildings, such as on Osney Mead and other development sites:** these buildings can be re-used and re-purposed to include new uses which promotes a sustainable approach to the use of the built form. It could include for example using industrial buildings for incubator space, and or rooftops for food growing.

**Delivery:**

89. The key to delivery will be working with partners, developers and local community to explore the potential for meanwhile uses. Landowners should be alive to the possibilities of meanwhile uses on their sites as a way of ensuring their continuous use.

**Golden threads**

90. Sustainability is achieved by introducing new uses that would make better use of vacant land and buildings. Meanwhile uses will seek to generate social value by building resilience, creating a long legacy and promoting collaboration with the community and partners in taking forward new projects and programmes. Economic benefits would flow from attracting investment and activity by supporting new uses.

**3.7 Land use strategy**

91. The Local Plan 2036 under different site allocations provides minimum housing requirements which respond to the existing and future needs of the area in the context of each site. In practice, and subject to viability, many of these sites may be able to take more housing which will bring vibrancy to the areas. The housing requirements set by the Local Plan 2036 are a direct response to Oxford's urgent need for more homes as a response to the city's housing supply crisis. Housing delivery is necessary for the city's economic, environmental, and social health. Economically, housing provision attracts and retains people to support the economy. Socially, it prevents the disconnection of social networks caused by housing unaffordability and environmentally lessens the impact of commuting. Ultimately, Oxford's West End is looking at a significant influx of homes in the coming decades. Those need to be designed carefully with other uses and to work as part of the mixed use schemes that are expected on all sites and the complementary intention to create an innovation district in the West End and Osney Mead area.
92. The adopted Local Plan 2036 allocates a number of sites for development in the West End, which will bring significant change in the future. The spatial framework

provides the setting for these new buildings, increase in population, new land uses including innovative and meanwhile uses, new activities, new and improved links throughout the area, improvements to the public realm and green spaces.

93. Consideration of land use distribution will need to respond to the following key principles: the promotion of mixed-use neighbourhoods seeking to provide a balanced mix of uses within local neighbourhoods (15 min distance), innovative urban typologies aim to bring this mix of uses together in well-designed buildings, which will generate activity for the areas of public realm, flexibility and adaptability will be important to ensure that buildings and spaces around them can respond to changing future needs, the lifecycle of buildings as a principle reflects the need to promote sustainability using recycled materials, and the creation of activity hubs that support an intensity of uses and good connections to ensure successful place-making.

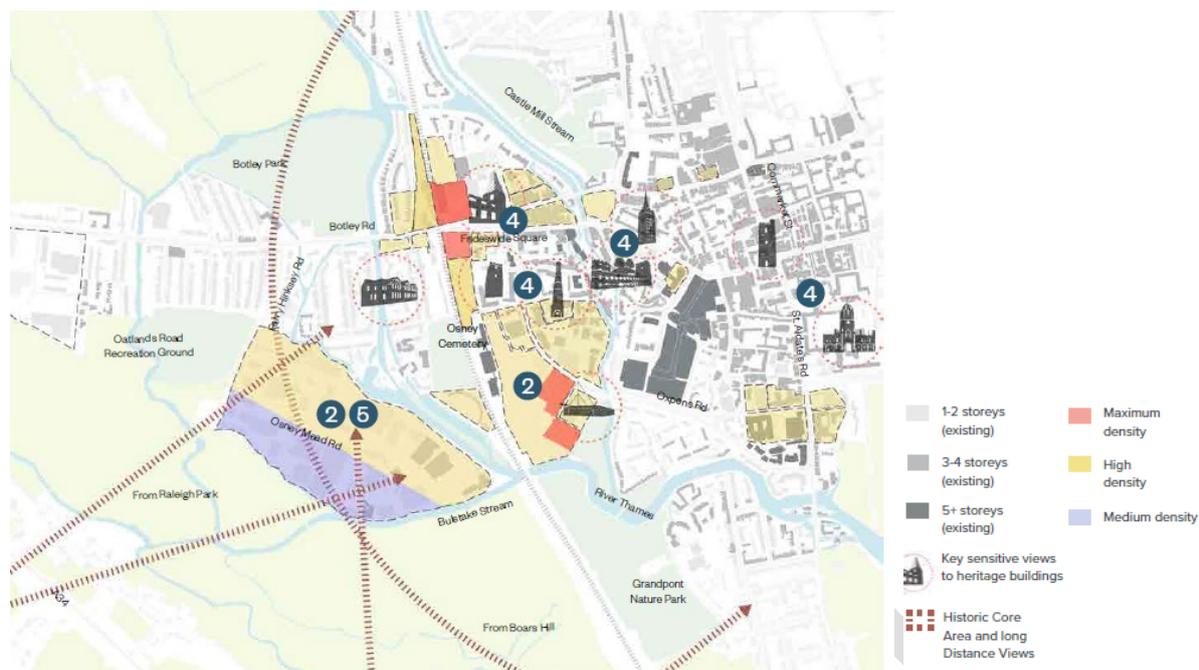
### **Golden-threads**

94. Sustainability is achieved by the promotion of mixed-use neighbourhoods that seek to support a mix of uses within local neighbourhood areas. It supports re-use of buildings and materials, and making sure that their layouts have flexibility to respond to changes in future needs. Social value is realised through the support for local neighbourhoods which creates activity hubs and a sense of belonging and connection to the area. Economic benefits are derived from the support for local firms, businesses and arts and culture activities together with the balanced mix of uses and a range of job opportunities.

### **3.8 Built form**

95. The framework addresses built form, which encompasses much of the physical and spatial elements of the built environment. The Spatial Framework and Design Guide address design quality of buildings and spaces, including considerations for appropriate scale, massing and roofscape. In line with the aspirations of the Area of Change policy in the Local Plan, the strategies also consider how to make use of density, block typology/morphology and overall design approaches in order to achieve the most efficient use of land.

*Figure 4: Heights and densities analysis diagram from the Spatial Framework (page 123):*



## Heights and densities

96. Oxford is particularly renowned for its iconic skyline, which can be particularly sensitive to the impacts of development of unsuitable heights and roof forms. The West End offers several opportunities for sensitive yet statement moments of built height to add fresh new additions to Oxford's 'dreaming spires', as well as gateways that serve as wayfinding landmarks and key character features. The framework includes a number of strategies on how to manage the heights of development proposals in order to result in a net positive impact to the skyline. The West End High Buildings Study (2018) specifies more contextual height parameters based on location. Broad principles to consider are:

1. Celebrating the West End's existing points of height, and strategically adding more
2. Enhancing the long distance views by improving the roofscape and form of the West End
3. Ensuring height of new development is informed by immediate surroundings
4. Building heights and massing should respond to existing heritage assets
5. Balance of new development with spaces in between Buildings

## Roofscape

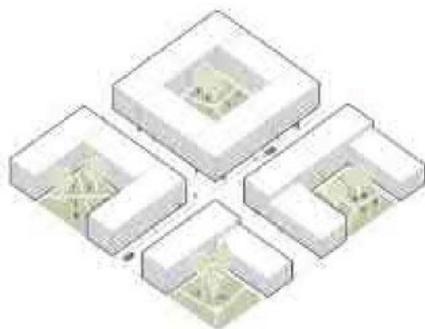
97. With Oxford having many long distance views into the City the aesthetics of the roofscape is important. Policy DH2 in the Local Plan 2036 asks proposals to ensure a positive contribution to the roofscape. The Assessment of the Oxford View Cones (2015) highlights the opportunity to improve long distance views from the west. It suggests that the existing industrial estate's roof surfaces could be amended. Using darker or less reflective material would be of benefit and tree planting could be used to break up the area. Utilisation of rooftops is essential in an urban area such as

Oxford where land is limited. Roof spaces provide a real opportunity to support biodiversity, mitigate flood risk, improve building insulation and thermal efficiency; and provide key amenity space for communities.

98. The Design Guide has assessed and identified three levels of built densities that may be appropriate for the West End context, including indicative numbers of storeys, although these are not definitive and heights will be subject to testing through the detailed design process for individual sites:

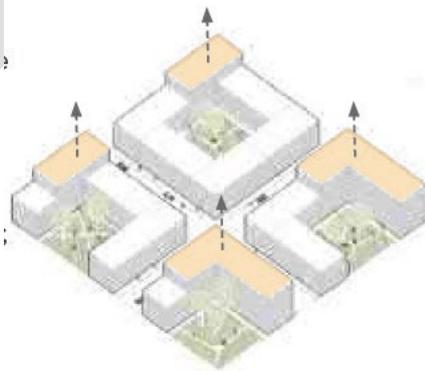
99. **At development sites adjacent to existing low-rise buildings or heritage buildings or where height will impact on heritage- medium:** urban block parameters which are 2/3-4 storeys with larger external spaces. Larger floor plates can be accommodated within these blocks - depending on the uses which need to be accommodated within the parameter.

*Figure 5: medium urban block parameters as set out in Design Guide (page 35)*



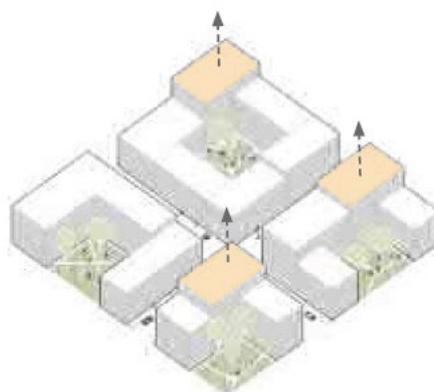
100. **Much of the new development sites- high:** tighter urban blocks. Fulfilling the need for different uses and limiting height as set out in Policy DH2 of the Local Plan 2036 allows for tight perimeter blocks which accommodate a multitude of uses. Existing examples of these are the redevelopment of Northgate and Clarendon Centre.

*Figure 6: higher and tighter urban block parameters as set out in Design Guide (page 35)*



101. **At strategically designed 'moments'- maximum:** key buildings which maximise development potential and are located at strategic moments. These could potentially be more than 5 storeys tall in places, although the impacts would need to be carefully tested through the design process. No existing precedents of such height have been found in Oxford City Centre. Careful design and sensitive planning for the setting of these taller moments/ buildings is essential. They could be developed as part of a wider wayfinding strategy for the West End.
102. Maximum densities will only be considered in certain locations and will need to be justified by place-making strategies. As the Local Plan 2036 states, development exceeding the limit of 18.2m will need to be limited in bulk and of high design quality. Extensive justification of higher building blocks will be required and all relevant policy for listed or other heritage buildings must be followed.

*Figure 7: maximum urban block parameters as set out in Design Guide (page 35)*



### Urban Block Typologies

103. The applicability of the different types of urban block typologies is dependent on site context, existing built morphology and urban grain and the ability to project height in the face of height limitations. The framework identifies a number that may be applicable in the West End setting:
104. **More constrained sites and infill sites- Individual Block typology:** Individual buildings stand alone but should be integrated into surrounding context with careful consideration given to public realm aspects for spaces between the buildings.
105. **Where a continuous building line around the boundaries of an urban block with shared space within is desired- Courtyard (perimeter) Block typology:** Courtyard blocks can vary in size and shape, and careful consideration is needed to ensure good levels of daylight- sunlight are achieved within the interior courtyard spaces. Should the urban block be developed at ground level with larger non-residential functions, raised courtyards in the form of podiums are possible.
106. **Where more flexibility and prominent points are required- Hybrid block typology:** Hybrid blocks combine the characteristics of courtyard and individual block typologies; they offer more plot flexibility as they are not made up by a continuous

block. Hybrid blocks offer opportunities to introduce building height at prominent points. This creates a block that is both visually interesting and capable of meeting ambitious floor space targets while minimising footprints at ground level. The urban block can also provide secondary access routes through - ground floor uses should be carefully designed to create active and animated frontages along the external perimeter and the internal route.

### Massing

107. Massing of buildings will need to vary considerably across the West End and will be significantly dependent on the land uses needed. How different scales and uses of buildings sit together and how these interface with the public realm will be particularly important.
108. Considerations of how different scales of buildings (for example large floor plates for non-residential uses like labs, research spaces with smaller footprints of residential and/ or offices above) sit together will also be important.

### Mix of uses

109. A compatible mix of land uses is desirable for most buildings to maximise the efficiency of land usage and to create vibrant and multi-functional spaces within buildings. It is however recognised that there are operational and management challenges with the practical delivery of these developments. The Osney Mead and Oxpens Character Areas will be characterised by large amounts of employment space, and the aspiration will be to integrate a mix of employment types, as well as space for residential dwellings, food and drink, shops, leisure, and community facilities.

*Figure 8: mixing of uses example as set out in Design Guide (page 37)*



110. Such mixes of use should be done with careful consideration to the needs of new and existing users for the avoidance of conflict on the grounds of amenity and service provision. The types of uses employed on the ground floors of buildings should be designed in close alignment with the intended character of the public realm around it. In order for there to be a positive contribution to the public realm, buildings should be designed with an active frontage that offers a degree of interface with the street. Buildings with façades that are obscured through a lack of windows or advertisements, breaking street character are in effect dead frontages. This is

possible to achieve regardless of the type of building or the land use at ground floor level.

### Golden Threads

111. Care in design of the built form is essential for achieving sustainability. Maximising use of space, ensuring a comfortable living and working environment in more extreme temperatures and saving energy can all be achieved by careful design of the built form. Social value can also be achieved. There is a disparity in impacts of climate change between more deprived and less deprived areas. Well designed and insulated buildings available to all help to minimise this disparity. Cheaper running costs for employment buildings and built in flexibility also helps their affordability for a variety of workspace types, helping to achieve economic aims.

### 3.9 Transformational sites

112. Four areas of the West End and Osney Mead are expected to see transformational change that will be key to the successful development of the whole area, which are Osney Mead, Oxpens, The Frideswide Square and Castle Mill Stream Gateway and Station Gateway. These four areas have particular focus in the West End Spatial Framework and the Design Guide in the emerging masterplans section. It is essential the details relating to these sites in the SF and Design Guide, and in the emerging masterplans section, is referred to, carefully understood and followed.

### Expectations for development on Osney Mead

113. Osney Mead's location and opportunity for change is instrumental in realising the wider vision for the area. It's a site which provides significant opportunity for more innovation, a new working and residential community and a place for culture, arts and leisure. Allocated in the Local Plan 2036 (Policy SP2), Osney Mead is earmarked as a place for a mixed use development which accommodates employment uses, academic uses, student accommodation, employer linked affordable housing and market housing.
114. The place-making vision for this site is to:
- Take the opportunity for green and blue infrastructure to address not only environmental challenges but be adapted into a friendly and comfortable public realm network
  - Build upon existing urban structure and existing access routes to create a practical urban armature of movement, connections and infrastructure
  - Allow intimate and lively public spaces to emerge from the processional design of streets and flexible urban block typologies
115. There are key opportunities to unlock the site around access, place-making and sustainable infrastructure. These measures make the most efficient use of land to fully achieve development goals and to unlock the full potential of Osney Mead as a world leading innovation and sustainable urban quarter. Some of these opportunities can only be achieved by comprehensive development across the site, the potential benefits of which may in future justify a Compulsory Purchase Order.

There are particular key interventions that can significantly enhance the development potential of the site that require a large-scale redevelopment, including relocation of the Environment Agency’s depot to create a new route into the site. Undergrounding the electric cables is also likely to only be achievable as part of a full redevelopment of the site. Comprehensive flood risk management through integrated SuDS and green infrastructure across the site. Development of the site as one piece would also have an advantage in terms of placemaking, ensuring comprehensive consideration of activity, public spaces and so on across the site. Connectivity, access and movement around the site, including for example potentially accommodating public transport, could also be considered fully.

116. Comprehensive development should follow the vision and design principles set out in the Spatial Framework. This includes the **Green Infrastructure Strategy**, which is illustrated by the following diagram:

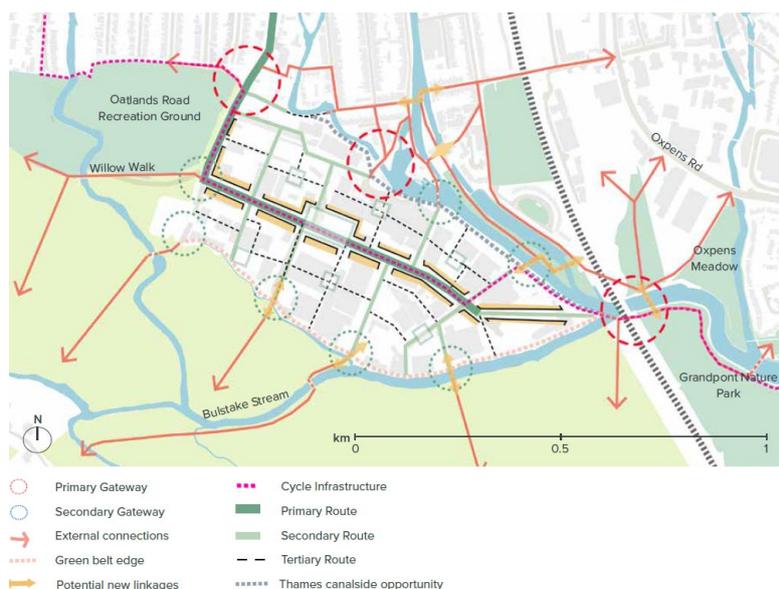
*Figure 9: Osney Mead blue and green infrastructure strategy*



117. This also includes the **Movement Strategy**, as illustrated by the following diagram. The off-site connections will not necessarily be achievable through the development of Osney Mead but it will be necessary to show that the site is adequately connected and integrated into the wider area:

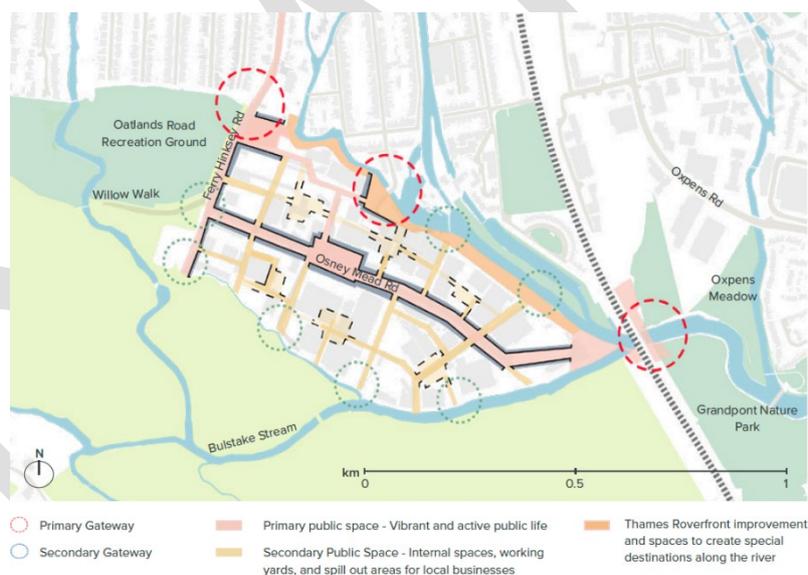
*Figure 10: Osney Mead movement strategy*

## West End and Osney Mead SPD



118. The **Urban Armature Strategy** should also be applied, as illustrated by this diagram showing the structure of public spaces across the site:

*Figure 11: Osney Mead urban armature strategy*



### Individual proposals ahead of any comprehensive development

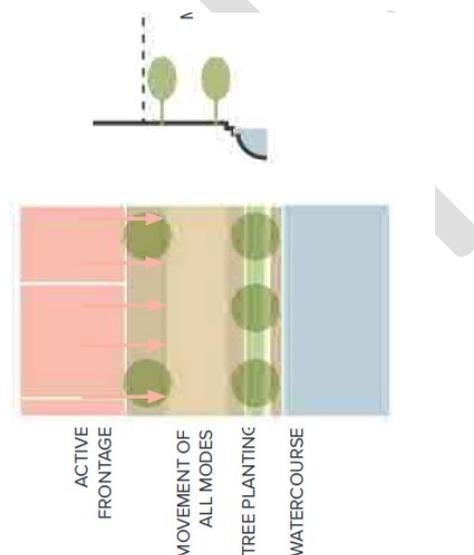
119. Even with any smaller individual proposals within the Osney Mead site it is important that they contribute to the delivery of the overall vision and do not compromise it. The means that the location should be identified on the strategy diagrams and proposals designed around this to ensure future delivery of the vision is not compromised. Policy SP2 states that planning permission will not be granted for development that prejudices the comprehensive development of the whole site and that a masterplan approved by the City Council should be developed prior to any development, which all development should comply with. Whilst development of a masterplan will rely on a majority landowner carrying out more detailed work, this

SPD enables smaller incremental developments to come forward and be considered in the context of their impacts on delivery of the vision for the site. Any large-scale comprehensive development of the site should follow development of a masterplan in collaboration with city council officers and endorsed at Cabinet.

120. Responding to the flood risk is essential for development on the site and it is likely that flood mitigation will be required on most of the site, even when in the context of the Oxfordshire Flood Alleviation Scheme. Technical work and detailed surveys will be needed to support proposals and the opportunity should be left for future implementation of the GI strategy.

121. Any development along the Thames should reactivate the interface with the river, designing in a river walk and a green buffer to the river. The Design Guide (page 17) gives the following guidance for developing alongside waterways, which will require an 8-12m gap:

*Figure 12: Movement guidance alongside waterways*



122. The SF gives guidance about mixed uses and innovative urban typologies, for example providing worker housing with private shared courtyards, stacking uses within buildings and rooftop meadows.

### **Expectations for development on Frideswide Square and Castle Mill Stream**

123. The placemaking vision for this site is that it will be a vibrant mixed-use quarter which is a place to work, live, study, socialise, play and visit. Its redevelopment should deliver an eco-system of workspace and innovation, achieved through a mix of uses integrated with a high quality public realm, activated waterside space and a new residential community. The location on a key transport axis in close proximity to the station makes the site immediately within a site of activity. For this reason, the public realm alongside the sites and the interface of the development with the public realm is very important. The public realm will need to support significant movement particularly of buses, cycles and pedestrians.

124. There are site specific principles within the SF that should be applied as proposals are developed, and that proposals will be assessed against to help determine whether they will enable the vision for the site and its role in the West End to be met.

### Movement

- Development should enhance Frideswide Square to facilitate the creation of a western gateway;
- Development should add some additional north-south connectivity between Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street and allow active and public transport on one or both of Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street, with enhancements for walking and cycling such as wider pavements and cycle lanes.

### Green and blue network

- Development should include the creation of a public space adjacent to the Castle Mill Stream which is active and celebrates the site's history
- Development should add to the greening of Frideswide Square where it is actively affecting public realm
- Development should retain existing trees where possible and consider opportunities for planting new trees, especially on Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street
- Development should consider potential for ecology on rooftops

### Public realm improvements and activation

- Require celebration and sensitivity towards existing heritage walls
- Greening of streets and public realm is expected
- Wayfinding interventions are expected which improve legibility and navigation.
- Complement opportunities for enhancement to the public realm and streets around the Nuffield West End sites as part of a holistic strategy that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists
- Ground floor activation will be essential
- The opportunity should be taken to provide enhancements to the public realm on Becket Street to improve the setting of the heritage assets of St Thomas the Martyr Church and Abbey, and to respond to proposals coming forward on the Becket Street Car Park

### Urban grain: mixed uses and built form

- Buildings should include diverse built typologies and flexible floor-plates
- Buildings should be designed to be sensitive to surrounding heritage assets
- Development could include moments of height to aid legibility on the Island and Worcester Street Car Park sites, if it can be sensitively incorporated.
- Development on Worcester Street Car Park should create a strong relationship with the built form of Nuffield College
- Opportunities should be taken to accommodate a range of types and sizes of businesses and to enhance the evening economy.

### Oxpens

125. The Oxpens site is strategically located where the urban city meets nature, providing an opportunity for the masterplanning of the site to be landscape driven by the River Thames, Oxpens Meadow, Green Belt and the heritage of the West End as a seat of industry and productivity. It has an important relationship with Osney Mead, the Station and the City centre's Core Area.
126. The vision for the place-making of Oxpens is to provide a mixed-use neighbourhood that opens up the riverside to provide a new public space for Oxford. The development of this site has the potential to provide new homes and jobs through residential and commercial uses as part of the Area of Change in the Local Plan 2036.
127. There are site specific principles within the SF that should be applied as proposals are developed, and that proposals will be assessed against to help determine whether they will enable the vision for the site and its role in the West End to be met. Many of these may be most easily achieved through comprehensive development, so a Compulsory Purchase Order across the whole site could have many benefits for successful delivery of these priorities.

### Green and blue infrastructure

- The development needs to demonstrate a strong biodiverse green and blue infrastructure response through the site showing how the river links to the city centre
- The development is required to expand the meadows into the heart of the Oxpens site area and for buildings to respond to its riverside setting

### Movement

- The development should include allow for the landing of the new Oxpens Bridge providing pedestrian and cycle access from south of the city, Grandpont and Osney Mead to the Station and City centre, which would significantly improve east-west connectivity links
- The development should contribute towards the cost of new improvements to the public realm along Oxpens Road including better pedestrian and cycle crossing links as well as new cycle lanes
- The development should seek to improve east-west links over the railway line, such as next to Student Castle
- Strengthen the link to the Castle Mill Stream and Westgate

### Urban grain, mix of uses and built form

- The Oxpens development as a whole needs to provide 450 homes to help meet the city's housing needs
- Commercial buildings should be designed to include flexible footprints and typologies to meet a diverse size and range of innovative businesses
- The comprehensive development of this site will bring significant benefits and help to deliver and phase the provision of key elements of infrastructure. However co-

operation and collaboration between landowners and partners is important in realising this place-making vision

- The development could include a hotel to attract visitors to this City centre site and help to activate the scheme
- An amphitheatre as a focus for outdoor events could be supported to further activate the development and promote social value and well-being

### Urban armature

- The development should include a new river plaza opening up the river to the city
- Buildings should include a dynamic roofscape that contributes to both the city's skyline and green infrastructure provision
- New buildings facing Oxpens Road and within the development should have 'active' frontages both at ground level and wherever possible on upper floors
- The development should support public realm improvements along Oxpens Road including landscaping and tree planting

### **The Station Gateway**

128. Establishing Oxford Station as a world-class multi-modal transport hub will be critical in realising the regeneration potential of the West End area of the city and forming an important gateway into the city. The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (ORCS) has highlighted the importance of the Station, locally, regionally and nationally and the need for significant improvements to be made to increase the station capacity and achieve greater connectivity. The capacity of the station needs to provide two new lines/new rail bridge over Botley Road, new ticket office to facilitate EWR, CBL and deliver greater connectivity to London, South-East, Midlands and the North; in addition to a new interchange for walking, cycling and bus, all within its tightly constrained existing site. These are all needed to deliver wider Oxfordshire Connect plans to support 100,000 new homes across the County. These infrastructure improvements to the Station will help to facilitate the delivery of the Cowley Branch Line to be opened up for passengers, which will make a significant difference to improving the accessibility and connectivity for those living in the south-east of the city together with both the planned urban extensions and access to the Business Park and Science Park.

129. The provision of two additional railway lines will place pressure on available space on the eastern side of the station, with the need to accommodate adequate interchange with pedestrians, cycle, bus and taxi. Consideration of Becket street as part of the solution will be needed. The size, scale and design of the car parking provision at Becket Street will need to be re-considered. The Rail Regulator has ultimate control over the number of car parking spaces, but there is a general ambition to reduce parking in the city centre. Development on Becket Street car park will also be important to create value that helps enable development of the station.

130. Some preliminary options for the Oxford Station masterplan, which includes the Station site (both east and west of the station) and Becket Street car park are being developed and tested. There are a range of scenarios which differ in how they deal with buses, car parking, development plots and movements around the site.

This initial work will be taken forward further through the preparation of a more detailed masterplan for the Station. It is expected that investment and improvement in the station area will need to be implemented on a phased basis, as business cases are approved.

131. The place-making vision is:

- **To create a strong sense of arrival.** This requires high quality public realm linked to strong legibility and wayfinding for those arriving and leaving from the station. Opportunities to link to Frideswide Square and south to Becket Street will be important to create a comprehensive public realm network and Gateway for the Station;
- **To provide a multi-modal hub.** This needs to be accessible for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, which is important for both visitors and local people. The hub needs to include adequate infrastructure comprising cycle parking, hire and routes; accessible and attractive bus stops; high quality public realm and buildings; and a mix of uses with active frontages;
- **To create a mixed-use precinct.** A rich mix of uses provides activity and contributes to a sense of arrival. Uses can include cafes, restaurants, studios and arts and community uses. These activate both the buildings and the spaces / public realm areas.

132. There are site specific principles within the SF that should be applied as proposals are developed, and that proposals will be assessed against, to help determine whether they will enable the vision for the site and its role in the West End to be met.

### Movement

- Becket Street is recognised as a key sustainable transport link with potential to support active and public travel interchange, which requires enhancement
- The creation of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Botley Road is important to provide access to and from the new Station development
- Last mile solutions should be fully explored to show how an integrated approach to travel has been proposed for bus stops, cycle parking, and taxi-ranks
- The aim should be to limit car parking provision to respond to a sustainable approach to travel, congestion measures and zero-emission
- Opportunities for improved bus accessibility and appropriate bus layover should be fully explored
- The provision of a western entrance has positive benefits for meeting the needs of those arriving from the west and serving Osney Mead.

### Urban grain, mix of uses and built form

- New buildings in Frideswide Square should demonstrate how their design and the uses proposed positively activate and enhance the square

### Urban Armature

- New development needs to celebrate and enhance the setting of St. Thomas's Church and the Abbey

## West End and Osney Mead SPD

- The new development should have due regard to the existing protected trees

### Green and Blue infrastructure

- Existing and new trees should be considered within the context of a landscaping scheme that assesses their value both from a biodiversity and amenity point of view.

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