

To: Cabinet
Date: 16 November 2022
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Draft West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton, Scrutiny Committee Chair
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery
Corporate Priority:	Pursue a zero carbon Oxford; Support thriving communities; Deliver more affordable housing; Enable an inclusive economy
Policy Framework:	The SPD seeks to provide further detail and advice on the implementation and delivery of key West End policies within the adopted Local Plan 2036
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 07 November 2022 to consider a report on the West End and Osney Mead SPD. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 16 November 2022, recommends that Cabinet: adopts the revised West End and Osney Mead SPD; approves the West End and Osney Mead SPD as a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications on sites in the area; authorises the Acting Head of Planning Services (Planning Policy), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to make any necessary editorial corrections; and approves the revocation of the Oxpens Masterplan SPD and of the Oxford Station SPD.

Summary and recommendations

2. Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report. He emphasised that the SPD did not, could not, and would not conflict with the Local Plan.
3. Tom Morris, Principal Planner, Sarah Harrison, Planning Policy Team Leader, and Arome Agamah, Senior Planner, attended to answer the Committee's questions. The Principal Planner gave an overview of the SPD and its objectives and a summary of the consultation.
4. The Committee explored the relationship between the SPD and the current Local Plan. It also raised questions around how this SPD would impact on the development of a future Local Plan and how future iterations of the Local Plan would relate to the SPD. This was explained to the Committee but it considered that it would be of benefit to include such an explanation in the documentation itself in the interests of transparency and clarity.

Recommendation 1: That the Council gives consideration to making clearer the relationship between this SPD, the development of future Local Plans, and future iterations of the Local Plan within the document.

5. The Committee recognised that the consultation had received a number of responses but highlighted that significant numbers of those responses had not been wholly positive about the consultation. The Committee also considered it important to engage proactively with tenants in the area impacted.

Recommendation 2: That the Council considers whether a second phase of engagement and consultation would be of benefit and how such a phase might connect with tenants in the community.

6. The Committee commended the number of references to the 'blue network' and asked if more information could be provided by Cabinet about discussions with the Environment Agency on this and on the opening up of the Environment Agency depot for access.

Recommendation 3: That the Council reports on progress in discussions with the Environment Agency on the 'blue network' and on the opening up of the Environment Agency depot and, also, to setting out the agency's formal responses, if any, thus far.

7. The Committee explored what was meant by 'activation of the riverside edge at the Thames and Osney Lock' and sought assurances that this did not mean that the area was necessarily to be built upon..

Recommendation 4: That the Council clarifies within the document that activation of the riverside edge need not mean the site is no longer predominantly green.

8. The Committee welcomed the explicit commitment within the SPD to active travel and public transport options. It suggested that the Movement Strategy outlined within the SPD would benefit from reference to car sharing and car clubs.

Recommendation 5: That the Council includes reference to car clubs and shared cars under the Movement Strategy within the SPD.

9. The Panel recognised the SPD’s description of ‘a reliance on constrained streets and towpaths’ but expressed the importance to connectivity in the area of the path along the Thames that leads north to Gibbs Crescent and to Mill Street.

Recommendation 6: That the Council gives consideration to referencing the importance for improved connectivity of the path along the River Thames that leads north to Gibbs Crescent and to Mill Street.

10. The Committee welcomed the aspiration to opening up the remnants of Osney Abbey and Osney Mill Cottage and asked how easy or difficult this was anticipated to be.

Recommendation 7: That the Council provides a progress update on the feasibility of opening up Osney Abbey and Osney Mill Cottage.

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