

Appendix A

Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 08 November 2022 concerning the draft West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
<p>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.</p>		<p>The SPD, if adopted by Cabinet, would be a ‘material consideration’ in determining planning applications. It would also provide a good indication of the direction of travel for future place-making, design principles, site allocations and Areas of Focus for the West End and Osney Mead area of the city, which would be taken forward through the emerging Oxford Local Plan 2040. The new policies developed as part of the Local Plan 2040 would have sovereign status as part of the Development Plan but the SPD would continue to provide some detailed advice and guidance on key place-making principles. Additional wording to this effect is suggested at the end of paragraph 4 of the SPD:</p> <p><i>The SPD will not constrain development of policies in the emerging Local Plan 2040 and policies in the Plan will refer back to this SPD to ensure it remains relevant. The broad principles and context that underpin the SPD are likely to remain relevant in the new Local Plan, although consideration might need to be given to whether any changes in approach in the emerging Local Plan affect the SPD and require it to be reviewed.</i></p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>There are statutory requirements for the preparation of a supplementary planning document (SPD), which the Council must follow, as set out in the Town and Country Regulations 2012 and in the Statement of Community Involvement. The preparation of the Spatial Framework has already been through three stages of public consultation, which applies equally to tenants and house owners.</p> <p>Firstly in early 2021 a public consultation was held seeking the views of the public, key stakeholders and landowners on the issues that people felt should be taken developing a spatial framework for the West End and Osney Mead Area. The results of this public consultation were used to inform the work subsequently carried out by Levitt Bernstein (urban design consultants) who were appointed by the City Council to lead a team to prepare the spatial framework.</p> <p>Secondly in helping to develop a vision for the West End the consultants then held a visioning workshop with key stakeholders, amenity bodies and landowners to help establish some of the key principles for the vision.</p> <p>The third stage involved the preparation of a Draft SPD, Spatial Framework and Design Guide, which were subject to a public consultation for 7 weeks from 29th June 2022 to 17th August 2022.</p> <p>The comments received for the public consultation are summarised in detail in the Statement of Public Consultation together with the officer's suggestions for proposed changes to be made to the documents in</p>
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		response. In these circumstances no further public consultation is considered to be necessary.
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.		<p>The consultants (Levitt Bernstein) in developing the spatial framework had some initial informal discussions with the Environment Agency to discuss the approach towards developing a blue and green infrastructure network, which in principle was supported. The response of the Environment Agency to the consultation on the draft SPD is summarised in the Public Participation Statement, which also shows an officer response and the changes made in response.</p> <p>Further discussions took place between the consultants and the Environment Agency (EA) over the potential opening up of their depot, but as a high-level discussion aimed at exploring the principle as an ambition that could possibly be realised in the future. The purpose of the SPD is not to enter a negotiation but it does set ambitions and aspirations. It is noted in the Public Participation Statement in response to an individual's comment that, whilst the EA Depot is a potential location for enhanced connectivity in the future there would be considerable practical issues to address, not least how to relocated its current functions.</p>
4) That the Council clarifies within the document that activation of the riverside edge need not mean the site is no longer predominantly green.		The 'activation of the riverside edge' is a place-making term that seeks to realise the potential and the assets of the river and waterways that run through the West End Area and recognise their value in both improving opportunities for connections and movement through the area by walking and cycling and creating new public spaces. Any new proposals coming forward would need to

		show how they positively responded to the place-making principles in the SPD and relevant adopted Local Plan policies.
5) That the Council includes reference to car clubs and shared cars under the Movement Strategy within the SPD.		This comment is accepted and some additional text is proposed at the end of the second sentence in paragraph 54 of the SPD to state: <i>together with support given to car clubs and shared car arrangements.</i>
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.		<p>Whilst this path lies outside the West End and Osney Mead SPD area it is important the footpath does properly connect to other areas outside the SPD area and improves connectivity and opportunities for better access and movement in the area as whole.</p> <p>Additional text is suggested as a third sentence to paragraph 57: <i>Opportunities to improve connectivity links to the wider area, such as the path along the River Thames leading north to Gibbs Crescent will be supported in principle to improve connectivity to the wider area.</i></p>
7) That the Council provides a progress update on the feasibility of opening up Osney Abbey and Osney Mill Cottage.		The SPD and Spatial Framework are high-level documents that set out the ambition for the West End and Osney Mead area. The consultants rightly highlighted the potential opportunity of seeking to realise the benefits of opening up the Osney Abbey and Osney Mill Cottage, given their value as heritage assets, but this would need to be taken forward (not necessarily by the Planning team or City Council) as a separate additional piece of work in the future.