

Oxford Local Plan 2042

Draft Document for Consultation (Regulation 18)

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Version Control

V1

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND STRATEGY

WHERE WE ARE

- 1.1 The Local Plan for the period 2022 to 2042 will replace the Local Plan 2036 and other relevant parts of the development plan including the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan. When adopted, it will form a key part of the Development Plan for the City.
- 1.2 Oxford is an attractive place to live, work, study and visit and is home to a diverse range of communities. Its environment is characterised by a wealth of heritage that has built up over centuries of settlement and by the many areas of high quality green and blue spaces that harbour a variety of ecologically important habitats. The city has a broad, multi-faceted and active economy, with one of the highest concentrations of knowledge intensive businesses in the UK. This is enhanced by its historic role as a world-renowned seat of learning with two universities and a strong research and innovation sector. However, this attractiveness and success has brought with it challenges for our environment and the people who live and work in the city.
- 1.3 High demand for land results in high land values; congestion on the city's roads makes movement difficult and exacerbates poor air quality in certain areas; and the supporting infrastructure has struggled to keep pace with a changing and growing city. These challenges are intensified by national and international pressures such as rising build costs for new development, a chronic undersupply of housing, climate change and energy insecurity. The role of this new Local Plan is to build upon the positive aspects that make the city so special, whilst also seeking to address the challenges we face through positive planning policies to ensure the optimum outcomes for the environment and its residents, businesses, education, and health institutions.
- 1.4 The vision for Oxford in 2042 seeks to address the strengths and challenges identified above. It is as follows:

In 2042 Oxford will be a healthy and inclusive city, with strong communities that benefit from equal opportunities for everyone, not only in access to housing, but to nature, employment, social and leisure opportunities and to healthcare. Oxford will be a city with a strong cultural identity, that respects and values our heritage, whilst maximising opportunities to look forwards to innovate, learn and enable businesses to prosper. The vision is one which supports research and development in the life sciences and health sectors which are and will provide solutions to global challenges. The environment

will be central to everything we do; it will be more biodiverse, better connected and more resilient. We will utilise resources prudently whilst mitigating our impacts on the soil, water, and air. The city will be net zero carbon, whilst our communities, buildings and infrastructure will be resilient to the impacts of climate change and other emergencies.

- 1.5 The vision for the city in 2042 is divided into key six themes which are illustrated in Figure 1.1. These are three themes based on the pillars of sustainability and three themes which fall at the intersections of those pillars. Taken together, the six themes represent what we consider to be a sustainable future for Oxford.

Figure 1.1: The six themes underpinning our vision for Oxford in 2042 – adapted from the three pillars of sustainability (society, economy and the environment)

1. SOCIETY

A healthy and inclusive city to live in

2. ENVIRONMENT

A green and biodiverse city that is resilient to climate change

3. ECONOMY

A fair and prosperous city with a globally important role in learning, knowledge and innovation

4. SOCIETAL / ECONOMY

A liveable city with strong communities and opportunities for all

5. SOCIETAL / ENVIRONMENT

A city that respects its heritage and fosters design of the highest quality

6. ENVIRONMENT / ECONOMY

A city that utilises its resources with care, protects the air, water and soil, and aims for net zero carbon

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

- 1.6 Building on the vision, several objectives that build off each of the six themes identified above. The Local Plan 2042 are proposed below in Figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1.2: The six Local Plan 2042 themes and underlying objectives

Local Plan 2042 theme	Underlying Local Plan 2042 objectives <i>The Oxford Local Plan 2042 will...</i>
A healthy and inclusive city to live in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise capacity for delivering homes across the city and set a housing requirement that seeks to meet the needs of different groups as far as possible. • Provide access to affordable, high-quality and suitable accommodation for all.
A green and biodiverse city that is resilient to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure strong, well-connected ecological networks and net gains in biodiversity. • Be resilient and adaptable to climate change and resistant to flood risk and its impacts on people and property. • Protect and enhance Oxford's green and blue network. • Provide opportunities for sport, food growing, recreation, relaxation and socialising on its open spaces.
A fair and prosperous city with a globally important role in learning, knowledge and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the benefits of the city's strengths in knowledge, healthcare and education while supporting economic growth in key sectors including science and innovation. • Recognise the valuable contribution that supporting a range of businesses (including SMEs) can make to innovation and economic diversity. Help to create the conditions in which all businesses can prosper. • Create opportunities for everyone in the city to access employment. Support local people giving them access to training, education and apprenticeships to make the most out of new job opportunities created in the city. • Help Oxford to continue in its role as a national and international destination and support the visitor economy by encouraging longer stays and higher spend in Oxford.
A liveable city with strong communities and opportunities for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide neighbourhoods facilities needed to support our daily lives within a short walk from our homes, to support a liveable city. • Develop thriving local centres that support a variety of uses and foster activity throughout the day and night. • Demonstrate we value diversity whilst fostering greater inclusivity within our communities. • Create opportunities for supporting the transition to more sustainable/active forms of transport, including by reducing the need to travel, supporting good bicycle parking facilities and avoiding on and off-street car parking where possible across the city.
A city that respects its heritage and fosters design of the highest quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit well-designed buildings and public spaces that feel safe, that are sustainable, and that are attractive to be in and travel to. • Protect and enhance our valued and important heritage. • Curate a built environment that supports and enables people to be physically and mentally healthy.

<p>A city that utilises its resources with care, protects the air, water and soil, and aims for net zero carbon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Oxford is ready for a net zero carbon future. • Our resources, including land, soil, and raw materials, will be protected and used prudently, with consideration for replenishment and renewal. • Contribute towards continued improvement in the city's air quality and its further limit impacts upon public health. • The city's water resources are utilised efficiently with consideration for the future, whilst water quality is protected and enhanced for the benefit of the wider environment.
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OVERARCHING THREADS

- 1.7 In response to the complexities of planning in such a challenging but dynamic city and alongside a need to urgently respond to inequality and climate change, there are three particularly important threads which are wound throughout the Local Plan and supported by multiple policies across the different chapters. These relate to key issues and challenges facing the city which require a multi-faceted response and that are relevant to all 6 themes underpinning the vision and all of the objectives. As such, all the proposed policies will help to address these key issues.
- 1.8 The first overarching thread which various proposed policies are trying to address is that of **reducing inequalities** in the city. The Local Plan chapter 2 puts forward a range of requirements aimed at supporting access to affordable housing, as well as a good mix of housing, in order to help address housing inequality. Equally, chapter 3 sets out policies which could seek to support the economy, including addressing unequal access to employment and training through options for policies requiring employment and skills plans as well as provision of affordable workspaces. Policies that are proposed for protecting, enhancing and providing new green infrastructure in chapter 4 are intended to help preserve access to and improve the natural environment across the city and there are other policies located in the document which also respond to this overarching thread.
- 1.9 The second thread is that of **addressing climate change**. In terms of reducing our emissions (climate change mitigation), the proposed policies of chapter 5 most directly address this issue covering topics such as net zero development, embodied carbon and supporting retrofitting of existing buildings, however policies elsewhere in the Local Plan also address good urban design, parking, and bike storage which can enable people to live lower carbon lifestyles. Equally, a diverse range of policies can support adaptation and resilience to the expected impacts of climate change, from resilient design and construction (which includes concerns around overheating), to flooding, green infrastructure and most of these sit within chapter 4, though other policies such as urban design and health impact assessment will also contribute.

- 1.10 Meanwhile, the third overarching thread which runs throughout the document is that of **enabling a liveable city** and ensuring that residents have access to the basis of their daily needs within an easy walking distance of their homes. The Local Plan's proposed strategic policies discussed later in this chapter include an overarching spatial strategy which sets out where types of development ought to be focused in the city and helps support this theme. Within subsequent chapters, there are policies which are put forward to focus on more specific aspects of provision that we want to see in our neighbourhoods to help ensure the right balance of needs are met. These include policies on town centre uses (chapter 3), the protection of a network of green spaces across the city (chapter 4), as well as policies which address the provision of community facilities (chapter 7).

SPATIAL STRATEGY AND PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 1.11 The policies of the Local Plan will seek to ensure that new development across the city occurs in the right place. To guide development to the optimum location, development proposals must reflect the key principles which support the spatial strategy.

- 1.12 Key considerations for the policy:

- The Local Plan should seek to deliver as much of the City's housing need as possible, without having detrimental effects on economic, social and environmental sustainability objectives. The Local Plan should set a housing requirement which seeks to meet housing needs as far as possible using a capacity-based approach.
- The Local Plan's policies will focus on delivering sustainable growth for Oxford that meets the objectives, including by delivering affordable housing, supporting an inclusive economy, ensuring the protection of our green and blue networks and natural resources and supporting the city in moving towards being net zero carbon by 2040.

- 1.13 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Support for the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the continued support for a wide range of uses which make a city liveable, sustainable and resilient whilst taking into account spatial and local impacts of new development.

DRAFT POLICY S1: SPATIAL STRATEGY AND PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission will be granted where development proposals accord with the policies of the Plan.

The City Council, through its policies and decisions, will positively pursue sustainable development and achieve sustainable growth in the delivery of homes, jobs and services to create a network of healthy, well-connected, high-quality areas where people want to live, play, learn and work in line with the vision and objectives of the Local Plan. To help achieve this it will aim to ensure development is located to:

- a) ensure the continued strength and vibrancy of district and local centres so they continue to attract people and support a range of facilities that meet people's immediate needs conveniently within their local area;
- b) ensure new development is focussed on areas with opportunities for sustainable travel links;
- c) ensure activities that attract large numbers of people are centrally located in the city centre and district centres, so they are easy to reach by walking, cycling and public transport;
- d) focus new employment development that supports Oxford's national and international role in research and development on existing sites already in that use, prioritising housing elsewhere;
- e) ensure new uses are in locations where they will not harm the amenity of existing neighbouring uses;
- f) prevent new development in locations where it would have a negative impact on important blue and green infrastructure networks, public open space, and result in loss of flood plain.; and
- g) take account of local historic context and respond appropriately to heritage significance.

When determining development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). The Council will work proactively with applicants with the aim of finding solutions that mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the city.

All new proposals for development must conform with the principles of securing sustainable development, which ensures that the city is ready for a net zero carbon future, natural resources and raw materials are used prudently and considerately, the air quality of the city is improved, and human health is safeguarded.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in any neighbourhood plans adopted in the future) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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

- h) the application of policies in the *National Planning Policy Framework* that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

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| i) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> taken as a whole. |
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DESIGN CODE AND GUIDANCE

1.14 Good design is a fundamental part of achieving many of the aims of the Plan.

1.15 Key considerations for the policy:

- Good design is not just about creating aesthetically pleasing buildings. It is about placemaking, strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, promoting a sense of identity and people's health and well-being. Good design can also help new development to sit more appropriately on challenging sites or certain locations which are more sensitive to change.
- Some parts of the city will experience change from new development on site allocations and in accordance with other policies of the development plan. Development in these areas will need to pay extra attention to how they are designed to avoid harms and maximise the benefits new development can bring about.

1.16 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy sets requirements which help to secure high quality design, conserve and enhance historic assets, and character. A design code to inform designs and ensure a comprehensive approach is taken. Identified locations such as areas of focus, city and district centres have associated design guidance.

DRAFT POLICY S2: DESIGN CODE AND GUIDANCE
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<p>The design checklist set out in Appendix 1.1 should be used to inform design and ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken from the outset, which includes consideration of the relevant context including heritage, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and protection of the natural environment.</p>

<p>For Areas of Focus, the City Centre and District Centres, and other areas with more detailed guidance, proposals should refer to and align with the design principles set out in the Local Plan or in supporting documents such as the West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document and the Botley Road Retail Park Development Brief 2022. The City Council will be proactive in producing additional local design codes or guidance when a need arises involving the local</p>
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community and landowners and will support neighbourhood planning groups who wish to produce design guidance for their areas.

In recognition of the significance of Oxford's heritage, and as part of its positive approach to the historic environment, in addition to fulfilling its statutory duties, the Council will:

- a) identify, conserve and enhance local heritage assets;
- b) take a proactive approach to the protection, promotion and interpretation of the city's archaeological remains;
- c) support the conservation and appreciation of key characteristics of the wider townscape and landscape; and
- d) take a positive strategy towards assets that are considered at risk.

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

1.17 To deliver the Local Plan vision for 2040, the spatial strategy and plan objectives, the provision of infrastructure will need to be funded and delivered in a timely manner to support development. It is important to ensure that roads, local services and supporting infrastructure such as energy supply, water supply and wastewater treatment can cope with the increased demand resulting from development proposed in the Plan. It can also assist contributing to the city's environment and community facilities, including spaces for sport and recreation, cultural facilities and historic assets, particularly those whose future might otherwise be at risk.

1.18 Key considerations for the policy:

- Where new development creates a need for new and improved infrastructure, contributions from developers and delivery of infrastructure will be sought to make the development acceptable in planning terms. These may be delivered as part of a Section 106 (S106) agreement, a S278 agreement, or through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.
- Contributions from a particular development must be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the contribution to the cumulative impact from the relevant scheme; and if necessary, address any unacceptable short-term problems.
- The City's current infrastructure requirements can be found in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which includes an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule. The documents identify infrastructure requirements needed to support the proposed development in Local Plan to 2042. The IDP includes key infrastructure projects for transport and physical infrastructure; social and community facilities and green infrastructure to support the city's planned

development needs to 2042. The IDP forms part of the evidence base and is a 'live' document that is regularly updated.

- The delivery of certain infrastructure projects is considered to have wide-reaching improvements and benefits that could be transformational in nature. This includes the county council's core transport schemes involving the introduction of traffic filters and workplace parking levy.
- There are two important rail projects which could be delivered in Oxford within the plan period to 2042. These are the transformation of Oxford Railway Station (incorporating the delivery of East-West Rail), and the re-opening of the Cowley Branch Line (CBL) to passenger trains (and the delivery of stations to service key employment sites in the south of the city such as the Oxford Science Park and Oxford Business Park (now known as ARC Oxford)). These projects would increase the accessibility of these locations to a wider workforce across the Oxford to Cambridge area.
- Enhancements to public transport accessibility in the south-east of the city are needed to support the anticipated intensification of existing employment uses and new residential development. Supporting existing public transport and the reopening of the CBL to passengers would enable a reduction in car use to this area. It is likely that significant funding will be required to deliver these transformational opportunities and certain sites that lie within the Cowley Branch Line and Littlemore Area of Focus (Policy CBLLAoF) will be expected to help contribute to their delivery.

1.19 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy requires new development to contribute to the delivery, or directly deliver, new infrastructure.
- It also identifies the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a key source of information, along with other relevant projects which are identified as important to be delivered to support new development in the city.
- The draft policy supports proposals that can enhance the city's rail and bus network, including Cowley Branch Line and Oxford Railway Station.
- Additionally, requirements are set out for developers to engage with key organisations such as infrastructure providers to discuss infrastructure needs and then deliver against those requirements or provide a contribution towards their delivery.

DRAFT POLICY S3: INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY IN NEW DEVELOPMENT
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The Council will work with infrastructure providers, developers and other key stakeholders to support the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to enable the development set out in the Local Plan. The

projects required to support the Local Plan strategy are identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be updated to ensure infrastructure information remains up to date and is monitored effectively.

Developers will be expected to engage early with the Council and infrastructure service providers to discuss their requirements. Developers must demonstrate they have explored existing infrastructure capacity, and how this could be future-proofed, with appropriate providers and demonstrate that they have made sufficient provision. Where appropriate, and where there is an identified shortfall across the city, opportunities should be taken to maximise infrastructure provision on suitable sites.

Development proposals, including those allocated in this plan which give rise to a need for infrastructure improvements, will be expected to mitigate their impact, both individually and cumulatively, and at a rate and scale to meet the needs that arise from that development or a phase of that development. The standards of infrastructure delivery will be expected to comply with other policies set out within this Plan.

Planning permission will be granted subject to the provision of (or appropriate funding towards) the required level of infrastructure to support the development. Infrastructure identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan or through negotiations on individual planning applications will continue to be delivered either through on-site provision or off-site contributions and secured by S106, S278 or other appropriate agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or its successor as well as other identified sources of funding as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Development proposals which rely on the delivery of critical infrastructure projects to support the development, will only be permitted prior to completion of that project or where appropriate, a phase of that project which has been identified as necessary in the IDP, where the council is content that the infrastructure or phase of that infrastructure will be in place within a reasonable timetable from the date of permission.

Proposals to enhance the City's rail and bus network will be supported. In particular, the redevelopment of Oxford Station and additional rail capacity to accommodate services including opening of the Cowley Branch Line (CBL) for passengers.

Proposals for improvements to Oxford Railway Station that increase network capacity, improve the design and quality of facilities and interchange and support the CBL will be supported. Oxford Railway Station should be transformed to facilitate integrated transport with a new entrance on the west, additional secure cycle storage, cycle racks, new bus interchange facilities and new priority public areas.

Enhancements to public transport accessibility in the south-east of the city are needed to support the anticipated intensification of existing employment uses and new residential development. Supporting existing public transport and the reopening of the CBL to passengers would enable a reduction in car use to this area. Financial contributions from new trip-generating development within a 1,500m buffer zone of the proposed CBL stations will be expected in order to achieve public transport enhancements in this area, including, among other sustainable transport measures, the delivery of the CBL. These will be tested in accordance with Paragraph 57 of the NPPF.

PLAN VIABILITY

1.20 The Plan must help to deliver development that is viable, and the Local Plan viability study will inform the drafting of the policies. However, in some instances a site may face exceptional costs that could not have been anticipated in the whole plan viability assessment. Setting out the basis for negotiations relating to viability as part of the Plan would help to be clear on priorities and expectations for evidence. Viability testing demonstrates that the policies as drafted are viable, which will continue to reflect the latest policy to ensure that continues to be the case.

1.21 Key considerations for the policy:

- It is anticipated that some new development proposals will have exceptional costs owing to the site conditions, for example land contamination which requires remediation, or transport or educational infrastructure. Assessing these costs is challenging until proper site investigations have been undertaken and we are aware such situations have implications for site viability.

1.22 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Policies of the Local Plan have been tested and are viable. Where viability is an issue, a cascade approach has been included.

DRAFT POLICY S4: PLAN VIABILITY

The policies in the Plan have been viability tested and planning applications that fully comply with them should generally be assumed to be viable.

If the combined impact of the policies in the Plan do result in a site being unable to deliver a viable development and if an applicant can demonstrate particular circumstances that justify the need for a viability assessment, negotiations will take place informed by an open book exercise.

If the applicant can demonstrate the development to be unviable, a cascade approach should be worked through with the City Council until development is viable, looking at first any carbon offsetting, then any low parking and finally affordable housing

The City Council will always expect developers to have considered the financial implications of affordable housing policy requirements, and local market indicators, when purchasing the land for development.

Where it is clearly demonstrated that any offsetting against the targets in Policy R1 Net Zero Buildings in Operation cannot be fully achieved, payments towards energy offsetting should be reduced incrementally until viability is achieved. The development itself must remain free of fossil

fuel use to ensure that it is net zero carbon ready and does not conflict with Net Zero Carbon targets for the city and nationally.

If the development remains unviable and the low car requirement in the parking policy impacts upon site viability, then this must be clearly set out in the planning application, including setting out the site-specific circumstances that lead to it being unviable. In the first instance, allocating spaces to units should be considered. If the development is still not viable, increasing the number of spaces incrementally, up to the maximum parking standards, which will be no more than one space per unit for residential schemes.

If, following the above adjustments to achieve viability, the affordable housing policy is impacting upon site viability, then the following steps in the cascade should be followed:

Affordable housing viability cascade

If on relevant sites (of 10 or more units) it can be robustly proven that meeting the affordable housing policy will make a site unviable, developers and the City Council will work through a cascade approach in the following order until a scheme is made viable.

This cascade seeks to prioritise provision of social rent:

- 1) firstly, reduce the number of affordable housing units provided by reducing the intermediate housing element only whilst retaining the social rent element in full;
- 2) secondly, if the development is still not viable, continue to reduce the amount of social rent incrementally until viable.

Robust evidence must be in the form of an independent viability appraisal. The City Council will expect the developer to negotiate on an “open book” basis which relates to the particular site circumstances that have resulted in the development’s non-viability.

CHAPTER TWO

A HEALTHY INCLUSIVE CITY TO LIVE IN

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and stresses the importance of bringing forward a sufficient amount and variety of land where needed (paragraph 61). At paragraph 62 the NPPF sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance.
- 2.2 Oxford has acute housing pressures that need to be addressed. The city has an urgent need for more housing, and it is widely recognised that demand continues to outstrip supply. The supply of available and affordable housing is a priority in supporting the economy, including healthcare and education needed for the city, because it means that staff can be both attracted and retained more readily.

HOUSING NEED AND REQUIREMENT

- 2.3 Key considerations for the policy:
- Housing need must be established and then planned for.
 - The Government has introduced a 'Standard Method' to be used to calculate each planning authority's individual housing need.
 - The NPPF is clear that the housing requirement set in the local plan may be different to the housing need identified in the Standard Method.
 - The local plan should include a housing requirement figure that shows the extent to which identified housing need can be met over the plan period.
 - The housing need for Oxford calculated by the Standard Method is currently 1,087. That means that the housing need over the 20-year plan period 2022-2042 is currently 21,740.
 - To help address the housing need we need to seek to maximise capacity in line with the strategy of the plan.
 - The capacity of the city is highly unlikely to be sufficient to meet need, whatever spatial strategy is in place (even if disregarding all other needs and objectives).
 - The surrounding districts of Oxfordshire have incorporated Oxford's agreed level of unmet need to 2036 in their own plans. Discussions will continue about the remaining unmet need to 2042.
 - The extant Local Plans for the other Oxfordshire districts are delivering 14,300 dwellings to meet Oxford's previously identified unmet need, as follows:

- Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review: 4,400
- South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033: 4,950
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2: 2,200
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan: 2,750

2.4 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Delivery of housing is a priority, and the Local Plan 2042's strategy is to maximise housing delivery while balancing protection of other important land uses.
- The capacity will be calculated in accordance with the strategy and will become the Housing Requirement set out in Policy H1.

Draft Policy H1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 001a of Background Paper 001.

DRAFT POLICY H1: HOUSING REQUIREMENT

Provision will be made for at least 9,851 (*calculation of capacity 2020-2040 March 2024, to be updated*) new homes to be built in Oxford over the plan period 2022-2042 (average of 493 per annum (*previous capacity calculation, to be updated*)).

Measures in the Local Plan to promote housing include:

- a) making site allocations for housing in this Plan (see Chapter 8: Site allocations);
- b) promoting the efficient use and development of land/sites, including highest appropriate densities and building heights in appropriate locations; and
- c) prioritising housing across the city and by allowing an element of housing on all employment sites if suitable.

DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOMES

2.5 One of the biggest issues facing residents in Oxford is the unaffordability of homes, to rent or to buy. Oxford is one of the least affordable places in the country, resulting from a combination of high land values, reducing land availability, and a shortage of homes. This means that housing is so expensive in absolute terms and compared to average salaries, that many people are priced out of the market. The net need for affordable housing in Oxford has been identified in the Specialist Housing Needs Evidence (2025, Icení) as 709 units per annum, and 458 households within this overall need figure are unable to afford to buy or rent market housing. As such, delivering housing that is genuinely affordable in Oxford is a long-standing priority of the City Council to help ensure that Oxford is a sustainable and inclusive city, with mixed and balanced communities.

2.6 The Government defines affordable housing as comprising Social Rent, Affordable Rent, and intermediate housing (with varying levels of ownership of the home) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market.

However, the high land and rental values in Oxford mean that some 'affordable' home ownership models are not affordable in Oxford or only benefit a very small portion of households.

2.7 In accordance with the government definition, registered providers and the council currently make provision for the following affordable Housing tenure types in Oxford:

- Social Rent: the most discounted affordable housing type. Rent set at a much lower rate than available on the open market (calculated using the Government's formula)
- Affordable Rent: rent discounted to at least 20% below local market rents This is not considered truly affordable in Oxford because of the high rental prices, which mean that with a 20% discount, market rent levels still exceed Local Housing Allowance levels.
- Other affordable routes to home ownership include shared ownership where a share of the homes is bought (using a mortgage) and the remainder is rented.

2.8 Securing new affordable housing as part of larger developments is a significant way that more affordable homes can be provided in Oxford. In successive Plans the City Council has adopted policies that require the delivery of an ambitious percentage of affordable housing. These contributions – whether onsite or financial – have made a significant contribution to the supply of affordable homes in Oxford, alongside other Council-led initiatives including an affordable housing delivery programme, and the City Council's own Housing Company OX Place. The introduction of the Employer-Linked housing policy in Local Plan 2036 has also contributed to the supply of affordable homes for those working at the hospitals and other key economic sectors in Oxford.

2.9 Key considerations for the policy:

- Provision of affordable housing contributions on-site is important because it helps to alleviate the challenge of finding other sites, provides more certainty, and helps to deliver mixed and balanced communities across Oxford.
- Any contributions should not disadvantage the delivery of sites.
- When on-site provision is not practicable then a financial contribution will be sought, but in the majority of cases on-site provision is preferable.
- Types of development where onsite provision may not be appropriate (so financial contributions are more appropriate), include purpose-built student accommodation or older persons accommodation.
- Viability trends in recent years, suggest that some commercial / employment developments may also be viable to make a contribution towards affordable housing, to help mitigate / address the housing need generated by the additional jobs created.

- The NPPF sets out that contributions should not be sought for sites of less than 10 dwellings (or dwelling equivalent for C2 communal uses such as student accommodation or older persons accommodation).
- It is important to address the overall need for affordable homes but also the right tenures to meet local needs. In Oxford, Social Rent is the only option for many people who are not able to access market housing, or even other tenures of affordable housing, as such it is the priority tenure from contributions, with a lesser proportion provided as intermediate forms of affordable housing.
- First Homes are no longer required by the NPPF so will not be required to be provided as part of the affordable housing element.
- For management purposes, lone social rented units are not very desirable and a number of units together are needed on a scheme.

2.10 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Viability assessment indicates this level of contribution from typical types of residential developments in Oxford is viable (subject to further viability testing).
- Policy prioritises onsite delivery on general residential sites, with tailored approaches for sites delivering purpose-built student accommodation and older persons accommodation. The contributions policy also prioritises social rent tenure.
- A threshold of 10 dwellings (or dwelling equivalent) net gain is applied to all contributions requirements.
- Affordable housing contributions are sought at 40% of the net gain number of units
- Employer-linked affordable housing policy, on specified sites
- Affordable housing contributions from commercial development.

Draft Policy H2 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 002a of Background Paper 002.

DRAFT POLICY H2 DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOMES

Planning permission will only be granted for residential development if affordable homes are provided in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) On self-contained residential developments (including for example C3 and C4 but excluding student accommodation and employer-linked housing) where sites* have a capacity for 10 or more homes (gross) or exceed 0.5 ha, a minimum of 40% of units (*provisional requirement, subject to further viability testing*) on a site should be provided as homes that are truly affordable in the context of the Oxford housing market.
- b) At least 80% (*provisional requirement, subject to further viability testing*) of the affordable units on the site should be provided as onsite Social Rented dwellings. The remaining element of the affordable housing may be provided as intermediate forms of housing onsite provided that they are affordable in the Oxford market.
- c) The affordable homes must be provided as part of the same development (i.e. on site) to ensure a balanced community.

- d) Where affordable housing is provided onsite it should incorporate a mix of unit sizes (see Policy H7 on mix of dwelling sizes).

Where the number of dwellings (including conversions and changes of use) proposed falls below the thresholds set out above, the Council will consider whether the site reasonably has capacity to provide 10 or more dwellings that would trigger a requirement to contribute towards affordable housing. This is to ensure that developers may not circumvent the policy requirement by artificially subdividing sites or through an inefficient use of land.

Where an applicant can demonstrate particular circumstances that justify the need for a viability assessment and can, through an open book exercise, demonstrate the affordable housing requirement to be unviable, a cascade approach should be worked through with the City Council until development is viable, as set out in Draft Policy S4.

*site area includes everything within the red line boundary of the planning application, which may include existing properties which are being materially altered.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NEW PURPOSE-BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (PBSA)

2.11 Many sites for student accommodation could equally be suitable for non-student homes, from which an affordable housing would normally be sought. The exception to this, is where student accommodation is developed within existing university campuses, because market housing would not usually be provided within those sites. As such, this policy seeks affordable housing contributions from new purpose-built student accommodation.

2.12 Key considerations for the policy:

- Any contributions should not disadvantage the delivery of sites.
- Any affordable housing contributions requirement should also take into account the onus placed on the universities by Policy H10 to provide accommodation for their students.
- Onsite provision of affordable housing as part of PBSA developments is seldom achieved owing to management, design, and landownership issues. For example they are typically designed as flats or apartments which would be challenging for registered landlords to manage if the affordable housing units were not in a self-contained block, or if they are within a university campus.

2.13 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Contributions from student developments are sought on a comparable basis to residential schemes i.e. for the equivalent of 10 self-contained dwellings, so that development of sites for residential is not disadvantaged in the market or viability terms, in comparison with student accommodation.
- The Government Housing Delivery Test sets out a ratio of 2.5 student bed spaces to 1 dwelling. Therefore, with the threshold at 10 dwellings for residential development affordable housing contributions, the threshold for student accommodation will be 25 bed spaces (or 10 or more self-contained student units as these are counted in monitoring terms as a dwelling).
- Financial contributions are sought rather than onsite provision of homes.
- Viability assessment indicates this level of contribution from PBSA developments is viable (subject to further viability testing).
- Provision of affordable PBSA bedspaces targeted at students in need of lower cost rent is not considered appropriate because PBSA is - by its nature - provided for students who do not live in the city full time, so affordable PBSA bedspaces would not therefore be addressing the city's affordable housing needs of existing residents.
- Exemptions are set out (developments within existing campuses etc).

Draft Policy H3 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 002b of Background Paper 002.

DRAFT POLICY H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NEW PURPOSE-BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

A financial contribution will be sought towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for new student accommodation of 25 or more student units (or 10 or more self-contained student units). Alternatively, the affordable housing contribution can be provided on-site where both the City Council and the applicant agree that this provision is appropriate.

Contributions towards affordable housing provision from new student accommodation will not be sought where:

- a) The proposal is within an existing or proposed university or college campus site, as defined in the glossary; or
- b) The proposal is for redevelopment of an existing purpose-built student accommodation site which at the date of adoption of the Plan is owned by a university, and which will continue to be owned by a university to meet the accommodation needs of its students after the redevelopment.

The contribution will be required only from the number of units creating a net gain. For mixed-use developments which include general housing on the site alongside student accommodation, then a pro-rata approach will be used to determine whether a contribution is required, and how much this should be.

The contribution will be calculated using the formula in Appendix 2.1.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SELF-CONTAINED OLDER PERSONS ACCOMMODATION

2.14 As with PBSA, sites developed for older persons accommodation could also typically also be suitable for residential use, from which affordable housing would have normally been sought. As such, this policy seeks affordable housing contributions from new self-contained older persons accommodation.

2.15 Key considerations for the policy:

- Contributions should be on a comparable basis i.e. for the equivalent of 10 self-contained dwellings so that development of sites for residential is not disadvantaged in the market or viability terms.
- Onsite provision of affordable housing within new developments for older persons such as retirement complexes, is unlikely to be appropriate because of the different housing needs and lifestyles. Management agreements and other restrictions (e.g. car parking) are also imposed which are also not necessarily appropriate to general housing.
- Viability assessment indicates this level of contribution is viable.

2.16 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- This requirement only applies to sites where residential development including affordable housing provision could have been otherwise anticipated.
- Viability assessment indicates this level of contribution from self-contained older persons developments is viable (subject to further viability testing).
- Financial contributions are sought rather than onsite provision of homes.

Draft Policy H4 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 002c of Background Paper 002.

DRAFT POLICY H4: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SELF-CONTAINED OLDER PERSONS ACCOMMODATION

A financial contribution will be sought towards the delivery of affordable housing from proposals for new self-contained older persons accommodation of 10 or more self-contained units. Alternatively, the affordable housing contribution can be provided on-site where both the City Council and the applicant agree that this provision is appropriate.

The contribution will be required only from the number of units creating a net gain. For mixed-use developments which include general housing on the site alongside older persons accommodation, then a pro-rata approach will be used to determine whether a contribution is required, and how much this should be.

Where the number of dwellings or units proposed falls below the relevant thresholds set out above to require affordable housing contributions, the Council will consider whether or not the site reasonably has capacity to provide the number of dwellings that would trigger a requirement to make a contribution towards affordable housing. This is to ensure that developers may not circumvent the policy requirement by artificially subdividing sites or an inefficient use of land. This policy will apply to all types of development including conversions and changes of use.

The contribution will be calculated using the formula in Appendix 2.1.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 2.17 Commercial developments can impact on affordable housing needs by encouraging workers in housing need to move to Oxford to take up new jobs generated by the proposed use of the new development. As such this policy explores whether those developments should contribute towards affordable housing provision.
- 2.18 Historically, the City Council implemented such a policy under the Local Plan 2001-2016, then viability testing indicated the policy was not effective. However, in recent years the viability context for commercial development has shifted in Oxford again with the boom in R&D development outstripping the viability of all other types of developments.
- 2.19 Key considerations for the policy:
- Subject to viability testing, to see if commercial developments – different types and locations - could deliver contributions in addition to CIL (2025 rates) plus S106 plus Cowley Branch line contributions (where applicable).
 - Retail and non-profit making public sector developments, such as those in education and health sectors, should be exempt.
- 2.20 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:
- Threshold for qualifying developments, so contributions are only sought from major developments (over 500sqm floorspace or 0.5ha site size)
 - Financial contributions are likely to be more appropriate than onsite provision
 - Contributions should be proportionate reflecting the numbers, types and sizes of affordable dwellings for which an additional need is created.
- 2.21 In order to respond to these issues, the council is formulating a new policy approach. Three clear options consisting of alternative approaches have emerged as being the most appropriate, although it is recognised there may be other potential approaches. The three options are proposed below.

Policy Option Set H5 sets out the various options relating to this issue. They are considered in more fully in option set 002d of Background Paper 002.

POLICY OPTION SET H5: AFFORDABLE HOUSING: FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Require financial contributions from all major commercial developmentsb) Require contributions only from specified sites or usesc) Do not require affordable housing contributions from commercial developments |
|--|

EMPLOYER-LINKED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 2.22 Employers in Oxford are facing significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff as a result of the lack of availability and affordability of housing. There is not only a shortage of homes in Oxford, but also a shortage of homes that are affordable to local people working in Oxford.
- 2.23 Many jobs in Oxford still require people to attend their workplaces because they are jobs that are not possible to do remotely, such as in frontline healthcare, teaching in schools and universities, as well as those working in manufacturing and R&D labs. Many of these workers are unable to afford market housing or even private rented accommodation in the city and find themselves living outside of Oxford with expensive and time-consuming commutes into the city or living in shared accommodation in Oxford that is too small for their needs.
- 2.24 People with no option but to rent a room in a house-share are prevented from moving on with their lives with a partner or family. In summary, people can be discouraged from taking jobs in Oxford if they cannot afford to live close enough to their place of work, and many employers, including critical services such as the NHS, have recruitment and retention difficulties associated with the lack of affordable housing in Oxford.
- 2.25 Employer-linked housing is a bespoke approach that was introduced in Oxford in the LP2036, as an additional means to help increase delivery of much-needed affordable housing. The policy provides an alternative means of delivering affordable housing, to supplement the affordable homes delivered via Policy H2.
- 2.26 It involves housing being developed on specified sites, by specified key employers, in the city to provide a means of delivering affordable housing for their own staff. This allows those employers to help to address their own recruitment and retention issues by providing housing on their own land. A typical example is the NHS providing staff accommodation within the hospital sites. For most of the specified sites, employer-

linked housing will only be one element of use on the site, for example operational hospital uses will be retained on the hospital sites, or schools will be retained alongside residential development.

2.27 Key considerations for the policy:

- Employer-linked affordable housing provides 100% affordable housing, so has different viability challenges to other residential development sites.
- The tenure mix and size of dwellings on employer-linked sites needs to respond to the needs and circumstances of the employees, it is not a one size fits all.
- By exempting these developments from the normal requirements for affordable homes contributions, the City Council is offering a significant opportunity for those employers to help to provide for their own needs and address the needs of employees who may not be able to access traditional affordable housing but are also not able to access market housing for sale or rent.
- It is important that the housing provided through this policy remains affordable in perpetuity.
- Sites and employers should be specified so that the policy is not used to circumvent normal affordable housing contribution policies or the provision of social rented housing.

2.28 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy is restricted to specified sites, which have been chosen for their suitability, availability and potential capacity to cater to the housing needs of essential workers.
- The policy allows for 100% of the homes to be employer-linked affordable housing, with no requirement to provide the Social Rented housing that is usually required.
- Application of this alternative approach is dependent on a series of criteria that collectively ensure that benefits truly outweigh the compromises. For example, the employer-linked housing must meet many of the features of traditional affordable housing and be available to a true cross-section of employees and retained as Affordable Rent homes in perpetuity. This can help to address recruitment issues, and also free up Social Rent homes in the rest of the city or places on the housing register.
- It is important that the housing provided through this policy remains affordable in perpetuity and the City Council will secure this through a legal agreement.
- In the event that market housing is also provided on the site then Policy H2 is engaged on the market housing element. The employer-linked affordable housing could then contribute to the requirement for the intermediate element within Policy H2 but could not be relied on to meet the Social Rent tenure requirement within Policy H2.

- In the event that over time, the employer no longer has a need for the employer-linked housing, the legal agreement will also ensure that 50% of the units are transferred to a registered provider or the City Council as affordable housing, with a tenure split that reflects affordable housing Policy H2, and not sold on the open market. This clawback approach will ensure that the city does not lose out on the provision of valuable affordable housing (one of the main objectives of this Plan) through misuse of this policy or changing circumstances over time.

Draft Policy H6 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 002e of Background Paper 002.

DRAFT POLICY H6: EMPLOYER-LINKED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Planning permission will be granted on the following sites for employer-linked affordable housing for rent.

The sites identified as appropriate for employer-linked affordable housing are:

- Campus sites of the colleges of the University of Oxford and of Oxford Brookes University. These are sites with academic accommodation existing at the time of the adoption of the Local Plan, and where academic institutional use would remain on the site, even with the development of some employer-linked housing
- Edge of Playing Fields Oxford Academy
- Edge of Playing Fields Bayards Hill Primary School
- Slade House
- Manzil Way Resource Centre
- Littlemore Mental Health Centre
- Warneford Hospital
- West Wellington Square
- Osney Mead
- John Radcliffe Hospital
- Churchill Hospital
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital

Where this policy is applied, the standard affordable housing requirements of Policy H2 will not apply, except to any market housing element on the site, or under those circumstances identified under criterion h).

An affordable housing approach will need to be agreed with the Council setting out how the proposed affordable homes will be developed and managed by the employers (or by development partners on their behalf) to meet the housing needs of their employees.

All of the following criteria must be demonstrated as part of the planning application and will be secured through the relevant planning permission:

- a) The employer has an agreed affordable housing approach in place setting out access criteria and eligibility, rent policy and rent levels, approved by the City Council and with an appropriate review mechanism in place; and

- b) 100% of the housing should be available to be occupied by those employees who meet the requirements of the affordable housing approach agreed with the council and be available in perpetuity; and
- c) The occupation of the housing will be limited to households where at least one member works for the employer linked to the site (for the duration of their employment). This also applies to social care workers who work for but are not employed directly by Oxfordshire County Council and to some NHS staff; and
- d) An occupancy register should be kept and made available for inspection by the City Council at any time; and
- e) Planning applications must be accompanied by a detailed explanation and justification of the approach proposed and the mechanisms for securing the requirements of this policy.
- f) A legal agreement will be required to secure the benefits of this policy. In addition, the legal agreement will be used to:
 - i) agree the allocations policy;
 - ii) agree an appropriate re-letting of units in the property in the event that there are units vacant for more than 6 months;
 - iii) agree that if the employer decides they no longer have a need for the housing, then the affordable housing requirements detailed under Policy H2 will be applied.

CREATING MIXED AND BALANCED COMMUNITIES

MIX OF DWELLING SIZES (NUMBER OF BEDROOMS)

2.29 The NPPF sets out an expectation that within the overall aim of meeting an area's identified housing need, should also be the aim to provide an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

2.30 Key considerations for the policy:

- Some sites and locations will be more suitable for different types of dwelling.
- Needs may change over time.
- The plan should aim to meet the full variety of needs over the plan period, which includes the need for family housing.
- The relevant evidence base includes consideration of the housing register, its turnover and likely trends, and demographics, household sizes and trends over time.
- Different contexts will better suit different sizes of unit.
- The mix will also affect the density, as higher densities can be achieved with only small units.

2.31 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- A range is proposed for flexibility.
- Certain development types are exempt from the mix because it would be difficult to apply, unsuitable or conflict with other aims.

Draft Policy H7 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 001b of Background Paper 001.

DRAFT POLICY H7: MIX OF DWELLING SIZES (NUMBER OF BEDROOMS)

Planning permission will be granted for residential development that is demonstrated will deliver an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes that responds to the site context, including local needs, and that results in mixed and balanced communities. Evidence to support the proposed mix should be proportionate to the application and may include evidence from the Specialist Housing Needs Evidence HENA, market demand, design considerations, and should include regard to the housing register and current requirements if the below mix for affordable housing does not apply.

Proposals for 25 or more homes (gross) (C3 residential) or sites of 0.5ha and greater, and which are outside of the city centre or district centres, will be expected to comply with the following mix of unit sizes for the affordable housing element, unless it can be shown not to be feasible (this does not apply to employer-linked affordable housing):

Mix of dwelling sizes for affordable housing (for rent and for ownership):

For affordable rented forms of homes:

Size of dwelling	% of the affordable housing element
1 bedroom homes (all 2 person unless by agreement based on specific need.	20-35%
2 bedroom homes	30-45%
3 bedroom homes	25- 30%
4+bedroom homes	5-15%

For affordable rented forms of homes for those 65 and over, the mix should be 45-55% 1 bed and the remainder 2-bed+.

For affordable ownership forms of homes: When there are 10 or more units of affordable home ownership types (excluding employer-linked housing):

Size of dwelling	% of the affordable housing element
1 bedroom homes (all 2 person unless by agreement based on specific need.	20-30%
2 bedroom homes	45-55%
3+ bedroom homes	20- 30%
4+bedroom homes	5-15%

LOSS OF DWELLINGS

2.32 There is no specific national requirement for a loss of dwellings policy, but Oxford cannot meet its full housing need and as such it is important to ensure that the existing stock of homes is protected. It is important to which are often under pressure to be subdivided or converted into HMO. The city also faces considerable pressure from the use of residential units as short term lets such as Airbnb which are taking more properties away from the longer term private rented sector and/or providing family homes.

2.33 Key considerations for the policy:

- How to ensure the existing housing stock is not permanently lost through conversion to short term lets.
- Lack of available land and sites in Oxford can constrain development of other facilities needed to support the local community, such as those identified below.
- Whether the policy needs to be flexible to allow the loss of a dwelling where it would provide a community facility or support/complement an existing community use in the area.

2.34 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Policy resists any net loss of dwelling, including for short-term lets but allows some flexibility where there are exceptional justifications. This flexibility is important to allow facilities important to the local community to come forward.
- Policy requires that any application for the loss of a dwelling ensures that the layout of the unit remains so that it could be converted back to a dwelling in the future
- Policy ensures that the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the local area.

Draft Policy H8 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 001c of Background Paper 001.

DRAFT POLICY H8: DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING LOSS OF DWELLINGS

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that results in the net loss of one or more self-contained dwellings on a site (this includes all HMO that are suitable for occupation by a single household), except in one of the following circumstances:

- a) where essential modernisation is proposed to make living accommodation acceptable, and it can be shown that loss of a unit is essential for operational reasons or to secure space standards; or
- b) a change of use of a C3 dwelling or dwellings to a non-self-contained C2 extra care, specialist or supported housing, sheltered accommodation or care home is proposed; or

- c) a change of use of a dwelling to form a primary care facility, dentist, children's nursery or local community hall or meeting place (Use Class F.2) (defined as a building (or parts of a building) or space that is open and accessible to the local community, providing services or activities that the local community wants and needs).

In such cases, the following criteria should all be satisfied:

- d) it must be demonstrated that the layout of the unit retains capacity to be turned back into a residential unit in future; and
- e) the scale and nature of the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and with the surrounding area and is not likely to give rise to unacceptable impacts and effects from noise, nuisance, traffic, or on-street parking.

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

2.35 The NPPF sets out an expectation that within the overall aim of meeting an area's identified housing need, should also be the aim to provide an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. For many, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) offer the only available and affordable solution as renting individually or buying a property in Oxford is often too expensive. However high concentrations of HMO can result in changes to the character of the local area and it is therefore important that the supply of this type of home is monitored and controlled.

2.36 Key considerations for the policy:

- The role HMO have in meeting Oxford's housing needs - proportion of Oxford residents who live in this type of housing.
- The definition of HMO and the different types of legislation that govern them.
- Whether HMO need to be managed so as to not be of detriment to the character of the local area.
- Provision of parking and refuse storage areas in HMOs.
- Whether purpose-built HMO are built specifically with the intention of being for student accommodation to circumvent draft policy H9 (location of student accommodation).
- Whether purpose-built HMOs could be allowed because they may help to meet a need for general housing to be more affordable.

2.37 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- It recognises the importance of HMO in Oxford and is supportive of HMO but sets criteria to manage how and where new HMOs are allowed
- It includes a threshold to ensure that there is not an overconcentration of HMO in certain streets/ areas of the city.

- It includes a requirement for applications for HMO to comply with good practice guidance on HMO amenities and facilities
- It does not allow new purpose-built HMO as provision of this type of accommodation reduces potential for delivering housing that meets greater needs (such as social rented housing).

Draft Policy H9 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 003a of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H9: HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Planning permission for conversions to or new HMO, will only be granted where:

- a) the proportion of buildings that are used in full or part as a licensed/ pending licensed HMO, within 100 metres of street length either side of the application site's principal elevation, does not exceed 20%; and
- b) the development complies with the City Council's good practice guidance on HMO amenities and facilities, or any equivalent replacement document.

For the purposes of this policy, street length is measured as:

- i) 100m either side of the mid-point of the principal elevation of the proposed development, including principal elevations that wrap around corners or that are broken by a road or footpath; and
- ii) 100m either side directly opposite the mid-point of the principal elevation of the proposed development, including principal elevations that wrap around corners or that are broken by a road or footpath; and
- iii) all buildings opposite the principal elevations described above.

Appendix 2.2 illustrates how this will be applied.

Applications for changes from C4 HMO to a Sui Generis HMO must be compliant with point b above.

New purpose-built HMO will not be permitted.

PROVIDING FOR specialist housing needs

- 2.38 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for the needs of groups with specific housing requirements; these include but are not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) also states that policy-making authorities need to plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on a campus.

LOCATION OF NEW STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

2.39 It is important to acknowledge, support and build on the important economic and educational role of the Universities and other educational institutions, whilst managing potential adverse impacts that a large number of students resident in Oxford may have on established communities and on the availability of general market and affordable housing.

2.40 Key considerations for the policy:

- Additional student accommodation will be needed to meet the needs of student accommodation.
- That demand for student accommodation places increases pressure on the housing stock as students may need to compete for general market housing
- Development of new student accommodation may prevent sites being delivered for other types of housing and may lead to a dominance of student accommodation (resulting in less availability, increased prices loss of opportunities to bring forward affordable housing and meaning a high proportion of transient occupants in an area, and an established community that becomes more fractured and less strong).
- Not all types of students have the same accommodation needs or impacts on the community, for example post-graduate researchers and those on vocational courses tend to be working alongside their course and student halls may not be suited. Some students may already live in or near the city at home, and they do not need accommodation.
- Student accommodation is generally not used for every week of the year, giving opportunities for efficient use of student accommodation outside of semester or term-time, if well managed.
- New student accommodation could have the potential to significantly increase the number of cars being brought into the vicinity of new development.

2.41 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- It allows student accommodation to be delivered only in the most suitable areas such as adjacent to existing campuses and within the city centre and district centres. These locations ensure student accommodation does not result in unacceptable changes in character and great increases in activity along quieter residential streets.
- It limits occupation of new student accommodation to full-time students enrolled on courses of one academic year or more.
- It is slightly more flexible to post-graduate accommodation than graduate accommodation.
- Not restricting use of the building outside semester or term-time, by allowing it to be used by short-stay visitors.

- It requires larger schemes to include indoor communal amenity space for students to gather and socialise, which should minimise impacts outside the accommodation.
- It allows only operational and disabled parking for new student accommodation.

Draft Policy H10 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 003b of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H10: LOCATION OF NEW STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Planning permission will only be granted for student accommodation in the following locations:

- On or adjacent to an existing* university or college campus or academic site, or hospital and research site, and only if the use during university terms or semesters is to accommodate students being taught or conducting research at that site; or
- In the city centre or a district centre; or
- On a site which is allocated in the development plan to potentially include student accommodation.

In addition, if purpose-built postgraduate accommodation already exists at a particular location, subject to meeting criteria a) to e) below, new purpose-built postgraduate accommodation will be granted planning permission adjacent to existing postgraduate accommodation.

Planning permission will only be granted for student accommodation if:

- a) Student accommodation will be restricted in occupation to full-time students enrolled in courses of one academic year or more, subject to the provisions of criterion e below; and
- b) For developments of 25 or more bedrooms, the design includes indoor communal amenity space for students to gather and socialise; and
- c) A management regime has been agreed with the City Council that will be implemented on first occupation of the development (to be secured by a planning obligation); and
- d) The development complies with parking standards that allow only operational and disabled parking, and the developer undertakes and provides a mechanism to prevent residents from parking their cars anywhere on the site, (unless a disabled vehicle is required), which the developer shall thereafter monitor and enforce; and
- e) A management strategy is agreed if it is intended there will be occupants other than students meeting the definition set in criterion a) outside of term times.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would lead to the loss of student accommodation linked to an educational institution unless new, alternative student accommodation is available for occupancy, within a reasonable and acceptable timeframe, by students of the same institution. New accommodation should be equivalent in amount, mix and affordability to the rooms being lost.

*An existing university or college campus or academic site is one that exists at the time the Plan is adopted

LINKING NEW ACADEMIC FACILITIES WITH THE ADEQUATE PROVISION OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

- 2.42 Higher education institutions offer courses for students of 18+, many of whom move to live in the city and therefore generate additional accommodation needs. Not all expansion of these institutions will create additional accommodation capacity for students, so institutions may be able to set out in the first instance that their proposals for academic or administrative accommodation will not generate an associated increase in capacity for student residences. Where that is not the case, it should be demonstrated that the additional students may be accommodated through provision of additional student accommodation. Presently, this is managed by setting individual thresholds for each university restricting the number of students permitted to be living outside of university-provided accommodation (or in the case of Oxford Brookes, other purpose-built accommodation), based on evidence including recognising and responding to the forecast needs of each institution. Work is currently being undertaken to establish what threshold levels should be set in this Local Plan.
- 2.43 Key considerations for the policy:
- Ensuring that new academic floorspace does not generate an increase in student numbers that cannot be accommodated within university-provided accommodation.
 - Not all students have the same needs, for example those on vocational courses with work placements away from Oxford (e.g. student teachers, nurses) would not require accommodation for that period, and postgraduates may have different needs to undergraduates.
 - Reconsidering the threshold levels for each institution and whether these are still appropriate or should be amended based on the latest forecasting needs for each university.
 - Long-term forecasting tends to be less reliable as many factors that inform the data could change, including the unpredictable nature of the economy. Therefore, there is a need to establish whether the threshold is set for the first five years of the plan period and negotiated after that date based on the latest evidence at that time, or whether the thresholds apply for a longer duration.
- 2.44 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:
- The draft policy will only permit new, redeveloped or refurbished academic, research or administrative facilities, if it can be demonstrated that any increase in students resulting from improved academic facilities will be matched by increased accommodation provision.
 - Acknowledges that it is not appropriate for all categories of student to be included within the threshold by limiting it to the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation.

- The thresholds needs to be set at a level which is realistic for each institution, whilst ensuring it is still effective in minimising the number of students who are reliant on living outside of university-provided accommodation so that this housing can be retained for market and affordable housing which is a priority for this Plan. Further work is also being carried out to determine what the appropriate duration of the threshold levels should be, and whether they should be reconsidered during the plan period.
- Ensuring that existing student accommodation sites are not lost to other uses and that any loss, must be provided for by at least an equivalent amount of new student accommodation.

Draft Policy H11 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 003c of Background Paper 003.

POLICY H11: LINKING NEW ACADEMIC FACILITIES WITH THE ADEQUATE PROVISION OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Planning permission will only be granted for new redeveloped or refurbished academic, research or administrative facilities for higher education institutions where it can be demonstrated that either:

- a) The new facilities would not generate or facilitate any increase in student numbers; or
- b) There is a plan in place for managing the accommodation needs of the additional students, either because the institution has sufficient existing accommodation, or because sufficient accommodation has been identified as being available. For Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford this criterion will be measured and can be demonstrated through application of the threshold of the number of qualifying students living outside of relevant student accommodation, as follows.

University of Oxford

Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic or administrative facilities that generates or facilitates an increase in student numbers) for University of Oxford where the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation does not exceed the level of university owned or managed accommodation by more than the following thresholds at the time of the application:

- Until the academic year starting in 2033: 2,500
- Academic year starting 2033 onwards to be negotiated based on consideration of the situation at the time.

Oxford Brookes University

Planning permission will only be granted for new/redeveloped or refurbished academic or administrative facilities (that generates or facilitates an increase in student numbers) for Oxford Brookes University where it can be demonstrated that the number of full-time taught course students living in Oxford requiring accommodation does not exceed the level of university owned or managed accommodation or known purpose-built student accommodation by more than the following thresholds at the time of the application:

- Until the academic year starting in 2033: 5,750
- Academic year starting 2033 onwards to be negotiated based on consideration the situation at the time.

The reference to full time, taught course students requiring accommodation excludes those students who were resident in Oxford before applying to study at the university and who continue to live at their pre-application home address while studying.

HOMES FOR TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES

2.45 The Council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on the assessment of need for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The assessment was published in 2024 and sets out the need for these types of accommodation for each authority from 2023/24 until 2041/42. This includes taking into account waiting lists and whether there are members of the travelling community living in bricks and mortar.

2.46 Key considerations for the policy:

- The 2024 assessment does not identify current or forecast need for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Oxford within the plan period.
- No allocations are required because a need hasn't been established, but if this accommodation type comes forward it is important the plan provides a criteria for assessment.
- The needs of travelling showpeople should be considered separately, recognising their different requirements.

2.47 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- It is a criteria-based policy that provides a framework for assessing planning applications for these types of specialist housing.
- Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are defined as two separate groups with different criteria applicable to each.

Draft Policy H12 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 003d of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H12: HOMES FOR TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES

Proposals for permanent or transit residential pitches or yards for Gypsy, Traveller, or Travelling Showpeople in Oxford will only be granted planning permission where all of the following criteria are met:

- a) The applicant or updated Council evidence base has adequately demonstrated a clear need for the pitch/yard in the city, and the number, type, and tenure of pitches/yards proposed, which cannot be met by a lawful existing or available allocated site; and
- b) The pitch/yard is accessible to facilities and services including local shops, healthcare, education and employment by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- c) The pitch/yard has safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, including adequate access for emergency services and the other types of vehicles that could reasonably be expected to use or access the pitch/yard; and
- d) Proposals make adequate access to or provision for essential on-site facilities that meet best practice for modern Traveller pitch/ yard requirements, including, play areas, and provision for servicing including water supply, electricity and recycling and waste management (and for Travelling Showpeople space for the storage and maintenance of equipment appropriate to their business activities): and
- e) The pitch/yard will provide an acceptable living environment and the health and safety of the pitch/yard's potential residents should not be put at risk. Factors to take into account include: flood risk (pitch/yard should not be located in Flood Zone 3a or 3b), site contamination, air quality, and noise; and
- f) The pitch/yard is located, and can be managed, so as not to have unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents or other existing uses, or the appearance or character of the surrounding area. Appropriate boundary treatment and landscaping should be capable of being provided.

HOMES FOR BOAT DWELLERS

2.48 Residential boats and their dwellers on both permanent and temporary visitor moorings contribute to the cultural and housing diversity of Oxford and provide a type of accommodation that can be more affordable. There are also boat-dwellers whose transitory nature generates a significant demand for temporary moorings, including those who identify as Bargee Travellers, as well as those who continuously cruise through Oxford and neighbouring areas. The Council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on the assessment of need for accommodation for boat dwellers. The assessment was published in 2024 and sets out the need for residential moorings for each authority from 2023/24 until 2041/42.

2.49 Key considerations for the policy:

- The analysis of houseboat need in the 2024 assessment suggests that there is additional need for residential moorings across waterways in Oxfordshire, the majority in Oxford with a range of 20-50 additional moorings.
- There is limited potential for additional sites in Oxford because of constraints such as the need to maintain safe navigation of the main river channels and avoiding conflict with the operational requirements of both the Canal and River Trust and Environment Agency.
- If sites do come forward, it will be important that there is a criteria-based policy to assess them against.
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2.50 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- It is a criteria-based policy that provides a framework for assessing planning applications for these types of specialist housing.

Draft Policy H13 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 003e of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H13: HOMES FOR BOAT DWELLERS

Planning permission will only be granted for new residential moorings on Oxford's waterways where all of the following criteria are met:

- a) Proposal does not impede navigation, navigational safety, or operational requirements of the waterway including use of footpaths;
- b) Proposal will maintain or enhance the amenity, visual character, water quality, historic and ecological value of the waterway or nearby land;
- c) Proposal is close to existing services and amenities including potable water, electricity and waste disposal;
- d) Proposal is served by adequate pedestrian/cycling access and public transport facilities and services including shops, healthcare, education and employment, and vehicular access for emergency vehicles; and
- e) Proposals have investigated impacts of flood risk and addressed provision for safe access/egress and/or evacuation plans where appropriate.

OLDER PERSONS AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

2.51 The NPPF lists older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes) and people with disabilities as groups whose housing needs should be understood and attempted to be met. There are a wide variety of different housing types to support the elderly and those with additional needs. Nationally, the population is ageing and whilst Oxford has a younger than average age profile of residents (12% aged 65+ compared to 19.8% in the South East), the population of those 65+ in Oxford is expected to grow 41%-44% by 2042 (representing 7,900-8,500 additional people in this age range). Therefore, it is important to ensure that the needs of older people are considered. The Oxfordshire County Council Specialist Housing Need Assessment 2024 gives a recent picture of need for supported housing in Oxford Updated Specialist Housing Needs Evidence.

2.52 Key considerations for the policy:

- There is an anticipated net need of housing with support in Oxford to 2042 of 643 units, 40 of which are market and the rest affordable. For housing with care, the net need to 2042 is 496, with 320 of those market, and for care homes the need is 271.
- For market accommodation, it is expected that the market will respond by bringing forward specialist housing types.
- To be viable, specialist housing needs to be of a reasonably large size, so that there are enough rooms to justify the on-site staff and facilities.

- Because of the lack of large sites in Oxford, there are limited opportunities to allocate parts of sites specifically for this use.
- People in this housing type may have limited mobility and it is important it is located in accessible locations so people do not become isolated.
- It is important the plan includes criteria to enable the assessment of this use should it come forward.

2.53 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Provision of new extra-care and elderly persons' accommodation is generally supported.
- The criteria are intended to ensure that supported accommodation is well designed, with good access to local facilities, and that it is well integrated into a mixed community.

Draft Policy H14 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 003f of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H14: OLDER PERSONS AND OTHER SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION

Planning permission for accommodation for older people and supported and specialist care will only be granted where it:

- Is located with good access to local facilities and services including public transport, shops and healthcare facilities; and
- Is located close to or as part of a mixed community and will contribute positively to the creation and/or maintenance of mixed and balanced communities; and
- Is appropriate for the neighbourhood in terms of form, scale and design; and
- Includes internal rooms and design, gardens and amenity space of appropriate size and quality for residents; and

Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing specialist care accommodation unless it can be demonstrated that provision is to be replaced or that there is a not a need for the facility. This may be secured by a legal agreement.

SELF BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING

2.54 The NPPF whose housing needs should be understood and attempted to be met. It also states self-build and custom housebuilding.

2.55 Key considerations for the policy:

- The level of interest/demand for this type of housing in Oxford– ascertained from the Self Build and Custom housebuilding register in place since 1 April 2016.

- The number of people with a local connection to Oxford on the self-build register.
- Whether it is feasible for residential development sites in Oxford to accommodate self-build and custom housebuilding plots.
- Whether any thresholds are needed within the policy for example site size, tenure of proposed dwellings (market sale, shared ownership, market or affordable rent, rent to buy, or a combination of these) and how this could impact on development viability
- Whether a time limit could be added to ensure that any self-build plots marketed but not sold over a specified time period could be built and bought forward as dwellings in the normal way
- Consideration of required infrastructure for plots (e.g. utilities, drainage, access)
- Consideration of any requirements for outdoor amenity space
- Consideration of bicycle and car parking standards
- Whether the absence of a policy supporting this type of accommodation could result in individuals and organisations seeking to build/develop this type of housing outside of the city boundary.

2.56 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

Supports this type of housing to come forward

- Sets a threshold to meet identified need (threshold informed by housing trajectory to ensure that sites come forward for development within the Plan period).
- Requires plots to be made available as part of the market housing element of the scheme, unless conditioned to be brought forward as housing that meets the affordable housing definition.
- Includes a requirement for legal agreements to ensure that if self-build plots have not sold after a certain time period they will be bought forward for housing in the normal way. Note there are some development types that this would not apply to.
- Includes requirements to ensure that self-build plots have access to services, infrastructure, outdoor amenity space and parking provision in accordance with other policies of the plan.

Draft Policy H15 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 003g and 003h of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H15 SELF-BUILD & CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING

Proposals for self-build and custom-build housing will be supported as a way of enabling people to meet their own housing needs.

On residential sites of 100 homes or more, 5% of the site area developed for residential use should be made available as self-build/custom-build plots. Plots will be part of the market

housing element of the scheme, unless they are conditioned to be brought forward as housing that meets the affordable housing definition.

Plots should have services (water, foul drainage and electricity supply) to the boundary and access to the public highway. Plots should also have surface water drainage, telecommunications services, and access to a fuel or energy source in line with policy R1.

A legal agreement will be used to ensure that if the self-build plots have not sold after 6 months of marketing, then dwellings should be built and brought forward in the normal way, in accordance with other policies regarding affordable housing and housing mix.

The following development types are excluded from this requirement: Employer-linked affordable housing; student accommodation; other C2 or Sui Generis types of accommodation; and residential development in conversions or on brownfield sites where only flatted development is provided.

Community-led housing

There are several organised groups with ambitions for providing community-led housing in Oxford. Proposals for community-led housing will be supported because of the benefits they are expected to bring in terms of community cohesion, permanent affordability and sustainable development. Community-led housing will not necessarily meet the requirements for self-build or custom build housing, but has potential to if the community-led housing group will have the primary input into the final design and layout.

BOARDING SCHOOL accommodation

2.57 There is no national policy or guidance on boarding school accommodation development. However, the Oxford brand is a strong market draw for this sector. In Oxford's context where there is a very large housing need and where boarding schools may well compete for sites that could be suited to this priority need, it is important to provide a policy framework.

2.58 Key considerations for the policy:

- This type of development could result in the loss of dwellings through change of use to boarding accommodation.
- This type of development may come forward on sites that may otherwise come forward for housing.
- Lack of available land and sites in Oxford can constrain development of other facilities needed to support the local community.
- The location of the new boarding development may affect the safety and amenity of students and local residents and neighbouring residential properties.
- There may be traffic implications, depending on the location of the accommodation and how close it is to the teaching campus.

2.59 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy requires that development would need to be on or adjacent to a teaching campus of the school the students will attend. This is to:
 - Reduce competition for sites with housing, prioritising delivery of general housing;
 - Reduce amenity and neighbourhood impacts by linking boarding accommodation to the teaching campus;
 - Help ensure safe provision for students;
 - Minimise transport impacts.

Draft Policy H16 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 003i of Background Paper 003.

DRAFT POLICY H16: BOARDING SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION
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Proposals for new or extended boarding school accommodation for children ages 18 and under can be supported where it is on or immediately adjacent to a main teaching campus of the school the children will attend and it is in accordance with the other policies of the Development Plan.
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CHAPTER THREE

A FAIR AND PROSPEROUS CITY WITH A GLOBALLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

INTRODUCTION AND WIDER CONTEXT

- 1.1 Oxford's economy makes a vital contribution to the regional and national economy. It is a well-known city with a global reputation which reaches far beyond expectations based on its size. It is influential and has its own well established and unique brand. Oxford is also highly sustainable location for employment in Oxfordshire and the south-east. Enhancements could be made to the already sustainable transport system to take people to jobs here rather than if employment is scattered to less sustainable locations. A concentration of employment in a sustainable location is better than dispersed employment relying on the private car. In particular, the city's economy is shaped by the presence of its two successful universities.
- 1.2 Oxford is also a major centre for teaching hospitals and is home to several acute and specialist medical research organisations. Oxford is an attractive location for a range of companies and is in a position to foster home-grown spin-out businesses due to existing research capabilities, the ready supply of graduates and the clustering effect of organisations with close ties in a number of related areas being closely located with one another. Work that's happening in Oxford has helped and continues to address global problems such as the Covid pandemic and climate change. New employment floorspace is being driven by occupier requirements associated with research and development supporting key sectors including life sciences. New lab-enabled office space is being delivered at pace to meet market demand and provide built-in flexibility for future occupiers. The strength of the commercial market in Oxford is notable. This type of floorspace is coming forward both inside and outside the city centre and results in premium rents regardless of its location. Its delivery supports inward investment and the continued development of university-related spin out companies.
- 1.3 [Recent government announcements](#) (January 2025) to support the delivery of the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor include the establishment of a new growth commission for the city. This will help Oxford by providing a clear strategy to deliver the housing and infrastructure needed to allow the city to realise its economic potential. Manufacturing still plays an important role in the city's economy and Oxford sits at the centre of a £6bn

automotive cluster, dubbed 'Motorsport Valley', while MINI Plant Oxford is a major industrial employer in the city. MINI Plant Oxford accounts for nearly half of all industrial space city-wide. Furthermore, retail and 'third sector' jobs in Oxford also make an important contribution to the economy. In addition, the visitor economy makes a meaningful contribution to the city's economy. According to [Experience Oxfordshire's Economic Impact of Tourism Report](#) for Oxford (2022), the city's visitor economy generated more than £645million of visitor spend and saw just under 6.5 million visitors (the majority – more than 5million - being day-trippers). While these levels are not yet back to pre-pandemic figures, the visitor economy in 2022 accounted for approximately 12% of all employment in the city.

- 1.4 Oxford also heavily influences the wider regional economy. Indeed, Oxfordshire's wider economic vision and strategy are set out in a series of documents produced by the Oxford Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). These include the refreshed Strategic Economic Plan (2023) and the associated Strategic Economic Plan 'Action Plan' (2024). The Strategic Economic Plan sets out a long-term vision and ambitions for economic growth across the county. This aligns with Oxfordshire's agreed Strategic Vision, which was adopted by all six Oxfordshire Councils in 2021, and recognises the importance of local and global innovation, collaboration and inclusive thinking to deliver real and lasting change in ways that build resilience and enhance environmental, social and economic wellbeing.
- 1.5 Economic diversity can provide a more stable path to equitable growth and development. In this way, providing support for Oxford's economic assets should both protect employment uses that are vital to the city's local economy while also encouraging appropriately located high value uses which contribute to the national (and even the global) economy. In a constrained city such as Oxford, with limited physical space for new development, it is important to make the best and most efficient use of land to deliver this strategy.

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

- 1.6 Oxford's employment land strategy has previously been to focus new employment development towards sites already in, or allocated for, employment-generating uses. It also supports the delivery of employment-generating uses in inherently sustainable locations namely within the city and district centres. An approach to modernise and intensify existing employment-generating uses at these locations has also been supported through previous plans. While certain employment sites (recognised for the contribution they make to the local and national economy) have also been afforded policy protection against their loss to other uses.
- 1.7 However, a change to the national use classes order means that existing brownfield sites in Use Class E now benefit from permitted development rights that allow changes of uses

with providing there are no alterations to the building itself. As such, sites like Botley Road Retail Park are experiencing a transition and transformation away from retail uses towards R&D, laboratory and grade A office space – employment sectors that support Oxford's key economic strengths. This national change to permitted development has brought both challenges and opportunities, although overall it must be recognised as benefiting the economy of Oxford and will need to be taken into account.

1.8 Key considerations for the policy:

- Recognise Oxford's strengths, dynamic economy and potential for growth
- Make provision for the identified employment land needs.
- Ensure the aims of the wider economic vision and strategy are reflected.
- Needs to support addressing barriers to investment and growth (i.e., housing and infrastructure issues).
- Needs to consider the protection of employment sites.
- Needs to support employment sectors relating to Oxford's key economic strengths.
- Needs to support SMEs, start-ups and important local businesses/employers.
- The best way to respond to the housing crisis in Oxford, balanced against responding to the successful economic situation.
- It is important that best and most efficient use is made of all land in Oxford. To do this requires careful consideration of which sites it is appropriate to protect, and where new development should be located.

1.9 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The degree of protection of employment sites is to be varied in accordance with overarching strategy of the Plan
- Given the potential for use of existing large employment sites to be intensified significantly to meet needs, the allocation of new sites outside of existing centres that are not currently in commercial use or allocated for employment is not likely to be justifiable.
- However, there are employment sites in the city which are less well located, and which do not have such an important role in supporting the sectors referred to in the NPPF or recognised as vital to supporting Oxford's economic strengths.
- Policy approach to encourage modernisation and intensification of existing sites in suitable locations to meet as much identified employment land need as possible on existing employment sites.
- Policy to support a flexible approach to support a range of appropriate uses
- Housing on at least an element of employment sites is encouraged

Draft Policy E1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue. It is considered within the four options sets 004a-1 to 004a-4 of Background Paper 004.

DRAFT POLICY E1: EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

All new development on employment sites needs to show that it is making the best and most efficient use of land and premises, positively promotes sustainable development and does not cause unacceptable environmental impacts.

New employment-generating uses and intensification of existing sites:

The only locations that are suitable for new employment-generating uses are existing employment sites and the city and district centres. Planning permission will not be granted for proposals for employment-generating uses outside of these locations.

Planning permission will be granted for the intensification and modernisation of any Key Employment Site (i.e., recognised for the contribution that they make to the national or local economy or the social value that they bring to an area).

Planning permission will only be granted for the intensification and modernisation of all other employment sites where that site is located within the city or a district centre. Outside of these locations, non-designated employment sites can only be regenerated for employment purposes if better and more intensive use is made of the site through the redevelopment, up-grading or re-use of existing under-used buildings. Proposals for additional employment floorspace on non-designated employment sites outside the city and district centres must follow the sequential approach for new town centre uses as set out in Policy C1.

Key Employment Sites are listed in Appendix 3.1 and are shown on the policies map. All other employment sites are non-designated employment sites.

Loss of employment floorspace and the use of employment sites to support housing delivery

Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in a net loss of employment floorspace on Key Employment Sites unless it can be fully justified where:

- a) number of jobs in employment-generating uses is retained; and
- b) the employment use can be maintained.

Planning permission will be granted for the loss of any non-designated employment sites to other uses, proposals for housing will be supported.

Proposals involving housing at Key Employment Sites and on non-designated employment sites will be assessed by a balanced judgement which will take into account the following objectives:

- c) meet as much housing need as possible in sustainable locations;
- d) avoid the loss of, or significant harm to, the continued operation or integrity of successful and/or locally useful, business and employment sites;
- e) create a pleasant residential environment that provides an acceptable level of amenity for future occupiers;
- f) create a sense of place that is well-connected by safe walking and cycling routes to shops, schools, open spaces, and community facilities and that is well-served by public transport;
- g) secure environmental improvements

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| h) avoid locating residential uses in close proximity to existing businesses that may create noise, smells or other potential disturbances as part of the day-to-day operations. |
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WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE USES

- 1.10 New large scale B8 uses are usually low-density and do not generally make for an intensive land-use. As a small, compact and constrained city, there are numerous competing pressures for land in Oxford. This means that there is often a need to make the best, or most efficient use of any land that becomes available. As such, new B8 uses are not always the most appropriate use for land within the city. However, these uses are sometimes needed to support the ongoing operation of larger employment sites. Therefore, the proposed approach to supporting warehousing and storage uses in the Local Plan 2042 is therefore proposed to be limited to where the B8 use is essential to supporting the operational requirements of a key employment site. Whereas the loss of B8 on any employment site is supported providing the B8 use is not essential to the support of a key employment site.
- 1.11 One key aim of the Local Plan 2042 is to support Oxford's transition to a zero-carbon future. The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership has produced a roadmap and action plan highlighting a number of important actions to help deliver a successful transition to Zero Carbon living by 2040 including to pilot "a number of freight consolidation centres around the edge of Oxford". It is important that the Local Plan 2042 policy approach does not prevent this from taking place as it most likely that these sites suitable for B8 uses could be considered as a suitable location for such centres.
- 1.12 Key considerations for the policy:
- These uses have a low job density and high demand for land, which can make them unsuitable in a compact city with competing pressures for development
 - These uses often need good access to the strategic road network
 - Nevertheless, these uses can be useful in supporting local employers in sectors such as manufacturing
 - Can support key employers to maintain their supply chain
 - Within consolidation centres goods are grouped together so that fewer delivery journeys are required by road, thus reducing air pollution, congestion and noise across Oxford.
- 1.13 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:
- Policy sets out particular circumstances when these uses would be allowed, i.e. if it is part of or there is a specific link to a key employment site.
 - Policy allows the loss of these uses where they are not essential to support a protected employment site.

- Policy makes a specific commitment to work with partners to support consolidation centres

Draft Policy E2 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 004b of Background Paper 004.

DRAFT POLICY E2: WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE USES

Planning permission will only be granted for new or expanded warehousing and storage uses if it is within an existing Key Employment Site and where it can be demonstrated in the planning application that the use is essential to support the operational requirements of that key employment site.

Planning permission will be granted for the loss of B8 space (on any category site) where it is not essential to support a Key Employment Site.

In all cases the suitability of the proposed use will be assessed against the site-specific circumstances.

The Council will work with partners to promote the use of freight consolidation centres where possible.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT PLANS

- 1.14** Community Employment and Procurement Plans (CEPP's) can significantly improve job opportunities for local people and support both the local labour market and the businesses that operate in Oxford or wish to move to the city.
- 1.15** Many people in Oxford are highly qualified. This is reflected in the number of science and knowledge-based jobs that relate directly to the city's economic strengths by supporting key sectors that supporting the economy. However, this positive picture masks the challenges faced within Oxford. Parts of the city contain large numbers of local people with few to no qualifications, or who are working but on low earnings.
- 1.16** Continuing pressure to develop land in the city creates an opportunity to support local people access training, education and apprenticeships. Oxford has a challenging labour market with different sectors competing for jobs. Skills and training for the local workforce is important for businesses to drive economic growth, productivity and provide services, but equally helps to deliver wider economic benefits, social value and well-being for all its citizens.

- 1.17 The City Council is committed to working in partnership with business and key partners to promote a strong, fair and inclusive economy that delivers greater opportunities and skills for local people.
- 1.18 Key considerations for the policy:
- Development in the city creates the potential to secure wider benefits for the local community;
 - Larger developments likely to be able to support a wider range of objectives;
 - Details of what is expected of developers should be set out;
 - Details of what developers are expected to provide should be clearly stated.
- 1.19 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:
- Provide clarity around the expectations for qualifying and non-qualifying developments
 - Larger (qualifying) developments offer the potential to deliver commitments within a site-specific CEPP secured by condition or legal agreement;
 - Non-qualifying developments offer the potential to deliver a more limited range of opportunities
 - An element of flexibility is required to ensure that any commitments that are made can reasonably be delivered by the type of development proposed
 - A Technical Advice Note (TAN) will be needed to expand on various aspects of the policy (including advice on how to prepare a CEPP, successful implementation and monitoring)

Draft Policy E3 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 004c of Background Paper 004.

DRAFT POLICY E3: COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT PLANS

Planning permission will only be granted for proposals of 50 or more homes or over 1,000m² non-residential floorspace where they are supported by a Community Employment and Procurement Plan (CEPP). The CEPP must identify the opportunities that will be provided by the development to support the inclusive economy, demonstrate the social value of the proposals and set out how they will be promoted and delivered. CEPPs will be expected to consider all the following criteria:

- a) Securing construction jobs for local residents;
- b) Providing construction apprenticeships and/ or training opportunities for local residents;
- c) Linking with local schools and colleges;
- d) Securing jobs in the operational/ end-user phase for local residents;
- e) Procuring a proportion of on-going supply chain needs locally;

- f) Paying all employees (other than apprentices) the Oxford Living Wage;
- g) Only using contractors who commit to paying the Oxford Living Wage or other social clauses appropriate to the development
- h) Procuring a proportion of construction materials locally; and
- i) Delivery of affordable workspaces.

The City Council will use a condition and/or legal agreement to secure these commitments in accordance with a site-specific CEPP.

Smaller developments, below the threshold for a CEPP, will be expected to provide a written statement in support of their planning application to show what job opportunities, and or skills and training prospects can be delivered during the construction and or end-user phase of the development.

AFFORDABLE WORKSPACES

- 1.20 Oxford has a successful economy, but its success does bring challenges. The recent demand for more research and development space has seen a significant increase in office rents, which has meant that SME's and Social Enterprises have experienced difficulties in being able to find affordable workspace in the city. The types of employment floorspace coming forward frequently have a very large floorplate, which itself excludes many employment typologies from accessing it.
- 1.21 The exclusion of SMEs and Social Enterprises would be hugely detrimental because these employment types enable economic diversity and often provide a social or cultural function, as well as supporting innovation opportunities and productivity. SMEs and Social Enterprises help to provide a more robust economy which ultimately supports research and development and other large-floorplate employment types in the city.
- 1.22 Recognising the valuable contribution that supporting a range of businesses (including SMEs and Social Enterprises) can make to innovation and economic diversity by supporting the delivery of affordable workspace therefore helps to realise the vision for an 'inclusive economy', set out the City Council's Economic Strategy together with Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (2023), which recognises the affordability and supply of workspaces as a key challenge to SMEs.
- 1.23 The provision of affordable workspace would help a broader range of businesses to have the opportunity to start-up, remain or re-locate within the city. This aligns with the Local Plan economic objective to *recognise the valuable contribution that supporting a range of businesses (including SMEs) can make to innovation and economic diversity.*

1.24 Key considerations for the policy:

- Rising rents and pressure on existing spaces are making it difficult for start-ups, social enterprises and other types of SMEs to find suitable premises in the city. These businesses add diversity to the economy and their future growth as the next generation should be planned for.
- Larger developers/ development sites could help address the need for smaller, flexible, affordable workspaces as part of their masterplans.
- To be effective, affordable/ flexible workspaces should be delivered in accordance with a strategy that identifies the gap or market failure that is intended to be addressed, and that explains how the approach will be beneficial in bridging that gap in terms of the type of workspace to be provided, and the quantum of it.
- Details of marketing arrangements and management of spaces will be important, as are end-user requirements.

1.25 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Larger sites for commercial development (in particular, sites delivering R&D/ office/ Lab space) offer the potential to bring forward affordable/ flexible workspace through an affordable workspace strategy;
- The delivery of affordable/ flexible workspace on-site (through an agreed affordable/ flexible workplace strategy) would add to the economic diversity of these larger sites. The affordable/ flexible workspace strategy should set out details of the size, marketing, servicing and management of the spaces (and would need to be underpinned by a legal agreement/ management plan/ etc.)
- A degree of flexibility of delivery is important however a minimum size of space is likely to be required if it is to make a meaningful contribution to appropriate sectors and appear attractive to third-party operators. Consider using of a qualifying threshold (supported by evidence including viability) for delivering new affordable workspaces.
- Consider whether there are situations where the use of financial contributions, are appropriate in supporting the delivery of affordable/ flexible workspaces.
- A Technical Advice Note will be needed to expand on various aspects of the policy (including what is expected from an affordable/ flexible workspace strategy, details of management arrangements, end-user requirements, etc.).

Draft Policy E4 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 004d of Background Paper 004.

DRAFT POLICY E4: AFFORDABLE WORKSPACES

Development proposals delivering commercial development on the following sites are expected to deliver an affordable strategy as part of their masterplans:

- ARC Oxford
- Oxford Science Park
- Oxpens
- Osney Mead
- Nuffield Sites
- Kassam Stadium and Ozone Leisure Park
- Unipart
- Oxford North
- Botley Road Retail Park

Details of the size, marketing, servicing, management and how the space provided will meet end-user requirements, should be set out in an affordable workspace strategy. This should explain how the proposed provision helps to overcome market gaps or failures that would otherwise prevent beneficial workspace typologies coming forward, because of a lack of suitable and/or affordable space.

TOURISM AND SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION

- 1.26 Tourism is a significant sector of Oxford's economy with distinct needs and pressures. Oxford is consistently in the top 10 most visited UK overnight destinations for international tourists. Tourists and visitors help support a wide range of facilities and attractions such as theatres, cinemas and the ice rink.
- 1.27 Oxford's heritage strongly supports the attraction of visitors, the retention of which will assist in ensuring the long-term vitality of the city's economy. Oxford has many short-stay visitors, often visiting for a day or only a few hours, which has fewer benefits for the local economy.
- 1.28 Policy H8 Development involving loss of dwellings needs to be fully considered when assessing proposals for tourism and short stay accommodation. Tourism and hotel development are 'main town centre uses'. Future growth is therefore subject to a sequential approach directing new development to the city and district centres as the preferred location for these uses.
- 1.29 Key considerations for the policy:
- Visitors (both for leisure and business) play an important role in Oxford's economy
 - Extending visitor stays increases the benefit to the economy

- The city has a good range and diversity of short stay accommodation, but there is strong demand
- Not all locations are suitable for short stay accommodation

1.30 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy sets out the locational requirements for the provision of new short stay accommodation, to ensure they are in well-connected locations to minimise traffic impacts;
- The policy generally protects existing larger short stay accommodation (10 bedrooms or more) but not in locations not defined as suitable for new short stay accommodation.
- The policy does not protect smaller short stay accommodation (which generally can struggle to compete) nor does it afford protection to short stay accommodation of any size if it can be demonstrated through market viability evidence that it cannot continue in its current use;
- The policy includes criteria for the expansion of existing accommodation and criteria for seeking to protect the loss of existing short stay accommodation. It does however provide support for the loss of smaller guesthouses and/ or B&B's either to residential use or where it does not meet the locational requirements.

Draft Policy E5 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 004c-1 and 004c-2 of Background Paper 004.

DRAFT POLICY E5: TOURISM AND SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION

Planning permission will only be granted for the development of new sites for tourism and short stay accommodation in the following locations:

- in the city centre;
- in district centres;
- on sites allocated for that purpose; and
- on Oxford's main arterial roads where there is frequent and direct public transport to the city centre.

Planning permission will only be granted for new tourism and short stay accommodation or for the expansion and or refurbishment of existing accommodation where it meets the following criteria:

- a) it is acceptable in terms of access, parking, highway safety, traffic generation, pedestrian and cycle movements; and
- b) it does not result in the loss of a residential dwelling as set out in Policy H8; and
- c) it will not result in an unacceptable level of noise and or disturbance to nearby residents.

Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use from tourism and short stay accommodation when any of the following criteria are met:

- d) the existing property has less than 10 bedrooms and is proposed to be changed to residential use;
- e) a property with 10 or more bedrooms, within the City centre, District centre or on a main arterial road would need to provide sufficient robust evidence of non-viability to justify its loss;
- f) a property is unsuitable for the use as demonstrated by being contrary to the location requirements or any of the criteria a-c above.

CHAPTER FOUR

A GREEN BIODIVERSE CITY THAT IS RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- 4.1 The draft policies set out in this chapter comprise the key component of the Local Plan's strategy for maintaining and strengthening the city's resilience to climate change, by which we mean ensuring that Oxford to withstand the risks arising from the changing climate, and better able to recover when hazards like flooding or heatwaves occur. The policies set out here will lead to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across the city and are important for improving health and wellbeing of people and the environment through ensuring access to nature. The chapter is divided into three subsections addressing the topics of green and blue infrastructure; biodiversity and the ecological network; as well as flood risk and climate resilient design.

OXFORD'S GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.2 A key feature that contributes to the special character of Oxford is its close relationship with the natural environment that encircles and permeates the city. The city benefits from a wide range of green spaces such as parks, natural and semi-natural spaces, historic sites, floodplains and sites of importance to biodiversity and nature conservation. There is also an extensive network of more than 248,000 trees of varying age, species and quality that cumulatively comprise the 'Urban Forest' and which provide a myriad of social, environmental and economic benefits. The key waterways are the River Thames, River Cherwell and the Oxford Canal, but there are also many brooks and streams, such as Bayswater Brook and Northfield Brook, which form part of wildlife and movement corridors. Equally, blue infrastructure is interwoven and interlinked with these areas, enhancing the experience and function of it.
- 4.3 There are three draft policies in this section that relate to the protection and provision of green and blue infrastructure in Oxford. The key considerations that are driving these policies in the Local Plan are as follows:
- Protecting and enhancing a network of green and blue spaces across our city is important for the multitude of benefits they provide for our health and wellbeing and the wider natural environment, including: providing space for recreation and social interaction; improving mental and physical wellbeing; food production; habitat for biodiversity; and ameliorating poor air quality.
 - Green spaces and features also help strengthen the city's resilience to climate change, by increasing flood storage and slowing the flow of surface water at times of heavy rainfall (thus mitigating flood risk); but also by

providing cooling benefits and offering respite during heat wave events (thus reducing risks of overheating).

- Whilst Oxford benefits from a wide range of green and blue spaces of varying sizes and typologies, access is unequal across different neighbourhoods of the city as has been shown in the Council's Green Infrastructure study (2022).
- Constraints in the city mean that it is very challenging to create large new areas of green open space and opportunities for new provision will be guided by the specific context of each individual development site. This will often require innovative thinking to make the most efficient use of spaces, and ensure that new provision is designed in a way that can deliver multiple functions at once.
- Equally, existing inequalities in access to green space and limited opportunities to provide new space means that loss of existing green features needs to be carefully considered and resisted wherever necessary.
- Green and blue infrastructure faces a variety of other pressures, from those arising from the need to accommodate new development in a constrained city; to the recreational impacts that occur as people use these spaces, as well as from climate change and pollution.

PROTECTION OF THE GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

- 4.4 Green Spaces in the city have a varied range of functions. Of great importance is the way these spaces function together as a network. Connections between these features means green spaces can act as movement corridors for both people and nature. Blue infrastructure is particularly important in this linking role, such as the rivers Cherwell and Thames and their embankments, as well as smaller streams and watercourses found throughout the city. It is important that the Local Plan identifies the most important spaces that form the GI network across the city and appropriately protects these from development, alongside other green features like trees.

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.5 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 005: Green infrastructure and Biodiversity. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- National policy sets out the importance of Local Plans protecting networks of green infrastructure. It also includes protections for open spaces and

guidance for how to assess applications that could result in their losses, as well as other green features like trees.

- However, there are competing pressures for land in the city and existing inequalities in access to open space which could be exacerbated without sufficient protection of key green spaces. Allowing loss of green infrastructure to development can also exacerbate other problems, such as harming health and wellbeing of residents, increasing risk to climate change, and intensifying biodiversity loss.
- Whilst public open spaces can be particularly beneficial, spaces do not have to be publicly accessible to form a vital contribution to green infrastructure network. Many private spaces play an important role for sport and recreation (e.g. pitches). Also, private gardens and non-domestic gardens such as the ground associated with academic institutions, offer valuable opportunities for private amenity and socialising, host a range of green and blue features, as well as making an important contribution to the fabric of the urban realm injecting pockets of natural features that support the amenity of the surrounding public realm.
- Additional protections already apply to land designated as Green Belt which is primarily focussed on preventing the spread of development and the coalescence of urban areas helping to protect the historic setting of the city.
- The GI network is also enhanced by a number of individual features such as trees and hedgerows. Some of these benefit from separate types of protection, for example
 - Ancient woodland, ancient/veteran trees and important hedgerows (as defined by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997), which are assigned a high level of protection through national policy.
 - A small proportion of trees benefit from TPOs, or protection through conservation areas, though there are many high-quality/valuable trees which are not captured under these designations.
 - A range of other individual GI features support the GI network and provide localised benefits to the spaces where they are found particularly in supporting amenity and biodiversity. These include features like ponds, smaller streams, green roofs and walls, as well as hedges, and wild patches of vegetation. As well as in public spaces, these features can be particularly important to the amenity of domestic/institutional gardens (such as gardens associated with private dwellings, care homes, schools and the Universities/Colleges).

4.6 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy would seek to protect all public and private green infrastructure in the city from inappropriate development and ensure that, where it comes forward, development mitigates any potential impacts.
- Whilst national policy protects open space, the draft policy seeks to set out additional levels of protection for some green infrastructure in the city. The spaces to be most strongly protected are those that provide a multitude of functions, that are most important to the local area and also those that need to be protected in situ to avoid fragmenting linkages or losing the key benefits they provide (e.g. flood risk or heritage setting). More detail on the proposed hierarchy of protection is set out in box 4.1 below.
- The draft policy sets out conditions by which certain types of green space may be lost to other forms of development, however, there may also be additional considerations which would apply to applications that affect certain types of spaces including how these might need to be reprovided. These will relate to the particular primary function a space is providing and will be of relevance when determining whether a site is 'surplus to requirements', but also in identifying the qualities and sensitivities essential to the function that would need to be addressed. It is likely that the supporting text to the policy would need to expand on these considerations, and an example of what these would likely look like is set out in box 4.2. below.
- Draft Policy G6 sets out additional considerations which apply to developments that would affect designated ecological sites, which also fall within the proposed core GI network under this policy.
- The draft policy also addresses protection of individual features like trees and hedgerows. In relation to trees, a varying level of protection and associated requirements expected in order to justify any loss are assigned through the policy. There will be other considerations for proposals affecting trees, including making use of best practice criteria such as the BS.5837:2012 standards or future equivalent.
- Where applications are proposed within green belt these would be determined in accordance with national policy.

Figure 4.1. - Proposed hierarchy of protection for spaces within the Green Infrastructure network

Recognising that particular spaces and their existing location are especially fundamental to the functioning of a strong GI network, the following hierarchy of GI spaces is proposed to be used:

1. **Core Green and Blue spaces** – designated at highest level in hierarchy due to their fundamental role in supporting the city-wide network through wildlife habitat and

corridor functions, flood storage, intensity of use and strength of heritage or other local value, which means they are not easily moved elsewhere. It is considered that these spaces cannot be moved/reprovided sufficiently without compromising the overall character and function. Some spaces are subject to separate policy protection to reflect the additional considerations that apply here (namely ecological designated sites).

Designated G1A on proposed policies map.

2. **Supporting Green and Blue spaces** – These spaces play an important role in enhancing the network and its overall function, and their loss will be resisted; however there is more opportunity for reprovion. As such change of use which is accompanied by reprovion to another part of the network, ideally onsite, to the same standard or higher will be accepted. Spaces have only been identified as supporting green and blue spaces if they are clearly carrying out green infrastructure functions; therefore, it is considered to be unlikely that any of these spaces could be found to be surplus, although it is accepted that there could be changes over time. Additional considerations for proposals affecting these types of spaces are highlighted below. *Designated G1B on proposed policies map.*

3. **All other Green and Blue spaces** – these spaces also support the overall network, as well as often helping to enhance the more urban areas of the city by breaking up the built environment with pockets of natural amenity, but are typically smaller and more fragmented, playing a reduced multi-functional role as a result. Change of use will be accepted where it is accompanied by sufficient reprovion, ideally onsite, and to the same standard or higher, or if it can be demonstrated in the application that current provision is surplus to requirements. *Other green and blue spaces are not identified on the proposed policies map.*

Figure 4.2. Additional considerations for proposals affecting particular types of spaces that would be set out in supporting text to the policy

It is important to recognise that there may be other specific contextual considerations relating to the type of open space which need to be taken into account in proposals affecting open spaces, aside from level of designation within the network.

As well as making reference to an up-to-date GI or open space study, proposals would need to consider the following when demonstrating compliance with Policy G1, regardless of where the site sits in the hierarchy:

Spaces for outdoor sport including pitches - where relevant, particularly when demonstrating a proposal to reprovide facilities, applicants will have to demonstrate that alternative sites are equally available locally, review any relevant information within the Council's latest Playing Pitch Study, and liaise with Sports England and the City Council's Active Communities team where necessary. Consideration should be given to the types of sports that the space provides for currently, whether this can be accommodated elsewhere, or whether alternative sports might better suit the local community.

Allotments and other spaces for food growing (e.g. community orchards) – where relevant, particularly where a proposal could reduce provision, applicants will have to demonstrate consideration of the current provision of allotments and other food growing opportunities in the local area, including review of up-to-date waiting lists, quality/quantity of plot provision and supporting facilities. Disposal of allotments requires application to the

Secretary of State and is only consented in exceptional circumstances.

Churchyards and cemeteries – where relevant, will have to demonstrate consideration of the historical context of many of these areas and their role as a setting for irreplaceable heritage assets and broader cultural/social significance.

Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces – these spaces often play a role in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), and generally provide an escape from the urban environment. Where relevant, applicants will have to demonstrate consideration of how any loss can be mitigated, especially if this is located in an area which already suffers from a deficit of such spaces according to an up-to-date green infrastructure/open space study.

Draft Policy G1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 005a of Background Paper 005.

DRAFT POLICY G1 – PROTECTION OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

The City Council will seek to protect the GI network for the many and varied benefits it offers. The hierarchy of GI spaces and the policy approach for each level of the hierarchy is as follows:

G1A: Core Green and Blue spaces

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would result in loss of, or harm to, the protected spaces identified as Core Oxford Green and Blue spaces and the important green network function they provide. These spaces are designated G1A on the policies map.

G1B: Supporting Green and Blue spaces

Planning permission will only be granted for proposals which affect Supporting Green and Blue spaces where any harm/loss is mitigated by ensuring sufficient re-provision, ideally onsite, and to the same standard or higher. These spaces are designated G1B on the policies map.

G1C: All other Green and Blue spaces

Planning permission will only be granted for proposals which affect all other Green and Blue spaces where any impacts are mitigated by ensuring sufficient re-provision, ideally onsite, and to the same standard or higher, or if it can be demonstrated in the application that current provision is surplus to requirements.

Residential Garden Land

Planning permission will be granted for new dwellings on residential garden land provided that:

- a) the proposal responds to the character and appearance of the area, taking into account the views from streets, footpaths and the wider residential and public

environment; and

- b) the plot to be developed is of an appropriate size and shape to accommodate the proposal, taking into account the scale, layout and spacing of existing and surrounding buildings, and the minimum requirements for living conditions set out in Policies HD11, HD12 and HD13; and
- c) requirements are met for biodiversity as set out in Policy G4, greening factor as set out in Policy G3 as well as requirements for protection of existing green infrastructure features, as set out below.

Existing green infrastructure features

Planning permission will not be granted for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees and important hedgerows except in wholly exceptional circumstances or there is a suitable compensation strategy in place (as per [Government Guidance](#)).

- d) Planning permission will not be granted for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of other trees, except in the following circumstances:
 - i. it can be demonstrated that preservation of the trees is not feasible which should include:
 - ii. evidence of testing of practical alternative site layouts that might preserve the tree(s) where possible; and
 - iii. Evidence that loss or other impacts to any tree(s) on the site has been minimised where possible, and guided by BS.5837:2012 recommendations or its future equivalent;
- e) where tree retention is not feasible, any loss of tree canopy cover should be compensated by the planting of new trees to provide additional tree cover (with consideration to the predicted future tree canopy on the site at 30 years following development) to achieve a minimum of no net-loss of tree canopy cover; and
- f) where loss of trees cannot be compensated by tree planting, then alternative forms of green infrastructure should be incorporated that will mitigate the loss of trees, using the Urban Greening Factor to demonstrate no reduction in GI score as a minimum (as well as meeting any other requirements as set out in Policy G3).

Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of other green infrastructure features such as hedges or ponds where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity or ecological interest. If it is demonstrated that their retention is not feasible, then their loss must be mitigated in accordance with other relevant policies, in particular Policy G3.

ENHANCEMENT AND PROVISION OF NEW GREEN AND BLUE FEATURES

- 4.7 Ensuring the provision of green and blue infrastructure features on new development that provides multi-functional benefits for health and wellbeing of people and wider environment should be fundamental to the design process. This might include providing enhancements to the existing green/blue features on a site,

as well as providing entirely new features and spaces, including potentially new public rights of way.

Key considerations for the policy:

4.8 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 005: Green infrastructure and Biodiversity. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- Many development sites in the city are constrained and opportunities to provide extensive green infrastructure can be limited.
- New development bringing additional people into an area can increase pressure on existing spaces.
- Public open space needs to be of a certain size to be useable, although green spaces can be valuable even if they are not public open space.
- It is important that the ongoing maintenance and management of green features is considered when it is designed into a scheme. For example, new trees require ongoing watering and care for the first few years after planting as well as periodic pruning and surveying throughout the rest of their life.
- Choice of green features should be guided by the context of the site but could include trees, hedges and pollinator friendly planting as well as blue features like ponds and rain gardens.
- By ensuring that the choice of species, their location and arrangement within the site and ongoing management is tailored towards maximising benefits from the beginning, applicants can ensure the most successful and long-lasting design outcomes for the lifetime of the development.
- On larger sites, there may be opportunities to incorporate tree-lined streets and multi-purpose green drainage features (SuDS) that can provide space for play and recreation, protection from heat, and also act as flood storage at times of heavy rainfall.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Because of the constrained nature of many of sites, it is important that, where opportunities are available to incorporate greening, the greening is designed to a high-quality. The draft policy seeks to guide applicants towards designing green infrastructure in a way that will, ideally, be able to secure multiple beneficial functions e.g. providing for biodiversity whilst also

offering space to play/socialise (though this may not always be appropriate for certain uses). Potential benefits are set out in a list.

- Recognising the valuable role blue corridors play in connecting up spaces across the city and providing for a range of benefits, including for nature, the draft policy includes requirements for ecological buffer zones along watercourses. It recognises that development nearby may also bring about opportunities to re-naturalise the embankments along these watercourses also.
- Larger developments will be expected to include on-site public open space such as small parks which should have a mix of uses tailored to the needs of occupants and the local area, for example, a nature area, seating, a playground and kick-about area, or areas left aside for community food growing. This provision can be important for reducing pressures on existing green spaces in the local area when new development brings in more residents.
- In exceptional circumstances, where on-site provision is not achievable, opportunities should be sought for enhancing existing public open space in the vicinity of the development to help accommodate any additional pressures arising in liaison with the Council, such as by providing additional recreational facilities on a site where existing provision is lacking. Developer contributions and/or legal agreement may be sought to deliver such outcomes where these are identified as important for the sustainable delivery of a scheme.
- The draft policy sets out requirements for applicants to consider the maintenance and management arrangements of new green features and, where appropriate, to ensure new features are successful in the long term.
- Whilst this draft policy would set out general requirements for new green infrastructure, applicants may have to consider other more site-specific requirements for greening that may be outlined in specific site allocations, as well as what is needed as part of the Urban Greening Factor (Policy G3).

Draft Policy G2 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 005b of Background Paper 005.

DRAFT POLICY G2: ENHANCEMENT AND PROVISION OF NEW GREEN AND BLUE FEATURES
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Planning permission will be granted for proposals that include a variety of green infrastructure features as a fundamental component in the design of new development. Where the site includes existing GI features, proposals should seek to enhance these, prioritising

opportunities to improve linkages between features in order to strengthen connections with the wider green infrastructure network including beyond the boundaries of the site. Features should be highlighted clearly within the Design and Access Statement where required and/or on landscape/elevation plans, which should also include details of how the following requirements have been met where relevant.

In demonstrating that green infrastructure considerations have played a fundamental part of the design process, the selection of green/blue features, or enhancement of any existing features, should be tailored to the specific context of the site and surrounding area. The proposal should set out clearly how GI has been designed to secure multi-functional benefits which contribute to the following, where relevant:

- a) Public access;
- b) Health and wellbeing, including facilitating recreation and play for people of all age groups and abilities;
- c) Making space for nature and enhancing biodiversity;
- d) Where there is an opportunity to strengthen links between green spaces, particularly ecological sites, creating linkages with surrounding green infrastructure (e.g. by including lines of trees/hedges to support linkages);
- e) Addressing climate change (including carbon sequestration; reducing flood risk; providing sustainable drainage; reducing overheating and promoting urban cooling);
- f) Enhancing appearance and character/sense of place;
- g) Conserving and, where possible, enhancing the historic environment;
- h)** Connectivity of walking and cycling routes;
- i) Opportunities for edible planting or community food growing;
- j) Providing natural buffer features to mitigate impacts of air pollution or noise.

Opportunities to enhance blue corridors

For proposals on sites incorporating or located adjacent to watercourses, opportunities should be sought through careful design and landscaping to re-naturalise the water courses where possible, including restoration of the bankside and instream habitats and leaving an ecological buffer zone of at least 10 metres width. In some cases, this may require reinstatement of the buffer zone on previously developed land.

New public open space

In situations where the proposal relates to replacement provision that is mitigating losses elsewhere, this will need to be demonstrated to be equally or more accessible for people of all ages and abilities by walking, cycling and public transport to local users of the existing site where relevant.

For residential sites of 1.5 hectares and above, new public open space of 10% of the area covered by residential development is required. For mixed-use sites, the area of residential use should be used for that calculation.

Where new open space is provided, the type of provision should be tailored to address existing needs or deficiencies in access locally. For example, by providing space for food growing where residents might not have access to allotments in the local area or incorporating play features for younger people.

Maintenance/management arrangements

Appropriate maintenance/management plans should be organised as part of the

design/construction process. Applicants will be required to replace any failed features for the first five years post-completion, unless agreed otherwise with the Council, and this will be secured through planning condition. Where appropriate, applicants will be expected to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that any new public space is properly maintained, by means of a financial contribution to the City Council.

PROVISION OF NEW GREEN AND BLUE FEATURES – URBAN GREENING FACTOR

- 4.9 Natural, green surface cover can promote multiple benefits, from providing space for biodiversity and mental/physical health benefits for people, as well as promoting climate resilience through slowing and storing rainwater during intense downpours and promoting cooling during high heat events. The potential for these benefits is lost if there is an overuse of artificial, impermeable surfacing materials like concrete, artificial lawns and tarmac. For these reasons, the use of a policy tool called an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is proposed as part of the Local Plan 2042, which seeks to quantify and drive onsite urban greening on new development, with particular attention on the naturalness of surface cover.

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.10 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 005: Green infrastructure and Biodiversity. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- The UGF is one of the five headline standards that are the key component of Natural England's GI framework. These standards define for planners, developers and communities what good green infrastructure 'looks like' and how to deliver them effectively.
 - The UGF has been developed to assign weighted scores to different types of surface cover provided on a site based upon the variety of environmental benefits that they provide.
 - The assessment process requires applicants to assess and quantify green infrastructure on their site prior to developing the area to establish a baseline for the site. This process is then repeated to assess the green infrastructure coverage which is proposed in the design of the new development to be provided post-development.
 - Whilst Natural England recommend targets to be used as part of a UGF requirement, these have not been subject to local considerations. For Oxford, the target score needs to be set to be achievable but high enough to achieve Local Plan aims around greening and driving climate resilience.

- The UGF tool is not intended to be used in place of other policy requirements, such as submission of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) biodiversity metric to demonstrate biodiversity net gain, or the need for landscaping plans. However, these considerations complement each other and there will be natural crossover between them. Features that help to meet the UGF requirement are also likely to add to biodiversity and help create Biodiversity Net Gain and also meet requirements of Policy G4.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- This policy sets out the minimum conditions for urban greening that major development will need to meet in Oxford, which are that there is no net loss in the baseline score of the sites through the development process and ensuring that all new development meets a minimum score.
- The minimum score would help to ensure that all applicable developments provide for an achievable level of improvement where the sites do not currently exceed this score. In addition, the requirement that there is no loss of baseline also ensures that development does not worsen the overall provision of greening on a site. This would potentially necessitate the improvement of some parts of a site through providing higher quality green features in order to offset the losses of features (e.g. to development) elsewhere on the site.
- The proposed targets in the policy have been informed by previous desk-based testing of the tool on a number of sites in the city to understand what is achievable. Whilst they are slightly lower than Natural England's recommendations, they are considered to be realistic and achievable based on the local context of the city. They could be reviewed as part of future Local Plans, depending on the performance of the policy in practice.
- Whilst the use of the UGF assessment is only required of major development through the policy, other types of development are encouraged to use the tool to calculate change in green surface cover in support of their application where possible.

Draft Policy G3 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 005c of Background Paper 005.

<p>DRAFT POLICY G3: PROVISION OF NEW GREEN AND BLUE FEATURES – URBAN GREENING FACTOR</p>

<p>An appropriate proportion of natural green surface cover – which may be comprised of both existing and newly installed features – will need to be demonstrated on certain proposals (as set out below) and evidenced via submission of a completed Urban Greening Factor (UGF)</p>

assessment.

Applicants are expected to assess and submit the baseline score for the site pre-development, prior to any site clearance, as well as the proposal as built/post-development. The as built/post-development score required for development proposals will need to meet the following policy criteria:

Major development: proposals should demonstrate that there would be no reduction in baseline score and achieve a minimum score of:

- 0.3 for residential or predominantly residential schemes
- 0.2 for predominantly non-residential schemes

All other forms of development (such as minor development) are encouraged to demonstrate how they have undertaken greening of their site through use of the UGF tool, though this is not mandatory.

Along with the submitted UGF assessment, all greening features proposed for the development and used in the calculation of the UGF score should be clearly demonstrated on associated landscaping/elevation plans in the application.

The adopted calculation formulae and the factors for various surface cover types are outlined in Appendix 4.1.

BIODIVERSITY AND THE ECOLOGICAL NETWORK

- 4.11 Oxford benefits from a concentration of rare and valuable habitats that are important refuges for a variety of flora and fauna, including lowland hay meadows, calcareous grassland, alkaline spring fen (among other types of wetland) as well as pockets of woodland. Their ongoing protection is important as many species and habitats across the country continue to experience significant losses due to a range of pressures including from changing land use, pollution and climate change. Alongside the broader approach to protecting and providing green infrastructure, it is important we incorporate policies into the Local Plan that not only conserve those spaces that are particularly valuable for our wildlife and flora but also deliver new provision for nature at a variety of scales supporting nature recovery - from smaller features in new development to wider habitat creation in line with the objectives of the Environment Act 2021.

DELIVERING MANDATORY NET GAINS IN BIODIVERSITY

- 4.12 Under the Environment Act 2021 all new planning applications must deliver biodiversity net gain of 10%. There are certain exemptions, including householder

applications, to which this requirement does not apply. The 10% target should be considered as the minimum and applicants are encouraged to explore options for delivery of net gain that exceeds this 10% wherever possible.

Key considerations for the policy:

4.13 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 005: Green infrastructure and Biodiversity. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- National legislation sets out high-level requirements for how 10% biodiversity net gain should be delivered, including that applicants must demonstrate it via completion of the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric tool.
- Whilst many sites in the city are constrained and may be limited in opportunities to deliver onsite net gains, trying to deliver biodiversity net gain as part of the development can be particularly beneficial for helping to ensure spaces for nature are brought closer to the places people live and work, securing the benefits for mental health they can provide as well as creating habitat for wildlife throughout the city.
- The Oxfordshire draft Nature Recovery Network (NRN), was prepared in advance of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire, and identifies areas of land within the city that are most beneficial for supporting the wider ecological network. The LNRS is being prepared by Oxfordshire County Council and is expected to be finalised later in 2025.
- The LNRS and NRN both seek to identify the areas of opportunity where biodiversity enhancement would be most beneficial in the city and wider county and help to provide a clear direction towards where off-site contributions would be most well-suited.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy expects use of the latest version of the Biodiversity Metric to demonstrate that the 10% net gain requirement will be met. The metric rules and principles set out by Natural England in the relevant User Guide must be adhered to, ensuring that all habitat categorisations and condition assessments are justified, with reference to the UK Habitat Classification System and the latest Biodiversity Metric Technical Supplement.
- Alongside submission of the completed Biodiversity Metric, baseline and proposed habitat plans must also be submitted.

- The draft policy would set out clear local expectations in the form of a hierarchy for delivering net gain, with onsite being the clear preference before other options are considered.
- Where onsite provision is not feasible, the proposed hierarchy would then steer offsite net gains towards the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identified areas within the city, before other sites are explored in the city and then the wider county.
- Because the LNRS is still an emerging document, the policy also references the existing mapping relating to the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network or Conservation Target Areas in the meantime, which could be targeted before the LNRS is finalised.
- It allows consideration of purchase of biodiversity units from a habitat bank or statutory biodiversity credits, as a last resort when neither on nor off-site net gain is possible and when it can be robustly justified.

Draft Policy G4 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 005d of Background Paper 005.

DRAFT POLICY G4: DELIVERING MANDATORY NET GAINS IN BIODIVERSITY

Planning permission will only be granted for development where it delivers a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, as measured by the latest version of the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric, unless exempted by national legislation or guidance. This must be achieved in all sections of the Biodiversity Metric relevant to that development (e.g. habitat, hedgerow, and river units). Delivery that exceeds 10% net gain is strongly encouraged wherever possible.

A copy of the completed metric spreadsheet must be submitted in support of planning applications. All metrics must be completed in line with the requirements set out in the relevant DEFRA User Guide, Technical Supplement, and best practice principles.

Applications are expected to prioritise the delivery of net gain onsite.

Where this is not feasible, delivery of off-site biodiversity enhancements will be expected to accord with the following hierarchy of preference:

1. Land in Oxford identified for its ecological potential within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (or within the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network, or Conservation Target Areas, until the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is published).
2. Elsewhere within the Oxford boundary
3. Elsewhere within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy areas in wider Oxfordshire (or within the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network, or Conservation Target Areas, until the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is published).

Where offsite measures are proposed, these should focus on delivering high-quality priority habitats. Any offsetting proposed in alternative locations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Where it is robustly justified that the above cannot be achieved, purchase of biodiversity units from habitat banks elsewhere or statutory credits may be accepted as a last resort.

All onsite and offsite measures must be delivered through a biodiversity management and monitoring plan which must cover a period of at least 30 years in line with the national legislation requirements.

ENHANCING ONSITE BIODIVERSITY IN OXFORD

- 4.14 The biodiversity net gain requirements required as part of the Environment Act, which are addressed in draft Policy G4, focus specifically on habitat creation. This is one important way of supporting our wildlife; however, there are additional ways in which design can support biodiversity in the city, including targeted support for wildlife, including priority species, by providing resources such as food and shelter within the urban environment. These extra measures are particularly important where the 10% biodiversity net gain requirement cannot be delivered onsite.

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.15 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 005: Green infrastructure and Biodiversity. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- Oxford and the surrounding area hosts a number of rare or nationally valuable species which are recognised nationally as 'priority species' including Hedgehogs, Water voles, Dormice, Swifts and Slow worms.
- The Environment Act's 10% habitat net gain requirement will not necessarily mean that support for wildlife, including our priority species, is provided within new developments, as developers do have to option to provide this offsite. Also, this net gain is focussed on habitat creation and there are other types of provision that can be important for helping species to navigate and survive in our urban environment.
- These features, such as bird/bat boxes, pollinator friendly planting, or design features that enable species to move between spaces and throughout the city, can be very simple to incorporate, even where onsite 10% BNG may not be feasible. They have many benefits for species though they are not typically recognised by the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric calculations.
- Such features will have the greatest benefit where they are tailored to specific opportunities for supporting local species in the area, particularly

priority species. For example, there are particular areas that are frequented by bat species so would be better suited to accommodating features that can help them, whereas development close to waterbodies may be particularly fitting for types of features that support wetland species.

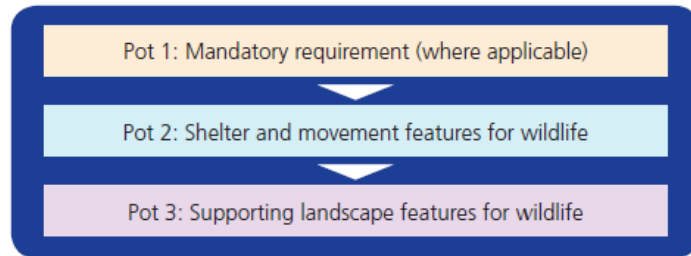
- Larger scales of development are likely to have more opportunities to host a greater selection of features than smaller scales of development.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy would set out that a minimum number of new ecological enhancements would be required on new developments separate to any onsite BNG delivered in accordance with the Environment Act.
- In order to meet the policy requirement, applicants would be able to select from a list of enhancements that have been identified in the Council's Ecological Points list as being particularly suitable to Oxford's setting. Potentially, this list could be maintained as a live list that could be added to in future where new opportunities for particular types of features are identified. There may also be opportunities to tailor the list of features so that they complement the types of enhancements that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies as opportunities within the city. An example of the potential features that could be included in the policy is set out in Appendix 4.2.
- As shown in Figure 4.3, the potential features would be grouped into a mandatory pot (pot 1), which are particularly important and would be required of all new development (including householder applications), as well as a group of features that support shelter and movement (pot 2) and a group of wider supporting landscape features (pot 3).
- After incorporating any mandatory features, the policy would be flexible as to which enhancements can be chosen to reach the minimum points total needed from pots 2 and 3 for minor and major development. This means that selection of particular features from the list can be tailored to the specific context of the site and surrounding area.
- The ecological enhancements chosen to meet the points requirement of the policy will need to be clearly evidenced on associated landscape and elevation plans and/or within the Design and Access statement. Applicants would also need to show that they have considered any maintenance/management requirements.
- The draft policy also includes some requirements around avoiding invasive species, and including a proportion of native planting species, which are particularly important for supporting local species. It does, however, make

an allowance for non-native species where these can be shown to have additional benefits.

Figure 4.3 - Three pots of features that would comprise the Council's proposed Ecological Points list



Draft Policy G5 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 005e of Background Paper 005.

DRAFT POLICY G5: ENHANCING ONSITE BIODIVERSITY IN OXFORD

All extensions and new-build development should seek to incorporate ecological enhancements into landscaping or building facades/roof spaces which are tailored to the priority habitats and protected species present within the site and surrounding area. Opportunities to create, expand, enhance or link ecological networks are particularly encouraged.

All new development must deliver a minimum number of ecological enhancements selected from the Council's Ecological Points List to achieve the required point total. The number of points required is as follows:

- **Householder application** – all mandatory features from pot 1 (where applicable)
- **Minor development application** – all mandatory features from pot 1 (where applicable); PLUS 1 feature from pot 2; PLUS 1 feature from pot 3
- **Major development application** – all mandatory features from pot 1 (where applicable); PLUS 2 features from pot 2; PLUS 2 features from pot 3.

Seeking advice from a suitably qualified ecologist on the ecological enhancements selected is encouraged. The chosen measure(s) will need to be clearly highlighted on landscape and elevation plans and/or within the design and access statement.

In addition, all new tree and soft landscaping must incorporate an element of native planting, and where non-native planting is proposed this should comprise species beneficial to UK pollinators and/or chosen to be well-adapted to future changes in climate. Proposals incorporating invasive plant species will be refused.

All maintenance and management requirements of the proposed enhancements must be specified within planning applications and secured via planning conditions.

PROTECTING OXFORD'S BIODIVERSITY INCLUDING THE ECOLOGICAL NETWORK

- 4.16 The draft Policy G1, as set out earlier in this chapter, is intended to protect a multi-functional network of green and blue space across the city, but additional, specific protections are proposed for ecological sites within the network based upon their importance and value for the species and/or habitat they have been designated for. The hierarchy of protection for this ecological network is set out in the following draft policy. The policy would also address requirements for assessing potential for any existing biodiversity on the site (including habitats and species) and mitigating impacts on these.

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.17 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 005: Green infrastructure and Biodiversity. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- Oxford includes a network of habitats and ecological sites, some of which are particularly rare or diverse, including areas of irreplaceable habitat, which is already protected strongly through national policy.
- There are a range of sites that have been designated for their importance at an international or national scale, such as the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which also benefit from protections in national policy. As well as areas of county level or city level importance, including Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Oxford City Wildlife Sites (OCWSs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), which need to be protected through local planning policy predominantly as they do not benefit from the same national policy protections as the SAC and SSSIs.
- The habitats that comprise the wider ecosystems within these sites are difficult to move without compromising the special characteristics and functions for which these sites have been designated. It is therefore important to protect them in situ and also ensure that new development coming forward nearby does to have adverse effects on these sites, either directly, such as through causing habitat loss, or indirectly through impacting the particular environmental conditions which support these sites (e.g. through pollution).
- A number of sites in the city are particularly reliant upon specific hydrological conditions, such as flows of surface or groundwater and the quality of that water which means that they are potentially vulnerable to changes in

hydrology that could arise from development. For example, Oxford Meadows SAC is potentially sensitive to changes in groundwater flows stemming from development on the North Oxford gravel terrace, equally, New Marston Meadows and Lye Valley SSSIs are sensitive to changes in flows and quantities of groundwater within their catchment areas.

- There are also undesignated sites that support habitats and species of principal importance (this is a wider selection of habitats and species listed under S41 of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act, 2006, some of which are protected under other legislation and some not).
- As well as the underlying habitat that supports a range of flora and fauna, there are species that need particular protection, as well as habitats. The impacts of development can negatively harm Oxford's wildlife, or be designed in a way that can support it, and it is important for proposals to be appropriately informed of potential for impacts through relevant assessments and ecological expertise so that these can be avoided and/or mitigated.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The starting point for the draft policy is that proposals should seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity, whilst also seeking to ensure that all designated sites within the ecological network are protected from development except in exceptional circumstances. This includes being developed upon, as well as being adversely affected by development nearby.
- The policy seeks to ensure that existing biodiversity and features of ecological interest are understood, and development proposals are accompanied by sufficient ecological survey information to enable this. Any impacts on existing features that survey work has identified would need to be satisfactorily addressed through the design of the development.
- In addressing impacts, the mitigation hierarchy would be expected to be followed. This requires that applicants seek to avoid any potential impacts in the first instance through careful design/construction choice before tailoring the proposal to mitigate impacts. Only once the first two steps (avoid and mitigate) in the hierarchy have been exhausted should compensation measures be considered.
- The draft policy then sets out protection for international/national sites, including that development would not be permitted where this results in adverse effects on them. The definition of adverse effect and what will need to be considered will depend upon the nature of the particular site, and the particular qualities for which it is designated, including the types of

habitat/species present and the impacts that they are vulnerable to. For example:

- New subterranean development on the Oxford gravel terrace may need to demonstrate through a hydrogeological assessment that there will be no significant adverse effect upon the integrity of the SAC through changes to groundwater flows.
 - Development in proximity to the Lye Valley may need to show how harmful impacts on water quality, or changes in groundwater flows or recharge have been avoided/mitigated if there is a possibility that the proposal could have an adverse effect in this way.
- At the end of the draft policy, some considerations for determining whether adverse effects may be generated are set out, and it is expected that these would be expanded upon in supporting text to the policy as well as other supporting guidance to the Local Plan e.g. Technical Advice Notes (TANs).
- Reflecting the particular importance of the SAC and SSSIs, new development immediately adjacent to these sites will also be expected to incorporate appropriate buffers that protect these sensitive areas during the construction and operational phases and ultimately deliver additional supporting habitat. The design of these buffers will need to be guided by the ecological context of the sites they are being designed to protect, as well as appropriate ecological advice.
- The draft policy also then sets out protections for locally designated sites, which do not otherwise benefit from any protection via national policy. Whilst the draft policy G1 protects these from development because they are also identified as core spaces within the GI network, the requirements in draft policy G6 primarily therefore relate to how development nearby which could have an adverse effect on these sites will need to address potential impacts before it would be permitted.

Draft Policy G6 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 005f of Background Paper 005.

DRAFT POLICY G6: PROTECTING OXFORD'S BIODIVERSITY INCLUDING THE ECOLOGICAL NETWORK
Development proposals must seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity including safeguarding the key sites of Oxford's ecological network.
Proposals with a reasonable likelihood of adversely impacting semi-natural habitats or protected species on or immediately adjacent to the site, will only be permitted where:
a) They have been informed by targeted ecological surveys, completed prior to determination of the planning application, unless explicitly agreed with the Council;

and

- b) Any impacts identified have been satisfactorily addressed in the design of the development in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy; and
- c) Any impacts on species or habitats that are of city or county importance, in line with the criteria for LWS or OCWS designation, have been addressed in accordance with requirements for proposals affecting locally designated sites (criteria d and e below).

Internationally and nationally designated sites

Development will not be permitted that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or an adverse effect on any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

In addition, development will not be permitted within the SAC or a SSSI except where it is related to and required for the management, maintenance or enhancement of the qualifying features of the site.

Development proposed on land immediately adjacent to the SAC or any SSSI must be designed with a buffer to that site that both helps to prevent adverse effects during the construction and operational phases of the development and delivers habitat supporting the interest features of that site.

Within the groundwater catchment areas for the Oxford Meadows SAC, Lye Valley and New Marston Meadows SSSI's, development which could have negative hydrological impacts in relation to surface and groundwater will need to demonstrate that these have been avoided, or mitigated where relevant, through use of appropriate measures such as infiltration methods (where geological conditions allow) and careful design of below ground works.

Locally designated sites

Development that would have an adverse effect on a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Local Wildlife Site (LWS) or Oxford City Wildlife Site (OCWS) will only be permitted where:

- d) There is an exceptional need for the new development that outweighs any adverse effect from loss of habitat or harm to any feature of interest for which the site was selected, and this need cannot be met by development on an alternative site with less biodiversity interest; and
- e) Satisfactory mitigation and compensation onsite or sufficiently local to preserve the feature of interest can be delivered and has been agreed with the Council.

The same level of protection will be afforded to proposed LWS and proposed OCWS (prior to the conclusion of the selection process).

Where proposals result in habitat loss within a LNR or LWS, they must retain and enhance the interest features for which the site was selected.

Other features of interest

Development should seek to retain and enhance habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity wherever possible.

Determining adverse effects

In determining the potential for adverse effects on ecology from a development, including where this relates to designated sites, applicants will need to demonstrate that they have considered information from various sources where relevant, including the site context and surrounding

area; expert ecological advice, applicable Council Technical Advice Notes, as well as a review of relevant existing information where available, such as Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). A range of potential impacts will need to be considered and will depend on the context of the application and proximity to any protected site(s), particularly, but not limited to:

- Loss of protected land;
- Recreational impacts;
- Impacts on air quality;
- Impacts on water quality;
- Impacts from artificial lighting;
- Changes to the hydrological regime (particularly surface and groundwater).

FLOOD RISK AND CLIMATE RESILIENT DESIGN

- 4.18 Climate change is the greatest threat facing society today and the way we design and construct the built environment has a key role to play, not only in how we mitigate our impacts on the climate (as is dealt with in Chapter 5), but also in how we can adapt to and withstand the impacts of a changing climate in future. A certain amount of climate change is already effectively 'baked into' our future, even if the world were to stop emitting greenhouse gases tomorrow, due to the long-term effects of emissions like carbon dioxide already within the atmosphere. Adaptable and resilient design in new development that can enable it to better withstand the impacts of climate change and reduce the harmful effects for occupants and other users will therefore be essential. This last section of the chapter sets out the draft policies for addressing flood risk and surface water drainage as well as ensuring design of new development is resilient to climate change.

FLOOD RISK AND FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS (FRAS)

- 4.19 Oxford's risk from future climate change is primarily related to the hazards of flooding and hotter, drier summers. The city has a complex geography with potential for flooding from various sources like rivers, surface waters and the sewers, with potential impacts for people's health as well as economic costs through damage to properties and businesses. It is therefore imperative that policies set out the approach development needs to take in addressing flood risk now and in the future with the added effects of the changing climate.

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.20 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 007: Flood risk, SuDS and drainage. In summary, the key

considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- National policy on planning for and mitigating flood risk is already very strong, but there is a need to consider this in the local context
- The context of Oxford in terms of flood risk is complex. Although the city is very constrained, there is a high development need, and much of the new development comes forward on previously developed land, there is also (in some parts of the city) a high level of flood risk
- A significant amount of the city lies within areas of higher flood risk according to EA mapping (updated March 2025) and the Council's latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2023).
- Climate change is projected to bring about wetter winters, and more intense rainfall events that could exacerbate flood risk from various sources like rivers, surface water and the sewers
- The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS) is a partnership project led by the Environment Agency which will reduce flood risk from the River Thames to existing businesses, residential properties, major roads and the railway development particularly at risk from flooding in the Botley and Abingdon Roads area. However, the OFAS is only one response for addressing flood risk in city and will not remove risk entirely, thus it is imperative that new development proposals consider flood risk from all sources and respond to particular circumstances of the local area accordingly.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Sets out where site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) will be required for development and what should be considered including accounting for the impacts of climate change over the expected lifetime of the development.
- Guides developers to take a methodical approach to addressing flood risk and emphasises hierarchy of need to assess, avoid, mitigate and then manage any remaining risk through design of the scheme if it cannot be avoided.
- Responds to the fact Oxford is constrained, has lots of development already in the flood plain and pressures for new development, by agreeing a bespoke approach to Flood Zone 3b, whilst ensuring that the flood risk vulnerability classification will not be increased on any site.
- Aware that the OFAS project is still being worked up and is not yet ready for delivery so should be dealt with in the supporting text rather than policy.

- Includes an approach to dealing with minor extensions (including householders) proposed within Flood Zone 2 and 3a. National policy is silent on this, but extensions are a common form of development occurring regularly around the city. The frequency of occurrence does have the potential for cumulative impacts resulting in increased flood risk as flood storage areas are lost to development of this type of development. A pragmatic approach to ensure minimisation of risk to occupants and the surrounding area is set out in the draft policy.
- Not allowing proposals for basement accommodation in Flood Zones 2 or 3 due to the unacceptable additional risks associated with this type of accommodation.
- Not permitting applications that propose to culvert open watercourses as this can increase flood risk and lead to a loss of natural flood management features.
- Changes of use to a house in multiple occupation (HMO) in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will require a FRA to be carried out to assess the risk on and off site. This is because there is a higher risk when managing the safe access and egress of individuals that live separately (which is more typical of those that live in HMO accommodation) should flooding occur.

Draft Policy G7 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 007a of Background Paper 007.

DRAFT POLICY G7: FLOOD RISK AND FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS (FRAS)

Planning permission will only be granted where proposals have considered the potential for flooding from all sources including the impacts of climate change for the expected lifetime of the development, as well as the potential for them increasing flood risk elsewhere, the safety of users of the development, and where they have appropriately addressed any flood risks identified.

Planning permission will only be granted where a sequential approach has been taken to locating the development and where the Sequential Test and the Exception Test (where necessary according to national policy and supporting guidance) have been passed.

Planning applications for development (including minor householder extensions and changes of use to houses in multiple occupation (HMO)) must be accompanied by a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) when proposed in the following locations:

- within Flood Zone 2,
- within Flood Zone 3,
- on sites within Flood Zone 1 larger than 1 ha,
- on sites within Flood Zone 1 of less than 1 ha but including a change of use in development type to a more vulnerable class,
- on sites within Flood Zone 1 in areas at risk of flooding from other sources such as

surface water and ground water flooding.

The FRA must be undertaken in accordance with up-to-date flood data, national and local guidance on flooding and consider flooding from all sources including the impacts of climate change now and in the future.

Planning permission will only be granted where the FRA demonstrates that for the lifetime of the development and including the impacts of climate change:

- a) the proposed development will not increase flood risk offsite; and
- b) future occupants will be safe during times of flood; and
- c) safe access and egress in the event of a flood can be provided; and
- d) details of the necessary mitigation measures to be implemented have been provided; and
- e) where the proposed development will not impact on delivery of future flood relief measures.

For minor extensions (including householder) proposed within Flood Zone 2 and 3a, it is acknowledged it may be challenging to meet all the requirements above. Proposals will be expected to minimise risk to occupants and surrounding area by following the below hierarchy of principles in order of preference, demonstrating robust justification where the top levels in the hierarchy cannot be met:

- f) Full requirements of an FRA (as above)
- g) Finished floor levels above design flood level with compensation
- h) Finished floor levels above design flood level
- i) Finished floor levels at existing level with water exclusion up to at least 300mm above the design flood level
- j) Finished floor levels at existing level with a water resilient strategy up to at least 300mm above the design flood level (unless the development cannot be made safe).

Planning permission will not be granted for development in Flood zone 3b (including minor household development) except where it is for water-compatible uses or essential infrastructure; or where it is on previously developed land and includes a high standard of mitigation designed to demonstrably decrease flood risk compared with the current situation. All the following criteria must also be met:

- k) it will not lead to a net increase in the built footprint of the existing building within Flood Zone 3b and where possible lead to a decrease; and
- l) it will not lead to a reduction in flood storage (using flood compensation measures) and where possible increase flood storage; and
- m) it will not lead to an increased risk of flooding elsewhere; and
- n) it will not put the development or any future occupants at risk, including in relation to ensuring safe access/egress; and
- o) it will not result in an increase in flood risk vulnerability classification or an increase in the number of dwellings.

Proposals for basement accommodation within flood zone 2 or 3 will not be permitted due to the unacceptable additional risks associated with this type of accommodation. Where proposals for basements are at risk of other sources of flooding (i.e. groundwater, surface water, or sewer flooding), it must be demonstrated that flood risk can be managed safely.

Applications that propose culverting of open watercourses will not be permitted.

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS)

- 4.21 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are features which are designed to manage the flow of rainwater in a way that mimics the natural landscape. They are increasingly important in the context of climate change, building the resilience of our urban areas to flooding during times of intense and heavy rainfall events but they can provide additional benefits, particularly where these are implemented through green features. SuDS need to be incorporated into the development from the earliest stages of design conception and may include water conservation (e.g. rainwater collection and storage) as well as surface water drainage (e.g. soakaways, porous surfaces, swales, streams and balancing ponds).

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.22 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 007: Flood risk, SuDS and drainage. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) contains information about SuDS, but it is limited in terms of addressing 'good design' and regarding wider objectives. Additionally, it only addresses SuDS on major schemes.
- Prioritising natural, green and blue SuDS features including soft landscaping, green roofs and ponds rather than unnatural artificial components such as pipe systems or underground attenuation tanks.
- Recognising that SuDS can provide a multitude of benefits including providing open space for recreation, habitats to support wildlife and wider biodiversity and adaptation to other climate hazards such as overheating, as well as managing surface water.
- Appropriate SuDS features will also need to consider the context of the site and any previous site uses. Where a site has a history of contamination for example, then infiltration methods may not be suitable unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no pathway of contamination and alternative SuDS features will need to be utilised instead.
- Maintenance of SuDS as they have a tendency to become obstructed, reducing their effectiveness.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- All development proposals (and not just major schemes) will be required to, where feasible, manage surface water through SuDS.
- Encouraging design of SuDS to maximise multi-functionality
- Setting out that SuDS are to be designed in a way that incorporates reuse, infiltration, retention or conveyance methods which utilise natural, green and blue infrastructure rather than unnatural, artificial components, unless exceptional site conditions justify that an alternative approach is required.
- Where a site has potential for contamination, SuDS that rely on infiltration will be discouraged and other suitable methods should be adopted to protect the water environment.
- Setting a drainage hierarchy for how surface water runoff should be managed.
- Requiring a SuDS maintenance plan to be submitted alongside any planning application for minor or major development, demonstrating how SuDS will be managed and remain effective for the lifetime of the development.

Draft Policy G8 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 007b of Background Paper 007.

DRAFT POLICY G8: SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS)

All development proposals will be required where feasible to manage surface water through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

SuDS must be designed in a way that incorporates reuse, infiltration, retention or conveyance methods which utilise natural, green and blue infrastructure rather than unnatural, artificial components. Below ground features such as pipe systems or underground attenuation tanks will not be permitted, unless exceptional site conditions justify an alternative approach which has been agreed with the Council. Multi-functionality of SuDS should be maximised in their design, such as where they are incorporated into public open space.

Where a site has potential for contamination, SuDS that rely on infiltration will be discouraged and other suitable methods should be adopted to protect the water environment unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no pathway of contamination. Infiltration SuDS measures would not be encouraged in areas that have shallow groundwater as these measures would not be suitable.

Surface water runoff should be managed to greenfield run-off rates as close to its source as possible, in line with the following drainage hierarchy:

- a) store rainwater for later use; then:
- b) discharge into the ground (infiltration); then:
- c) discharge to a surface water body; then:

- d) discharge to a surface water sewer, highway drain or other drainage system; and finally:
- e) discharge to a combined sewer (only in exceptional circumstances).

Details of the SuDS must be submitted as part of a drainage strategy or FRA where required.

A SuDS maintenance plan must be submitted alongside any planning application for minor or major development, demonstrating how SuDS will be managed and remain effective for the lifetime of the development. The plan must clearly explain what maintenance measures will take place, how frequently they will occur and for how long and will be secured by condition.

For major developments, Oxfordshire County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) are a statutory consultee, and as such proposals will be expected to be adhere to their SuDS standards.

RESILIENT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- 4.23 All new development needs to be designed in a way that can function efficiently and preserves the wellbeing of occupants in the context of current and future climate. This means applicants should have a good understanding of future climate risks (which extend beyond flood risk to encapsulate issues such as overheating, water stress and increased storminess) and incorporate a range of adaptation measures into their development that enable it to be resilient for its lifetime.

Key considerations for the policy:

- 4.24 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 008: Carbon reduction and climate resilient design. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- Oxford is already at risk from hazards such as flooding, water stress and overheating, as has been documented in Oxfordshire County Council's Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2024. Indeed, Oxford has some of the most at risk areas in the county to overheating and flooding at present due to a variety of factors. These risks are expected to increase in future as climate continues to change.
 - New development being built today is likely to be around for many decades, thus it is important that design is tailored for climate today as well as climate that is expected in future, considering both the risks to buildings, structures and supporting infrastructure, but also the risks to their occupants. Equally, it is important to avoid 'maladaptation', whereby inefficient design results in inappropriate development for future climate and the increased risks for occupants that come with it.

- There are a variety of Local Plan policies that are likely to be mutually supporting of climate resilient design, for example greening of development, or approaches to avoiding flood risk as part of design of sites. However, these policy areas are often seeking to achieve multiple objectives and delivering climate resilience may not always be the first priority, which means opportunities to deliver on this objective may not be maximised, or design choices could unintentionally go against achieving it.
- There is likely to be some overlap with Part O of the Building Regulations which is a separate consenting process to planning permission and where this is not considered in design processes conflicts can arise. For example, to address potential overheating, the Building Regs already require some consideration of factors that influence thermal performance such as the design and layout of windows. Changing window sizes and layout for other design reasons without considering impacts on overheating risk can impede ability to meet the Part O standard. Thus, considering issues at design stage and as part of the planning process reduces the likelihood of building control issues later.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy has two elements which should be demonstrated with detail that is proportionate to the scale of the development. The first element seeks to ensure that applicants to demonstrate how their design process has afforded appropriate consideration to existing and future climate and potential weather extremes that the proposed development will have to function within.
- Some applications will need to consider more risks than others, for example, those on sites in proximity to sources of flooding now or in future will have to consider issues in relation to these hazards whilst applications on sites in other parts of the city may not.
- The second element of the draft policy incorporates a checklist setting out the key measures which need to be addressed in the design of the development where relevant. Meeting these requirements will help demonstrate the proposal is designed for resilience to the spectrum of climate impacts.
- The parts of the checklist that will apply to each development will differ depending on the site and the types of risks it is exposed to and they will need to be informed by the information that has been referred to as part of the first element of the policy. There will be a variety of design solutions for a site that can deliver upon multiple requirements in the checklist (e.g. green infrastructure can promote urban cooling as well as flood resilience).

Applicants would be encouraged to incorporate design measures that have multi-functional benefits wherever possible.

- It is acknowledged that there may be overlap with requirements in other proposed policy areas and applicants may be able to refer to other parts of their application to evidence how they have addressed certain elements of the checklist, e.g. Flood Risk Assessments for flood resistance/resilience measures. However, to ensure compliance with this policy, the proposal will need to explicitly identify how the measure adapts or builds resilience to the existing and future climate change risks.
- The preferred approach would be for the applicants' Design and Access Statements to clearly set out how the requirements within the checklist have been addressed (or identify where these are not relevant), but where this is not required, the proposal should clearly set out in one place how the requirements have been met in another part of the application (e.g. planning statement).

Draft Policy G9 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 008d of Background Paper 008.

DRAFT POLICY G9: RESILIENT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Planning permission will be granted where proposals have been designed with regard to most up-to-date climate change projections, suitably addressing the key risks from changing climate on occupants; the development; and any supporting infrastructure for its lifetime.

All proposals excluding householder applications, unless this is required as part of other policies in the Local Plan, will be expected to demonstrate (which could be as part of the Design and Access Statement) that the following resilience requirements are incorporated into the design:

- a) Risk of overheating, flooding (from all relevant sources), and storm extremes have been considered for the lifetime of the proposed development and that design has been tailored to function effectively within future climate scenarios.
- b) A cooling strategy to address risks of overheating which is proportionate to the scale of the building and promotes passive cooling, energy efficient measures in the first instance (in line with requirements of Policy R1). This should consider both internal and external environments.
- c) The measures incorporated to manage water run-off and, where the site is at risk of flooding now or in future, measures to reduce flood risk, such as flood resistance measures (e.g. dry-proofing to keep water out) and resilience measures (e.g. wet-proofing to allow continued function during, or quick recovery after flooding).
- d) The measures incorporated to ensure water is used prudently and that water is conserved, including that dwellings meet the water consumption limits in line with Policy R5 (Water Quality and Resources).
- e) Supporting infrastructure is designed to function in extreme weather conditions.

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CHAPTER FIVE

A CITY THAT UTILISES ITS RESOURCES WITH CARE, PROTECTS THE AIR, WATER AND SOIL AND AIMS FOR NET ZERO CARBON

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 The draft policies of the previous chapter are intended to preserve and enhance green infrastructure and our natural environment, support nature recovery, and generally build the city's resilience to the changes in the climate that are already happening as a result of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (climate adaptation). Meanwhile, this chapter sets out the preferred approach for policies which seek to ensure new development comes forward in a way that does not further exacerbate climate change through additional carbon emissions – also known as climate change mitigation – whilst also supporting the existing built environment to move towards net zero carbon. The second part of the chapter also deals with protection of various natural resources and ensuring that the development process mitigates its impact on the wider environment.

AIMING FOR NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

- 5.2 The first three draft policies for this chapter of the Local Plan address different elements of the strategy for helping to move the city towards its net zero carbon target of 2040, and the UK net zero carbon target as legislated in the Climate Change Act 2008 of 2050.
- 5.3 Key considerations driving this set of policies:
- Development occurring during the lifetime of this Local Plan will continue to be in use well beyond 2040 and 2050, it is crucial that it is brought forward in a way that is consistent with a net zero carbon future now – this reduces the need for future retro-fitting.
 - In Oxford, the primary source of existing carbon emissions comes from the built environment, including buildings like homes and offices, as well as industrial and commercial uses. New buildings can add to the problem if not carefully designed. Retro-fitting will help tackle existing emission sources, and whilst many retro-fit measures can

take place without planning permission, the Local Plan needs to support projects where it can.

- Whilst this chapter focuses on buildings, development should also be designed in a way that supports users to live their daily lives in a sustainable way and reduce their carbon footprint in other aspects of life. There will be cross over with other areas in the Local Plan, such as the design policies and the policies which seek to support sustainable/active modes of travel, as well as local amenities within walking distance of where people live. These other policy areas can help to address sources of emissions that the Local Plan has less direct control over, such as transport emissions.

NET ZERO CARBON BUILDINGS IN OPERATION

- 5.4 New buildings contribute to carbon emissions in a few ways. Alongside the carbon cost of their construction (dealt with in the next section), the operation of a building can be an ongoing source of emissions due to how energy is sourced and utilised. Principally, emissions are associated with burning of fossil fuels for space heating and heating of water, as well as for cooking, but emissions are also associated with electricity use from the national grid. Ensuring net zero buildings in operation means ensuring they are as energy efficient as possible, this has additional benefits for reducing energy bills and risk of fuel poverty, as well as helping to reduce strain on the wider energy grid.
- 5.5 Key considerations for the policy:
- 5.6 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 008: Carbon reduction and climate resilient design. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- The city has a net zero carbon target of 2040, and there is a nationally legislated net zero target of 2050 through the Climate Change Act. Also, legal duty as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act, as well as guidance in the NPPF and PPG, sets a strong precedent for policy to address carbon reduction in new buildings.
 - Newly permitted buildings once in operation will add to the city's carbon footprint where these are not heated and powered from renewable sources.
 - National building regulations now, as well as future proposed updates, are unlikely to deliver full net zero buildings in operation for various reasons. They do not address all energy demands of a building, nor do they incentivise energy efficiency or meeting full energy demands renewably onsite.

- The calculation methodologies for modelling building performance under building control are ineffective at driving net zero design, meaning relying on national standards (or even Local Plan 2036 policy RE1) alone cannot deliver full net zero carbon buildings. Industry now generally recommends use of Energy Use Intensity metric alongside targets for total energy demand, space heating and onsite energy generation.
- Levels of fuel poverty are already above average in the city compared with regionally/nationally, and there are ongoing challenges of higher energy prices and energy insecurity due to national/international disruption.
- The local energy grid is already under pressure and likely to face additional pressures as society transitions to net zero, including electrification of transport and heat. The city's zero carbon roadmap identifies an ongoing need for installation of new micro renewables year on year to 2040.
- Whilst net zero carbon design looks to be financially viable and technically feasible for most standard types of development (subject to further viability testing), there will be typologies that find this standard more challenging including high energy demand use such as research and development, and healthcare. Feedback from local stakeholders as part of the LP2040 Reg 19 consultation reinforced this message. A more flexible approach, which still pushes for the highest standards is likely to be needed for these uses – such as higher or less specific targets for energy use, as well as allowances for offsetting.

5.7 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy first and foremost encourages energy efficient design by requiring applicants to follow the principles of the energy hierarchy (reduce energy, use energy efficiently, source energy cleanly). This will help to drive applicants towards fabric-first approaches which drive down the energy demand it takes to operate the building in the first place and is more explicit than policy RE1 in the adopted Local Plan.
- The policy as proposed also diverts from the adopted policy RE1 in how it seeks to measure performance of new development—instead of setting carbon reduction targets as % reductions below Building Regs standards, it sets out Energy Use Intensity targets that will need to be met, which are a standardised way of measuring energy efficiency that can be applied to most buildings. There is one EUI target for total energy (the energy measured at the meter) and one for space heating (as a component of total energy).
- The total energy EUI target is different for residential development and non-residential and has been set with reference to a number of national sources

providing guidance on what is feasible for these broad typologies—these are set out in the net zero carbon design literature review.

- However, the policy wording also includes separate requirements for non-residential development with high energy demands. For these uses, it allows flexibility for applicants to propose a higher total energy EUI target, as long as this is robustly justified and evidence provided for the measures taken to reduce this as much as possible.
- Space heating EUI target remains the same across all development types. Applicants will also need to demonstrate no fossil fuel systems in the building.
- Renewable energy generation will need to match the total EUI of the proposed development in order to ensure that the capacity of microgeneration in the city is increased in line with additional energy demand generated by development. Whilst the preference is for this to be met onsite, allowances are made for applicants to provide some of this elsewhere (e.g. if they own other areas of land or buildings in the city) if they are unable to fully meet energy needs onsite due to site constraints such as having limited roof space to accommodate sufficient rooftop solar pv.
- The draft policy also allows for applicants to pay into a Council-managed energy offsetting mechanism where renewable energy generation cannot be fully provided for as part of the development (or directly offsite by the applicant). Payment into the offsetting scheme would be accepted as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted, but any funds collected would then be used to facilitate retro-fitting of existing building across the city.
- All applicants would be expected to demonstrate how they've met the various requirements of the policy through submission of an energy and carbon statement. Some types of applications such as conversions and change of use would only need to meet parts of the policy as it is not considered reasonable to apply all criteria. The policy also sets out expectations for how anything short of full compliance with the policy should be justified.
- The draft policy seeks to leave choices about technologies to applicants, and different systems will fit with the needs of different applications in order to meet the policy requirements. Applicants are expected to consider the potential for existing or future heat networks and how their development might integrate with these where appropriate. This may mean designing heating systems so that they have the ability to connect into a wider network in future if a network is coming forward in future. Choices should always be guided by what might be the most sustainable option for the building however.

- The technical nature of this policy means that it will likely need to be supported by additional guidance as set out in a Technical Advice Note (TAN). The TAN would cover how applicants should meet the various elements of the policy, as well as setting out methodologies that are acceptable for modelling performance and demonstrating alignment with the policy targets. The TAN would also likely reference best practice guidance, such as the emerging Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard, which will be particularly relevant where applicants seek to justify performance that exceeds the policy targets under criteria 2, 3 and 5. It can also identify potential heat networks that may offer opportunities for additional connections in future.

Draft Policy R1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 008a of Background Paper 008.

DRAFT POLICY R1: NET ZERO BUILDINGS IN OPERATION

All new buildings should be net zero carbon in operation. This must be demonstrated through submission of an Energy and Carbon Statement that details how all the criteria below have been met:

1. Developments have been designed in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Applications should demonstrate how design has methodically followed the steps in the hierarchy, firstly through reducing energy use; using energy efficiently; and then, meeting all energy needs through renewables sources, ideally generated onsite, or else offsetting as a last resort.
2. A total Energy Use Intensity (EUI) figure for the development has been provided, calculated using an approved methodology as set out in supporting text. Developments will not be permitted where they exceed the following Energy Use Intensity targets (unless demonstrated to be technically unfeasible):
 - Residential: 45 kwh/m²/yr
 - Non-residential: 70 kwh/m²/yr
 - For non-residential uses with exceptionally high energy demands, including R&D/labs/hospitals, a higher EUI target will be accepted where it can be robustly justified, including the measures taken to limit this.
3. The portion of the development's total EUI associated with space heating is no more than 20 kwh/m²/yr. Emerging best practice suggests 15kwh/m²/yr will be achievable in many instances and achieving this tighter limit is encouraged.
4. No fossil fuels are being directly utilised in the operation of the development (e.g. no gas used for heating and cooking).
5. All energy needs (matching the development's total EUI figure) will be met through onsite renewable energy generating technologies in the first instance, accompanied by energy storage where possible. Where the total energy need cannot be met through onsite renewables, applicants should seek to maximise available capacity onsite, before seeking to meet the remaining energy balance through installation of sufficient additional renewable

generation at a location offsite. In these circumstances, it will need to be demonstrated in the Energy and Carbon Statement that offsite provision has been fully secured and will be in operation upon completion of the development.

As a last resort, where the above steps have been fully explored and net zero carbon still cannot be fully delivered, offsetting may be accepted to mitigate any remaining energy demand that cannot be sourced renewably either onsite or through an identified offsite location. The Council will accept payment into the Council's offsetting fund that can be shown to fully offset this remaining energy demand, and this will be secured through an appropriate legal agreement/S106.

6. All new development must include information that specifies the approach to metering that will be adopted as well as proposed monitoring of the performance of the development to be undertaken post-completion (to ensure performance is in line with design specifications).

Proposals for conversions, and change of use (where they include works to the fabric of the building to facilitate this) that would require planning permission are only expected to demonstrate accordance with criteria 1 and 4, unless they would result in the creation of a self-contained dwelling or non-residential unit, in which case all criteria apply. Extensions are expected to comply with criteria 1-3 unless they would result in the creation of a self-contained dwelling or non-residential unit, in which case all criteria apply.

The development of heat networks of varying scales will be supported where these can offer more sustainable heating choices and are in keeping with other policies in the Local Plan. Where development comes forward in areas with access to a heat network, now or in the future, connection into the network should be considered as part of the design process, particularly if this offers more sustainable means of heating/powering the building.

The City Council will expect that, having worked through requirements 1-6, Energy and Carbon Statements demonstrate compliance with the above criteria; however, a case for anything short of full compliance will be expected to be clearly justified as follows:

- a) Full details of where a criterion cannot be met will be provided and justified within the Energy and Carbon Statement with explanation of the reasonable attempts to meet it provided; and
- b) clarification that all other criteria are met or exceeded; and
- c) the proposal is overall net zero carbon in operation (meaning no reliance on fossil fuels and including use of offsetting only as a last resort).

EMBODIED CARBON IN THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

- 5.8 There is an embodied carbon content within the materials used in the built environment and associated with the construction, maintenance, redevelopment and demolition processes. As energy use of developments becomes net zero carbon when they are in operation, the embodied carbon cost for constructing, maintaining and deconstructing

buildings will become the primary source of carbon emissions associated with them making this an important issue to address too.

5.9 Key considerations for the policy:

5.10 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 008: Carbon reduction and climate resilient design. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- Embodied carbon/energy (including upfront carbon emitted during the construction process) is influenced by a wide variety of design choices such as: selection of materials, the places they are sourced from and how they are processed; the management of waste and recycling; and reuse or demolition of existing features on a site (such as buildings that might be able to be reused).
- Reflecting the complex interplay of factors impacting embodied carbon/energy, the assessment process for how much embodied carbon is associated with a new development can be equally complicated. For example, carbon will be emitted as a consequence of various design choices and construction practices, but carbon can also be locked away at greater levels than the amounts released during the manufacturing process for certain materials.
- The process of Whole Life Cycle Carbon Assessment helps to calculate embodied carbon across various life stages of a development (from cradle to grave). Understanding is likely to be more certain for the construction phase which is under greatest influence by the design process (the upfront carbon emitted as part of the development). Later phases are subject to increasing uncertainty as use of the building becomes more challenging to predict (e.g. carbon associated with maintenance, redevelopment, end of life).
- The planning system often needs to balance out various place-making priorities which can make judgements about embodied carbon impacts over other impacts difficult – there is unlikely to be a consistent single answer – e.g. is it better to replace an energy inefficient building in operation with a new more efficient building, or to force applicants to retain existing inefficient buildings to save the carbon locked up inside?
- National standards as set out in the building control system do not currently address embodied carbon/energy, nor do the proposed updates to these standards in their current form.

5.11 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy seeks to set out key principles that will need to be responded to, although the principles of most relevance will likely differ from application to application, depending upon the type of development proposed and the specific site context. These principles will help to reduce upfront carbon emitted during construction in particular, but can also help with addressing the balance of embodied carbon associated with the lifetime of the development.
- The Council does not propose to include specific targets for upfront carbon/embodied carbon but the policy does ask applicants to detail, as part of their energy and carbon statement, how they have embedded the principles of the policy into their design so as to secure reductions in emissions as a result.
- Reflecting the likely more resource intensive and complicated nature of Whole Life Cycle Carbon assessments, the policy aims to require a more rigorous level of assessment of this nature only from the larger proposals expected to come forward in the city (the ones likely to have the most consequential impact in relation to carbon emissions). Alongside quantifying their embodied carbon/energy associated with the development, they would need to specify the reductions in this figure that they have secured through careful design choices, with a particular focus on upfront emissions associated with the construction stages.
- The threshold for requiring additional details, e.g. Whole Life Cycle Assessment, is currently proposed as being required from developments of 100 or more dwellings, or 10,000m² or more non-residential floorspace. The threshold could be set at a lower level e.g. being required from all major development. This would mean more developments are considering embodied carbon at greater detail and showing how they have reduced this through good design but could incur additional costs and evidence requirements from more applicants.
- The draft policy set out below is considered to be an important stepping stone, bridging the absence of policy in Local Plan 2036 toward potentially more stringent policies in future Local Plans (unless national building standards are updated to address this issue). As industry understanding and guidance on this issues improves, future iterations of the Local Plan could reduce this threshold so that the assessment is needed of more types of proposals, or else introduce specific embodied carbon targets for development to limit embodied carbon to.
- As with the net zero buildings in operation policy, it is likely that additional guidance would be set out in a Technical Advice Note (TAN) for how to meet the specific elements of this policy as well as to point applicants to helpful resources to inform their design. The TAN could also advise on best practice in relation to limits that should be aimed for around upfront carbon/embodied carbon.

Draft Policy R2 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 008b of Background Paper 008.

DRAFT POLICY R2: EMBODIED CARBON

All developments are expected to demonstrate consideration of embodied carbon for the lifetime of the development, particularly the upfront carbon in the construction process and take actions to limit this as much as possible through careful design choices. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that demonstrate through their Energy and Carbon Statement that the following principles are embedded in design choices:

- a) Re-use of any existing buildings on a site has been explored and robustly demonstrated to be unfeasible before resorting to demolition.
- b) Waste generation has been minimised and re-use and recycling of materials has been maximised in the construction process, including using any demolition materials.
- c) The selection of construction materials has been informed by the carbon footprint associated with their sourcing and production (carbon footprint sought to be reduced wherever possible); use of materials that sequester more carbon than is produced in making them is prioritised where opportunities arise.
- d) The ways that materials are transported to site and processed during construction have been chosen to minimise the associated carbon emissions wherever possible.
- e) Design choices would allow buildings to be easily maintained, adapted and repurposed at the end of use/life.

Proposals for large scale new-build development (developments of 100 or more dwellings, or 10,000m² or more non-residential floorspace) will also need to be accompanied by details within their Energy and Carbon Statement that provide the following:

- f) a measurement of total embodied carbon associated with the development (including upfront carbon associated with selection of materials). A recognised methodology should be followed to determine these quantities including submission of Whole Life Cycle Carbon Assessment.
- g) details of actions taken to reduce this embodied carbon as much as possible, particularly the upfront carbon associated with the construction stages, and the specific quantitative reductions that have been secured through design process.

Where any future updates to Building Regulations (or other national policy) make embodied carbon requirements at a national level, the Energy and Carbon Statement should instead demonstrate how embodied carbon is being addressed in the context of that national legislation.

RETRO-FITTING EXISTING BUILDINGS, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS AND HERITAGE ASSETS

- 5.12 Retro-fitting existing buildings to net zero carbon through energy efficiency improvements will be essential if we are to mitigate our impacts on the changing climate. Equally, retro-fitting has a role in facilitating adaptation of buildings to the changing climate and building in resilience to impacts like flooding and heatwaves to protect the health and wellbeing of occupants. Whilst retro-fitting can also be carried out sensitively and successfully to traditional buildings and heritage assets without harming their unique historic character, this needs to be undertaken in a more thoughtful and methodical manner for these particular types of structures.
- 5.13 Key considerations for the policy:
- 5.14 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 008: Carbon reduction and climate resilient design. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- The primary source of carbon emissions in the city comes from the built environment – the energy associated with heating and powering existing buildings. To reach the city's net zero carbon target of 2040, the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership Net Zero Action Plan and Roadmap identifies a significant retro-fit challenge over the coming years.
 - The ZCOP Action Plan and Roadmap requires various interventions across Oxford's existing buildings including transitioning heating systems to electricity-based technologies like heat pumps, installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, as well as installation of micro-renewables like rooftop solar PV across many buildings. Many of these interventions will not require planning permission, thus are outside of the influence of the Local Plan.
 - The Local Plan can help to provide additional clarity and requirements for retro-fit projects which do engage the need for planning permission. In particular, retro-fit projects which impact upon traditional buildings and heritage assets which can often require a more sensitive and methodical approach to design, in order to preserve the special characteristics of these buildings, but also to avoid problems of maladaptation.
 - Traditional construction practices often relied upon various passive ventilation measures which were key to ensuring older buildings could manage moisture and 'breathe'. Whilst Oxford's many traditional buildings and heritage assets are likely to benefit from retro-fitting measures, poorly designed interventions can lead to

maladaptive changes which interrupt these passive performance and lead to negative impacts which damage the buildings and harm occupants' health. They can also harm the special characteristics and qualities for which many such buildings have been nationally or locally designated.

- Ongoing engagement with Historic England during the preparation of Local Plan 2040 flagged the importance of guiding applicants towards a Whole Building Approach to retro-fitting of traditional buildings and heritage assets.

5.15 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The starting point of the draft policy is one of supporting retro-fit projects that are designed to deliver benefits in terms of climate change mitigation (e.g. energy efficiency and carbon reduction) or climate change adaptation. This might include fabric efficiency improvements, replacing boilers with systems like heat pumps, installing renewable energy generation technologies, or features that can reduce flood risk or help address overheating.
- The draft policy also supports retro-fitting traditional buildings, including heritage assets, though these projects can be more complex. Additional requirements that applicants will need to factor into their application are set out to ensure these projects are undertaken in the right way for the building and its occupants.
- The principal consideration for traditional buildings/heritage assets is that a whole building approach is taken—this helps to ensure that any retro-fit project is fully informed by an understanding of how the building performs at present and what is about the building that makes it special from a heritage perspective. This will help to ensure that unintended negative impacts are avoided.
- The draft policy also makes it clear that retro-fit projects that secure benefits for energy efficiency or climate adaptation will be considered as public benefits, which is a relevant consideration in the balance of harm to existing assets. Each application will need to be determined based on its own specific considerations, however, so this public benefit would not automatically override concerns around harm, particularly where the relate to designated buildings.
- The Council has already published a supporting Technical Advice Note (TAN) which addressed the topic of retro-fitting heritage assets and it is likely that this TAN will remain of relevance to supporting this draft policy under the new Local Plan, with some minor updates. It may be appropriate to set out additional guidance in the TAN as part of future updates, including recommended best-practice performance targets for retro-fit projects that seek to deliver mitigation/impact on climate change as is currently emerging from various national bodies.

Draft Policy R3 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 008c of Background Paper 008.

DRAFT POLICY R3: RETRO-FITTING EXISTING BUILDINGS

The Council will support retrofit measures to existing buildings where they secure energy efficiency improvements or adaptation to changing climate. The expectation is that the interventions are selected in accordance with the steps of the energy hierarchy (reduce energy use, use energy efficiently, source energy renewably) as set out in Policy R1.

A whole building approach should be taken to the retrofitting of traditional buildings, including heritage assets, whereby applications will need to demonstrate how the following principles have been embedded in the design rationale:

- a) choices on interventions have been informed by a whole building approach which includes methodical assessment of the building's heritage significance, its current performance in terms of energy efficiency and climate risk, its use (now and in future), its context, and the selection of suitable materials;
- b) any harm to the heritage significance of the asset has been minimised and mitigated as much as possible through careful design choices and in line with requirements of policies HD1-HD6;
- c) professional advice has been sought from historic environment and energy/climate experts to inform proposals where necessary/appropriate;
- d) all required consents have been secured, or are in the process of being secured, such as Listed Building Consent or consent for works affecting TPOs.

Measures that seek to deliver carbon reduction through energy efficiency or provide adaptation to changing climate will be considered as a public benefit in the balance against harm, although this will not automatically override any harm to an asset.

NATURAL RESOURCES

5.16 As well as carbon impacts of development in the city, there are a wide range of natural resources which need to be considered by new development. Natural resources such as the soil, air, and water are all important to health and wellbeing but also to the sustainable functioning of the wider natural environment that makes Oxford so special. As such, it is important that the development process considers these issues and mitigates its impact on them.

5.17 The second part of this chapter sets out five preferred policies for addressing different elements of the natural environment including air quality, water quality, soil quality, contaminated land, and amenity and environmental health.

AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENTS AND STANDARDS

- 5.18 Improving local air quality, mitigating the impact of development on air quality, and reducing exposure to poor air quality across Oxford is important for safeguarding public health and the environment. Some people are more vulnerable to poor air quality because they are at a heightened risk of negative health outcomes due to existing ill health (defined as sensitive receptors).
- 5.19 Key considerations for the policy:
- 5.20 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 009: Natural Resources. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are:
- The whole of the city was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2010 due to historic exceedances in Nitrogen Dioxide levels. As well as nitrogen dioxide, other harmful pollutants of note in the city include particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) as well as ozone. Since then, air quality has been improving in the city.
 - Whilst some people are more vulnerable to the health impacts of air pollution, such as the young and elderly, as well as those with pre-existing health conditions, air pollution presents a health risk to everyone to varying degrees.
 - Recent source apportionment data for the city indicates that particular sources of air pollution in Oxford include transport (including tail-pipe, brake and tyre dust), domestic combustion (e.g. from boilers), and production processes (e.g. manufacturing and construction).
 - The City Council has produced an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which sets out a range of measures to improve air quality across Oxford, including adopting a local annual mean NO₂ target of 30 µg/m³ by 2025. The AQAP is due to be updated in 2025 as the current plan runs from 2021 to 2025.
 - The design of new development can exacerbate the problems of poor air quality if this issue is not considered as part of the design process e.g. through promoting reliance on private vehicles, exposing vulnerable occupants to existing poor air quality, preventing pollutants from dissipating easily in the wider environment. High-quality design can also help to avoid and mitigate the impacts of poor air quality.
- 5.21 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy requires new development to mitigate impacts on air quality and minimise exposure to poor air quality, which can likely be achieved in a variety of ways through careful design.
- It is expected that particular attention is paid to issues of air quality when proposals relate to sensitive uses (meaning uses that could be occupied by those who are at particular risk from poor air quality).
- Major applications are required to submit an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) as part of their application, that fully considers the issue of air pollution, identifies negative impacts from the development and sets out how these will be mitigated. An AQA would also be expected of any proposals that are likely to involve significant demolition, construction or earthworks because of the potential for generating dust.
- The targets in the policy reflect the city's local air quality target for nitrogen dioxide via the AQA (which are more stringent than national targets).
- It is anticipated that further guidance on meeting the requirements of the policy would be set out in Oxford City Council's Air Quality Planning Application Guidance Note (as is the case with the Local Plan 2036).

Draft Policy R4 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 009a of Background Paper 009.

DRAFT POLICY R4: AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENTS AND STANDARDS

Planning permission will only be granted where the impact of new development on air quality is mitigated, and where exposure to poor air quality is minimised or reduced, as far as is reasonably practicable as per the criteria set out in this policy.

The design and layout of new development (during construction and in operation) needs to consider the potential impacts upon air quality for current and new occupants. Sensitive uses such as schools, nurseries, care homes and healthcare settings, should be located away from areas of poor air quality as far as reasonably practical through careful site layout designed to protect human exposure to high pollution levels.

Air Quality Assessments (AQA) will be required for all major developments. Planning permission will only be granted for major developments where the AQA meets the following criteria:

- a) provides an assessment of the impacts of all the sources of air pollution generated during the development's operational and construction phases, including but not limited to transport, heating, dust generated from demolition/construction/earthworks activities; and

- b) has considered the cumulative impacts from other sources of air pollution in the local area where relevant; and
- c) clearly identifies any potential negative air quality impacts, including where these would compromise achievement of the local annual mean air quality target for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), as set out in the city's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP); and
- d) sets out appropriate site-specific mitigation measures to address negative impacts identified, following the principle of redesign – mitigate – offset.

Planning applications that involve significant demolition, construction or earthworks will also be required to submit a dust assessment as part of the AQA, to assess the potential impacts and health risks of dust emissions from those activities. Any appropriate site-specific dust mitigation measures will be secured as part of the Construction Management Plan (CMP) as required by Policy C6.

All applications are expected to follow the guidance set out in the latest Oxford City Council's Air Quality Planning Application Guidance Note.

WATER RESOURCES AND QUALITY

- 5.22 Water is a natural resource and a critical factor in safeguarding public health and wellbeing, the environment, and the long-term sustainability of local communities. Conserving and utilising water resources prudently whilst protecting and improving water quality across Oxford will be important to ensuring water supply and demand can be met safely for development now and in future, as well as for supporting biodiversity, including some of the city's most sensitive ecological sites.
- 5.23 Key considerations for the policy:
- 5.24 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 009: Natural Resources. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- In terms of water supply, the EA has identified Oxford to be in a “serious water stressed” area.
 - Thames Water are responsible for water supply for the city and their Water Resources Management Plan notes several key challenges facing the management of water supply for the region in the future: a growing population, climate change, and the need to protect the environment. By 2050, without taking action, the plan projects a water supply shortfall for the region of 1060 million litres per day. Which increased to 1100 million litres per day by 2075.
 - Water quality issues are ongoing in the city, with the majority of watercourses either classified as moderate or poor in ecological status for a variety of reasons. There are ongoing quality concerns particularly for Northfield Brook and the

Thames River. Water quality issues stem from pollution from a range of sources including agriculture, sewage discharge and surface run-off.

- There are currently concerns in relation to wastewater infrastructure in the city and upgrades are being proposed to the Wastewater Treatment works which services the city to address current capacity problems and future needs.
- Climate change is likely to put additional pressures on the water environment in future. Drier, warmer summers could put pressure on water supply and the quality of waterbodies in the city, as well as impacting the more sensitive habitats that rely on a certain hydrological profile to support species that exist there. Equally, more intense rainfall events could put additional pressures on wastewater systems and result in additional releases of pollutants into waterbodies without appropriate mitigation measures in place.
- New development has the potential for directly introducing a range of pollutants into water bodies on the surface and below ground where it is not appropriately mitigated. Equally, once in operation, its users can influence nearby water quality through increased demand on water supplies, as well as through output of pollutants which can be particularly harmful where this happens close to sensitive catchments.

5.25 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy sets out various requirements guiding the design of new development in relation to water use and mitigating impacts on water quality. It encourages applicants to include a water awareness statement to demonstrate how policy requirements have been met in relation to water supply, efficiency and quality, although proposals for smaller-scale development may prefer to incorporate these details in another part of the application (e.g. Design and Access Statement).
- Whilst it is acknowledged that new development will incur some additional demand for water supplies, the draft policy seeks to ensure that water use is as limited as much as possible in recognition of the water stressed nature of the region, including through setting the tighter Building Regulations target for water consumption in new residential development of 110/litre/person/day (whilst also encouraging proposals to go further than this).
- Additionally, the draft policy asks that all non-residential development should demonstrate what measures have been incorporated to reduce and minimise water use. All applications should also demonstrate what other measures have been incorporated into the design to conserve water use including rain/grey water harvesting/reuse where appropriate.

- The development will need to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on water bodies and groundwater, nor will it prevent future attainment of favourable conservation status, this may mean utilising a variety of measures, such as SUDs, pollution control in order to prevent spillages into watercourses etc.
- In addition, the draft policy also sets out expectations for how wastewater systems should be designed, in order to reduce strain on the wider wastewater infrastructure. This includes requiring developers to separate foul and surface water sewers on all new development and ensure that surface water is not discharging into the foul or combined sewer system. Taking up opportunities to separate foul and surface water during redevelopment are also encouraged.

Draft Policy R5 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 009b of Background Paper 009.

DRAFT POLICY R5: WATER RESOURCES AND QUALITY

Planning permission will only be granted for new development that utilises water supplies prudently and protects water quality in line with the requirements set out below. Applicants are encouraged to include a water awareness statement to demonstrate how policy requirements have been met.

Water Supply/Efficiency

All new dwellings (including conversions, reversions, and change of use) achieve an estimated water consumption of no more than 110 litres per person per day using the 'Fittings Approach' as set out in Building Regulations part G2 (proposals are encouraged to go further than this). All non-residential development should demonstrate what measures have been incorporated to reduce water use.

All applications should demonstrate what other measures have been incorporated into the design to conserve water use including rain/grey water harvesting/reuse where appropriate.

Water Quality and Wastewater

Development proposals should demonstrate that development has no adverse impact on the quality of water bodies and groundwater, such as by:

- managing run-off and infiltration through utilising SUDs;
- putting measures in place to manage and contain sediment/pollutants particularly where in proximity to open watercourses;

Developers must separate foul and surface water sewers on all new development. Where opportunities are present during works on existing development, including householder extensions, applicants are encouraged to separate existing combined foul and surface water sewer arrangements.

No surface water from new development will be discharged to the public foul or combined sewer system: a Foul and Surface Water Drainage Strategy must be provided for all new build residential development of 100 dwellings or more; non-residential development of 7,200m² or more; or student

accommodation of 250 study bedrooms or more, to demonstrate how foul water and surface water drainage will be managed to reduce run off and improve water quality in line with national policy.

SOIL QUALITY

- 5.26 Soils are a source of natural capital from which we derive many benefits including food production and flood mitigation, preserving water quality and acting as stores of organic carbon. The natural accumulation of soil can be a slow process and as such, soil should be considered to be a non-renewable resource which needs to be managed as such.
- 5.27 Key considerations for the policy:
- 5.28 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 009: Natural Resources. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- The development process can impact upon and deteriorate the quality of soils in various ways, such as through removal, compaction (e.g. with heavy machinery), sealing over with artificial surfaces and pollution. These impacts reduce the multi-functional benefits of soils for the wider environment, such as reducing ability to store surface water (reducing flood storage), ability to accommodate vegetation, storage of carbon.
 - Some types of soils/substrates having particularly valuable benefits, such as peat deposits, which not only lock up greater amounts of carbon in the organic matter they contain, but also act as archaeological reserves. Whilst they have additional beneficial qualities, they also take much longer to accumulate and as such are much more difficult to replace.
 - Mapping from Natural England's website has identified peat deposits at Dunstan Park, around the Churchill Hospital and Lye Valley, as well as along Littlemore Brook in the south of the city, although it is understood that this mapping is only approximate and there could be other deposits nearby.
- 5.29 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:
- There are two sections to the draft policy, the first addresses the need for all development to take actions to conserve and, where possible, enhance soils, where they are present. The policy sets out that the application will need to demonstrate how the design process been tailored to this and include some principles which should be responded to where they are relevant.

- Depending on the proposal and where it is located, not all of the principles in the policy may be relevant, but where they are, demonstrating how the design and construction process has sought to take them into account will help to show that impacts on soils have been considered appropriately.
- The draft policy sets out various ways that the principles can be responded to in an application.
- The second section of the draft policy addresses protections for the remaining peat deposits in the city. It sets out that permission would not be granted for proposals which would involve the removal or dewatering 10m³ or more of peat.
- In addition, to allow the Council to make an informed decision as to the impact of the development on peat and determine the significance of any potential losses, proposals for major development of undeveloped land upon an identified peat reserve in the city (as per Natural England mapping) will need to submit an assessment that details soil conditions and any existing peat reserve affected by the scheme alongside the application. This assessment will need to be informed by physical borehole sampling.
- To account for the known uncertainties in the Natural England mapping discussed above, the draft policy includes a 200m buffer around the known peat reserves. The assessment referred for proposals atop identified deposits would therefore also need to be submitted for proposals that fall within this wider area, so as to allow the Council to make a judgement as to potential impacts on unrecorded peat deposits that could be nearby. This scale of buffer has previously been discussed with Natural England and is considered to be an appropriate and pragmatic zone for the local context of the area over which to apply the additional assessment requirement.

Draft Policy R6 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 009c of Background Paper 009.

DRAFT POLICY R6: SOIL QUALITY

Planning applications will be expected to demonstrate how the impact of development on soils has been mitigated and opportunities for conserving and enhancing the capacity/quality of soil maximised. The Design and Access Statement and associated landscape plans should include details setting out the following where relevant:

- a) How impact on soils during the construction process has been minimised through avoiding: soil loss, compaction, pollution and reduction in the quality of soil; and

- b) Development has been located in a way that avoids highest quality soils on sites where possible; and
- c) Beneficial soil reuse and sustainable soil management has been implemented where possible; and
- d) Artificial surface cover that seals off soils has been minimised.

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would remove or dewater 10m³ or more of peat.

Proposals for new major developments on undeveloped land upon, or within 200m of, known peat reserves should submit an assessment, informed by borehole sampling, to allow the Council to determine any potential impacts on reserves. The assessment should include details of the following:

- I) The estimated carbon footprint of the peat impacted by development.
- II) Its palaeo-archaeological interest.
- III) Its function in the surrounding habitats.
- IV) Its hydrological condition and stability.

LAND CONTAMINATION

5.30 Due to Oxford's extensive history of development, there are areas of the city which are likely to be affected by poor soil quality and the presence of contaminants that could be harmful for human health. For example, the city has a number of closed landfill sites of varying ages, some of which are still actively producing landfill gas, as well as previously developed sites that have been contaminated by historic industrial processes. Contamination can also arise from natural sources.

5.31 Key considerations for the policy:

5.32 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 009: Natural Resources. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:

- Various sites in Oxford have the potential for land contamination which can impact remediation requirements. Whilst almost all of the former major industrial sites have now been remediated and redeveloped, there remain a number of smaller sites that have the potential to be affected by contamination.
- The NPPF sets out that after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Also, that responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

- The presence of contamination can restrict the use of land; development can also be an important mechanism in bringing land back into beneficial use through sustainable remediation processes that eliminate and/or control unacceptable risks in a safe and timely manner.

5.33 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy sets out that proposals that could be affected by contamination will be expected to be accompanied by a report that shows how the issues has been investigated and sets out the details of any mitigation proposed to address any contamination identified (including remediation potentially).
- In assessing whether land contamination is an issue that needs to be taken into account when a planning application is submitted, the Council will have regard to a range of information sources including its database of potentially contaminated sites, information provided by developers and third parties, and the advice from the Council's specialists in the relevant area.

Draft Policy R7 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 009d of Background Paper 009.

DRAFT POLICY R7: LAND CONTAMINATION

Planning applications where proposals could be affected by contamination or where contamination may present a risk to the surrounding environment, must be accompanied by a report which:

- a) details the investigations that have been carried out to assess the nature and extent of contamination and the possible impacts it may have on the development and its future users, biodiversity, the built environment, land and controlled waters; and
- b) sets out detailed mitigation measures to allow the development to go ahead safely and without adverse effect, including, as appropriate:
 - I) removing the contamination;
 - II) treating the contamination;
 - III) protecting and/or separating the development from the effects of the contamination;
 - IV) validation of mitigation measures.

Where site investigation and mitigation measures are needed, these will be required as a condition of any planning permission.

AMENITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.34 New development can create environmental impacts, particularly during the construction phase, as well as once in operation. This can range from increased noise and vibration (e.g. from movement of trucks bringing materials to site, to presence of plant equipment on buildings once in operation), to the generation of dust and other contaminants (e.g. during demolition or processing of construction materials). These impacts need to be fully assessed during the planning application process to ensure that any potential nuisance resulting from the development can be properly mitigated to protect the amenity of residents, employees and the wider environment in the vicinity of the development.
- 5.35 Key considerations for the policy:
- 5.36 The considerations which have informed the preferred approach so far are set out in Background Paper 009: Natural Resources. In summary, the key considerations that have led to the suggested policy being proposed for Local Plan 2042 are as follows:
- New development can generate a variety of environmental effects that can negatively impact health and wellbeing, as well as the wider environment and the particular considerations of relevance will likely vary from application to application.
 - Some of the impacts from new development arising from the construction process will be assessed and addressed through a construction management plan, but there may be wider considerations, e.g. once the development is in operation.
 - The issue of noise and vibration can be particularly harmful for health, disturbing sleep, impairing concentration and having various physical and mental health impacts as a result.
 - Impacts of noise on neighbouring uses arising from construction and the development in operation are not the only considerations, national policy is also clear that new development should be appropriate for its location—taking into account noise impacts from existing uses that could cause harm to new occupants. The applicant (or ‘agent of change’) should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.
- 5.37 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:
- The draft policy sets the requirements of new development in relation to avoiding and/or mitigating impacts on amenity and the wider environment.

- Various factors are set out that the Council will consider in determining compliance with the policy, though in practice, the factors may not all apply to every application – it will depend upon the proposal and the context of the location.
- Applicants may need to provide additional information as part of their design and access statement or via other reports/statements depending on what elements need to be demonstrated. For example, odour impacts on future occupiers of a sensitive development, such as residential, will be a particular consideration for applications that propose development in proximity to the Sewage Treatment Works and may need to be explored further through technical assessment.
- Because some of the considerations in this policy will be covered by a Construction Management Plan, there is likely to be some cross over with the Draft Policy C6.
- The policy includes additional requirements in relation to noise. The Council typically require the cumulative noise level from all proposed building services plant to be 5 dB below the representative background noise level. Noise levels that are 10 dB or more above the existing background sound level, are likely to be an indication of a significant adverse impact. If the level is 5 dB above the existing background sound level, it is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact.

Draft Policy R8 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 009e of Background Paper 009.

DRAFT POLICY R8: AMENITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission will only be granted for development that:

- a) ensures that the amenity of communities, occupiers, neighbours and the natural environment is protected; and
- b) does not have unacceptable transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network; and
- c) provides mitigation measures where necessary.

The factors the City Council will consider in determining compliance with the above elements of this policy will also include where relevant:

- d) visual privacy, outlook;
- e) sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and mitigating glare from solar panels and windows where applicable;
- f) artificial lighting levels;
- g) transport impacts;

- h) impacts of the construction phase including the assessment of these impacts within the Construction Management Plan (CMP) (refer to Policy C6);
- i) odour, fumes and dust;
- j) microclimate e.g. wind, overheating
- k) contaminated land;
- l) impact upon waste and wastewater infrastructure;
- m) noise and vibration; and
- n) preserving surrounding water quality.

Planning permission will not be granted for development sensitive to noise in locations which experience high levels of noise, unless it can be demonstrated through a noise assessment, that appropriate attenuation measures will be provided to ensure an acceptable level of amenity for end users and to prevent harm to the continued operation of existing uses.

CHAPTER SIX

A CITY THAT RESPECTS ITS HERITAGE & FOSTERS DESIGN OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY

HERITAGE ASSETS

CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets. They are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’ Oxford has 18 conservation areas which are listed in Appendix 6.1 and defined on the Policies Map. They include a diverse range of qualities, reflecting the story of Oxford, from the medieval walled city to surrounding agricultural settlements, the open green space found in the Headington Hill Conservation Area to the meadows of the river valleys such as Wolvercote and Godstow.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Although varied in character, all conservation areas contain features that link us to our past, and the protection of these needs to be effectively managed, ensuring future generations will value and enjoy their special qualities.
- The NPPF sets out the policy approach for designated heritage assets, but each is individual, and the Plan can add detail/Oxford context.
- Conservation Area Appraisals describe what makes the distinctive character, appearance, and historic interest of the conservation areas, and associated management plans help to articulate appropriate responses to local issues and pressures.
- Conservation area appraisals and management plans provide a good starting point in creating good, contextually responsive new development.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The proposed policy requires full regard be given to any detailed character assessments and other relevant information set out in conservation area appraisals and management plans.
- The policy lists the type of features that may be characteristic in a particular conservation area, and these must be responded to sensitively.

Draft Policy HD1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011a of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD1: CONSERVATION AREAS

Planning permission will be granted for development that respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's conservation areas, responding positively to their significance, character and distinctiveness and enhancing it where possible.

For all planning permission or listed building consent decisions affecting the significance of a conservation area or its setting, great weight will be given to the conservation of that conservation area and to the setting of the conservation area where it contributes to that significance or appreciation of that significance.

Certain features may be characteristic of a particular conservation area, and planning applications should set out how these have been responded to sensitively to avoid harm. These features may include but are not limited to:

- The urban grain such as specific settlement patterns, plot types and groupings of buildings and their relationship to each other and the wider area;
- Proportions, such as height and massing, may be characteristic and may be harmed by developments that do not relate well to these;
- Views, which includes long distance and close views, focal points at the end of a view, glimpsed views of spaces beyond and between;
- Setting of the conservation area and what the setting contributes to its significance;
- Trees and other landscape features, including views and backdrops to views;
- Boundary treatments, which may include railings, walls and hedges are often characteristic and add to the significance of the area; and/or
- Architectural details such as the palette of materials, windows and doors, proportions, and rhythms.

An application for planning permission or listed building consent for development which would or may affect the significance of a conservation area, either directly or by being within its setting, should be accompanied by a heritage assessment. This must be based on an understanding of the context and that includes a description of the conservation area and its significance and an assessment of the impact of the development proposed on the conservation area's significance.

A heritage assessment must include information sufficient to demonstrate:

- a) an understanding of the significance of the conservation area, including recognition of its contribution to the quality of life of current and future generations and the wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits they may bring and the extent to which its setting contributes to its significance; and
- b) that the development of the proposal and its design process have been informed by an understanding of the significance of the conservation area including its setting and that harm to its significance has been avoided or where it's not possible, any harm has been minimised through thoughtful design; and
- c) that, in cases where development would result in harm to the significance of a conservation area, including its setting, the levels of harm has been properly and accurately assessed and understood, that it is justified because alternative possibilities or design arrangements have been explored and that measures are incorporated into the proposal, where appropriate, that mitigate, reduce or compensate for the harm.

Where a development proposal would cause harm to a conservation area that is less than substantial, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Clear and convincing justification for this harm should be set out in full in the heritage assessment.

Substantial harm to or loss of significance of a conservation area should be wholly exceptional. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of the significance of a conservation area, planning permission or listed building consent will only be granted if all of the criteria in paragraph 214 (or equivalent in any update) of the NPPF (*National Planning Policy*

Framework) can be demonstrated, or unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, which should be set out in the heritage assessment.

Conservation areas are listed in Appendix 6.1 and defined on the Policies Map.

LISTED BUILDINGS

Oxford has a very high concentration of historic buildings. It contains buildings of great rarity, group value and high aesthetic value, and with associations to people and events of history, that allow a visible understanding of the past of Oxford and the country, and that create a unique character and distinctiveness.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- The impacts of alterations to listed buildings on the significance of listed buildings and their setting could potentially be very harmful if not fully informed by an understanding of the significance of the building.
- Historic buildings may need to change, for example to be repaired and adapted to meet changing needs, which may be changing needs of occupants for example, or the need to respond to the climate emergency.
- It is important that change is carried out thoughtfully and in a manner that preserves the fabric of the building as well as notable features of the building or heritage asset that contribute to its significance and the reason it is protected.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The proposed policy aligns with the approach of the NPPF by requiring an assessment of the level of harm and then for this to be weighed against public benefits.
- The proposed policy makes it clear that the use of the building may also be of significance and that this needs to be considered in change of use applications.

Draft Policy HD2 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 001a of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD2: LISTED BUILDINGS

Planning permission or listed building consent will be granted for development that respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's listed buildings, responding positively to their significance, character and distinctiveness. For all planning permission or listed building consent decisions affecting the significance of a listed building or its setting, great weight will be given to the conservation of that listed building and to the setting of the listed building where it contributes to that significance or appreciation of that significance.

An application for planning permission or listed building consent for development which would or may affect the significance of a listed building, either directly or by being within its setting, should be accompanied by a heritage assessment that includes

- A) a description of the listed building and information sufficient to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the listed building including

- i. its rarity, group value and how it reveals its historic, architectural, archaeological and/or artistic interest and/or value for its associations to things that shape the identity and character of the area, the way it illustrates the past and helps our understanding of it, its aesthetic contribution to the area, and its importance to the community; and
 - ii. recognition of its contribution to the quality of life of current and future generations and the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits they may bring; and
 - iii. the extent to which its setting contributes to its significance.
- B) an assessment of the impact of the development proposed on significance of the listed building and its setting, including on the integrity of the building, its impact on group value and Oxford's/the local area's identity. The assessment should explain:
- iv. how the development of the proposal and its design process have been informed by an understanding of the significance of the listed building; and
 - v. any measures within the proposal to enhance the significance of the listed building (including its setting); and
 - vi. how harm to its significance has been avoided; or
 - vii. in cases where development would result in harm to the significance of a listed building, including its setting, that the extent of harm has been properly and accurately assessed and understood, minimised as far as possible, and clearly and convincingly justified.

Where a development proposal will lead to harm to a listed building that is less than substantial, clear and convincing justification must be provided within the heritage assessment. This should explain what alternative proposals have been considered and how measures have been incorporated into the proposal, where appropriate, that mitigate, reduce or compensate for the harm. Only then will the harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Substantial harm to or loss of Grade II listed buildings should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of Grade I and II* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of the significance of a listed building, planning permission or listed building consent will only be granted if all of the criteria in paragraph 214 (or equivalent in any update) of the NPPF can be demonstrated, or unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, which should be set out in the heritage assessment.

The use of a listed building may be part of its significance. Changes of use should:

- C) be to a use which would not be harmful to the special interest of the building or its setting; and
- D) be suitable without harmful reconstruction

REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

Many parks and gardens in Oxford contribute significantly to its townscape and are an important part of appreciating and understanding its heritage. Historic England's National Heritage List includes 15 parks and gardens in Oxford, 5 of which are Grade I, 1 is Grade II* and 9 of which are Grade II. These are designated heritage assets. They represent a dense network of assets, a high proportion of which are highly graded, and they cover a significant proportion of the city, helping to frame the city's relationship with the River Cherwell. Many more parks and gardens are not registered but nevertheless contribute to local significance.

The majority of the Registered Parks and Gardens are related to colleges, conveying in rich detail the integrated way in which the colleges have been designed and developed. They have a pivotal role in shaping how the city's institutions and the boundaries between the public and private realms are experienced, for example because certain elements (such as some of the Quadrangles) are only glimpsed through entrances that are in near constant use. In addition to the colleges, Oxford's Registered Parks and Gardens include High Wall in Pullens Lane, Park Town and St Sepulchre's Cemetery.

The Core Green Infrastructure Network include both Registered Parks and Gardens and other parks and gardens. Protected under Policy G1, green spaces within the network perform a multitude of functions, ranging from flood control to biodiversity net gain. Some (such as Oxford Botanic Garden) have a particularly important educational role linked with botany, genetics and related research.

Key considerations when drafting the policy

- The Registered Parks and Gardens all have associated listed buildings and form a significant part of the setting of those listed buildings, so the impact of any proposals on associated heritage assets will also be a key consideration (see draft policy HD5), as will the potential for impacts on archaeological remains if below-ground works are proposed (see draft policy HD6).
- Because the nature of Registered Parks and Gardens in the city is that they are not stand alone heritage assets, but part of a wider heritage asset including listed buildings, the criteria in paragraph 214 of the NPPF referred to in policy HD3, those about viable uses, grant-funding and bringing the site back into use are unlikely to apply.
- The designation requires local authorities to consult Historic England on development affecting Grade I and II* Registered Parks. It also requires local authorities to consult the Garden History Society on works to all grades of parks and gardens.
- The effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden, or its setting, is also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations

- The proposed policy takes a positive approach to Registered Parks and Gardens, expecting development to respect and draw inspiration from them
- The proposed policy follows the NPPF approach of requiring the level of harm to be understood and then balanced against public benefits.

Draft Policy HD3 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011a of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD3: REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS
Planning permission will be granted for development that respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's Registered Parks and Gardens, responding positively to their significance, character and distinctiveness and enhancing it where possible.

Any proposals that would result in harm to, or loss of, the significance of a Registered Park and Garden or its setting requires clear and convincing justification in a Heritage Assessment. Substantial harm to or loss of Grade II registered parks and gardens should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens should be wholly exceptional.

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of the significance of a park or garden, planning permission (or other planning consents where relevant) will only be granted if all of the criteria in paragraph 214 (or equivalent in any update) of the NPPF can be demonstrated, or unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, which should be set out in the heritage assessment. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

Scheduled Monuments are a type of designated heritage asset. A heritage asset is only designated a Scheduled Monument if it is of national importance and also if designation is the best means of its protection. Scheduled Monuments may or may not be visible above ground. There are 9 Scheduled Monuments in Oxford, which are varied in age and type. They are the remains of Osney Abbey and Rewley Abbey, Oxford Castle and the City Walls, Seacourt Medieval Settlement, Old Abingdon Road Culverts, Grandpont Causeway, Port Meadow, and the Swing Bridge near Oxford Station.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is required for any works that will affect a scheduled monument, through an application to Historic England, in addition to any application for planning permission.
- Historic England should be notified where SMC is required in addition to planning permission.
- The NPPF paragraphs relating to heritage assets apply to Scheduled Monuments.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The proposed policy requires that a heritage assessment is submitted that demonstrates an understanding of the significance of the asset, how the proposal is informed by this and that any residual harm is balanced against the public benefits.
- Pre-application engagement with Historic England is strongly encouraged for all proposals that are likely to affect the significance of a Scheduled Monument.

Draft Policy HD4 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011a of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD4: SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

An application for planning permission for development which would or may affect the significance of a Scheduled Monument, either directly or by being within its setting, should be accompanied by a heritage assessment.

The submitted heritage assessment must include information sufficient to demonstrate:

- a) an understanding of the significance of the Scheduled Monument (including the extent to which its setting contributes to its significance), including recognition of its contribution to the quality of life of current and future generations and the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits they may bring; and
- b) that the development of the proposal and its design process have been informed by an understanding of the significance of the Scheduled Monument, that enhancement to the significance of the Scheduled Monument (including its setting) have been identified where possible, and that harm to its significance has been avoided or minimised; and
- c) that, in cases where development would result in harm to the significance of a Scheduled Monument, including its setting, the extent of harm has been properly and accurately assessed and understood, that it is justified, and that measures are incorporated into the proposal, where appropriate, that mitigate, reduce, or compensate for the harm.

Where a development proposal would cause harm to a scheduled monument that is less than substantial, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Clear and convincing justification for this harm should be set out in full in the heritage assessment. Substantial harm to or loss of significance of a scheduled monument should be wholly exceptional.

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of the significance of a scheduled monument, planning permission will only be granted if all of the criteria in paragraph 214 (or equivalent in any update) of the NPPF can be demonstrated, or unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, which should be set out in the heritage assessment.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Whilst some heritage assets are designated, such as listed buildings, not all heritage assets are designated. Non-designated heritage assets which may include buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes that have been positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Many non-designated heritage assets are identified in the Oxford Heritage Asset Register (OHAR). Whilst these assets do not merit a national-level protection, they do have a local relevance that is important to consider in determining planning applications (and in developing proposals).
- There are likely to be other heritage assets which are not yet identified on the OHAR. Non-designated heritage assets may be identified through the conservation area appraisal, neighbourhood planning or planning application process.
- The NPPF sets out the approach to non-designated heritage assets.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The proposed policy sets out the ways a non-designated heritage may be identified.

- The proposed policy requires consideration of the asset and how this may be incorporated into proposals.
- The proposed policy requires recording of the significance of any assets to be lost.
- The proposed policy aligns with the NPPF approach.

Draft Policy HD5 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011b of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD5: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

A non-designated building or group of buildings, monument or site, place or landscape will be considered a local heritage asset if it is found to have local interest, value, and significance. These assets may be identified through the Oxford Heritage Assets Register, conservation area appraisals, or the planning application process.

Planning permission will only be granted for development affecting a local heritage asset or its setting if it is demonstrated that due regard has been given to the impact on the asset's significance and its setting and that it is demonstrated that the significance of the asset and its conservation has informed the design of the proposed development.

In determining whether planning permission should be granted for a development proposal that affects a local heritage asset, consideration will be given to the significance of the asset, the extent of impact on its significance, as well as the scale of any harm or loss to the asset as balanced against the public benefits that may result from the development proposals.

Recording should take place to advance understanding of the significance of any assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and that is publicly accessible. The ability to provide publicly accessible recording will not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the requirements of Policy HD4.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Oxford has a rich archaeological heritage that has been progressively built up from prehistoric times to the modern day. This archaeology has the potential to aid understanding of our heritage. The unique archaeological heritage of the city encompasses a wide variety of asset types. A few of these are formally designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, however many assets of comparable significance are not currently designated and warrant appropriate protection through the planning system. Notable assets include Palaeolithic and Mesolithic flint working sites, Neolithic and later prehistoric domestic, ritual, and funerary sites located across north Oxford and the remains of an important Roman pottery manufacturing industry to the south and east of city. The town is also distinctive for its middle-late Saxon urban remains, its emergence as a major cloth trading town in the Norman period and for the numerous assets associated with Oxford's development as an international centre for academic study including the remains of multiple religious institutions, academic halls and endowed colleges. Other assets of note include the town defences, the distinctive

remains associated with the medieval Jewish Community and the Royalist Civil War defences.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Archaeological remains can't be renewed so it is essential they are managed carefully and treated with respect.
- New development has the potential to harm or destroy these assets where their presence is not appropriately investigated, and impacts are not carefully mitigated.
- Owing to the richness of archaeological remains in Oxford, especially in the medieval core, there is a danger that allowing the recording of deposits rather than preservation in situ for several individual developments will lead to significant degradation of the archaeological record.
- Development within the medieval core has a high potential to harm the heritage value of the sites, if not carried out sensitively. There are many things to consider as part of the design of developments at these sites, so a comprehensive approach is essential that ensures archaeology, and cumulative impacts on archaeology, is part of wider considerations of how to develop a site.
- Building designs should aim to preserve significant archaeology in situ. Where the loss of archaeological assets is warranted by the merits and public benefits of the development then archaeological investigation and recording, public outreach, storage of artefacts and the publication and dissemination of results may be an acceptable alternative
- Understanding and incorporating archaeological remains into current designs will add interest and local distinctiveness.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The City Centre Archaeological Area is defined as an area that has an exceptionally high concentration of archaeological remains, and so where any significant breaking of the ground will require an archaeological assessment.
- An archaeological assessment may also be required outside of specified areas where it is suspected there are archaeological remains.
- Further work to ensure adequate contextual assessment and mitigation may be required when there may be cumulative impacts.

There are known concentrations of past human activity in many parts of Oxford, and early discussion with the City Council to ascertain whether an archaeological assessment is required is strongly advised.

Draft Policy HD6 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011c of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD6: ARCHAEOLOGY
Within the City Centre Archaeological Area, on allocated sites where identified, or elsewhere where archaeological deposits and features are suspected to be present (including upstanding remains), applications should be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment. A Heritage Assessment should include and be informed by:

- a) a description of the impacted archaeological deposit or feature (including where relevant its setting), incorporating information to define the character, significance and extent of such deposits or features; and
- b) an explanation of how early assessment and field evaluation has informed design that aims to preserve deposits and features in situ, avoiding adverse effects from poor siting of foundations, drainage features and hard landscaping; and
- c) an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the deposits or features, using a proportionate level of detail that is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal. The assessment should reference appropriate records (including the information held on the Oxford Historic Environment Record); and
- d) if appropriate, a full archaeological desk-based assessment and the results of evaluation by fieldwork. This should be produced by an appropriately qualified contractor. Pre-application discussion is encouraged to establish requirements. In the City Centre Archaeological Area, where significant archaeological asset types can be shown to be subject to cumulative impact from development, the desk-based assessment should contain appropriate contextual assessment of this impact. The desk-based assessment in the City Centre Archaeological area should also include a whole site plan (which may be beyond the red line to include a whole campus site, for example) that shows current understanding of any basement and underground servicing, likely locations of hidden archaeological remains, other heritage assets (including settings) to be considered and explain how this whole-site understanding has helped inform decisions about the layout and location of the development.

Development proposals that affect archaeological deposits and features will be supported where they are designed to enhance or to better reveal the significance of the asset and will help secure a sustainable future for it.

Proposals which would or may affect archaeological deposits or features that are designated heritage assets will be considered against the relevant policy approach (Draft Policy HD2 Listed Buildings, Draft Policy HD4 Scheduled Monuments).

Subject to the above, proposals that will lead to harm to the significance of non-designated archaeological deposits or features will be resisted unless a clear and convincing justification through public benefit can be demonstrated to outweigh that harm, having regard to the significance of the deposits or features and the extent of harm. Where harm to an archaeological or paleoenvironmental asset has been convincingly justified and is unavoidable, mitigation should be agreed with Oxford City Council and should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and impact. The aim of mitigation should be to minimise harm, to promote public enjoyment of heritage and to record and advance knowledge. Appropriate provision should be made for investigation, recording, analysis, conservation of remains, publication, archive deposition and community involvement.

HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

PRINCIPLES OF HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN

The value and benefits of good design and improvements to quality of life are so significant that good design is not a nice extra, it is essential. A successfully designed scheme will be a positive addition to its surroundings. It may blend in or stand out, but it should not detract from existing significant positive characteristics in the area, and it may add interest and variety. A well-designed scheme will meet the needs of all users and will stand the test of time.

Oxford has a rich legacy of buildings from iconic architectural set pieces to smaller domestic, medieval houses in the historic core and locally distinctive buildings within the many villages that now form part of the city. There is therefore a wealth of inspiration in terms of building form and character and great opportunity for creative, high quality complementary character to enhance the existing built form.

Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design of emerging schemes will help clarify expectations and allow the opportunity for creative ideas and problem solving to add value. The Council has a Design Review Panel which can give advice so that designs can be reviewed and improved at the informative stage prior to the formal determination of the application.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- To be successful, new buildings and alterations to existing buildings should be of high-quality design.
- To achieve high quality design, development should be informed and inspired by the unique characteristics of the site and its setting.
- Relevant context to consider will be the history and development of the site and surrounding area, landscape structure, biodiversity, the pattern, character and appearance of streets, buildings, and spaces. They should respond appropriately to the existing form, materials and architectural detailing and should not have adverse impacts on existing and neighbouring buildings. Placement, style and proportions of doors and windows will be important, as will the choice of materials.
- Unique site features identified will present an opportunity to shape design and offer the opportunity for reinforcing existing character or creating an individual character drawing on the context. Constraints identified will help provide clarity about potential issues and open up the opportunity to explore imaginative solutions to them.

Holistic View for High Quality Design

- High quality design should be seen as part of a holistic view of looking at a place. It is not just a matter of scrutinising the external visual appearance of a building, although that is important in itself, but also the spaces around, and between buildings, and open spaces, whether public or private.

Other Points of Reference

- The *National Model Design Guide* sets out and illustrates the governments priorities for well-designed places.
- Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the latest edition of one of the most widely used design guides used in England and has as its emphasis healthy placemaking.

A rigorous design process and design-led solutions are crucial to achieving new developments of high quality. Design should have a clear rationale and be informed and inspired by the unique characteristics of the site and its wider setting, including an understanding of heritage. To enable decision makers to properly understand and assess the final design, the design process must be clearly explained and justified. Policies are intended

to set out requirements for following a design process that will ensure development that responds to context including the immediate and wider surrounding and that works well for its intended use. Requirements for explaining the design process, including how early consideration of context has informed design, are also set out.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- It requires a constraints and opportunities plan to explain how the context analysis has informed design development.

Draft Policy HD7 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011d of Background Paper 011.

POLICY HD7: PRINCIPLES OF HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN

Planning permission will only be granted for development of high-quality design that is responsive to its context, creates or enhances local distinctiveness, and ensures that the amenity of the natural environment is protected. Planning permission will only be granted where proposals are designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development as set out in Appendix 1.1.

All developments - other than changes of use without external alterations and householder applications - will be expected to be supported by a constraints and opportunities plan with supporting text and/or visuals to explain their design rationale in a design statement proportionate to the proposal (which could be part of a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement or other demonstration of compliance with other plan policies that may be relevant), which should address the relevant checklist points set out in Appendix 1.1.

MAKING EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

Using scarce resources, including land, efficiently is vital to ensuring Oxford's sustainable growth and development. Oxford is a small, constrained city with a growing population. Oxford has some very densely developed areas, and it is a city with an effective record for re-using previously developed land efficiently. However, there is also potential to increase density in the city, particularly in transport hubs such as the city centre and the district centre, along main arterial roads, and in much of the suburban area that is less sensitive in terms of heritage and particularly heights (as set out in Draft Policy HD9).

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Making efficient use of land is particularly important in Oxford, due to competing needs and a lack of capacity.
- Making efficient use of land while delivering high quality design requires a holistic understanding of the context, including the needs of the proposed use, consideration of the natural and historic environment and any sensitivities present in the local area.
- Understanding sensitivities at the outset is important so that design can respond, for example by maintaining views, safeguarding archaeological remains by careful positioning of foundations.
- Transport hubs generally enable a greater density to be assumed.

- There is not a simple relationship between heights and density, there are numerous factors which combine to affect site capacity.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy requires the efficient use of land
- High indicative densities are set for nearly all locations in the city
- The contextual features that should be responded to in the design are listed in the policy

Draft Policy HD8 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011e of Background Paper 011.

POLICY HD8: MAKING EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

Planning permission will only be granted where development proposals make efficient use of land and maximise capacity. It is expected that sites across the city will be capable of accommodating development at an increased scale and density to their surroundings.

Proposals should demonstrate that the built form:

- Maximises density; and
- is appropriate for the use proposed; and
- is informed by an understanding of the impacts on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including their setting and the potential for archaeological remains; and
- protects significant green infrastructure features such as biodiversity habitats, public open spaces and mature trees and considers existing provision of these in the local area as well as opportunities to enhance greening and biodiversity on the site; and
- considers the opportunities for net zero carbon design, including energy efficiency measures, maximising renewable energy generation, reducing carbon dioxide emitted through construction process, and preserving carbon sinks; and
- considers presence of flood risk and, where relevant, locating more vulnerable uses in locations with reduced flood risk, less vulnerable uses in areas of higher risk.

It is expected that very high-density development (for residential development this will indicatively be taken as over 100dph) can be achieved in the highly accessible locations of the district centres, and in the city centre, where feasible in the context of the impacts on heritage. High density development (indicatively to be taken as over 80dph) will be expected at gateway sites (in mixed use areas on the edges of city on the main road network), and high suburban densities (indicatively to be taken as over 60dph) will be expected in most other locations.

VIEWS AND BUILDING HEIGHTS

Particular care needs to be taken over the design and placement of taller buildings in Oxford because development might be in the setting of the buildings that create the iconic 'dreaming spires'. These buildings are a collection of nationally and internationally important buildings of historic and architectural significance. They sit in a compact area in the core of Oxford, which is raised slightly on a gravel terrace, giving more prominence to these historic buildings, and meaning that Oxford's unique skyline can be viewed as a single entity whose composition varies

according to the direction of viewing. Taller buildings should not negatively impact on views of the iconic skyline.

Quality design of high buildings

If it is established that a taller building is appropriate in a particular location, it is important it is designed to ensure it contributes positively to the character of the area, that it does not detract from the amenity of its surroundings, that it is sustainable and creates a good internal environment. Certain aspects of the design of high buildings require particular and specific consideration. Whether a building is considered a high building will depend on the context. The High Buildings Guidance Technical Advice Note (TAN) should be referred to. This includes guidance on differing heights across the city where the impacts from those heights will be minimal. Higher buildings may still be appropriate, and the TAN also sets out design considerations for exceeding those heights. Policy HD9 sets out the requirements for technological representations of the visual impact of high buildings to aid decision making; non-technical representations may also be appropriate. Higher buildings will often be appropriate in district centres and on arterial roads.

Areas of Greater Potential

The High Buildings Study identified three areas of Oxford where proposals for new high buildings are more likely to be appropriate (Areas of Greater Potential shown in Figure 7 of the High Buildings TAN). These areas are less constrained by heritage considerations and represent areas where there is more potential for them to contribute to regeneration opportunities, and that have good connectivity and availability of existing facilities of district centres. The identified Areas of Greater Potential are the northern suburbs, the eastern suburbs, and the south-eastern suburbs.

Heritage

The addition of a high building in the setting of a heritage asset needs particular attention. A new high building adjacent to a heritage asset could cause harm for reasons including obstruction of valued views to or from the asset, visual competition, and incongruous design. Even at some distance from an asset a new high building may cause harm by obstructing a valued view towards that asset, or by changing the historic character of informative views towards or from an asset with visual competition in the foreground or background.

The historic core area

Although from certain points of view the towers and spires that make up the historic skyline seem to be spaced very widely, the area from which the silhouette emerges is, in fact, very compact and does not extend far beyond the old city wall within the central core. The area within a 1,200 metre radius of Carfax tower (defined on the Policies Map as the Historic Core Area) contains all the buildings that comprise the historic skyline. New buildings within the Historic Core Area have high potential to interfere with the character of the skyline, especially if their height is above that of Carfax Tower. These will be developments that exceed 18.2m (60ft) in height or ordnance datum (height above sea level) 79.3m (260ft) (whichever is the lower).

The fragility and small height and volume of the spires means the character of the skyline is particularly vulnerable to change. The aim of any design within the historic core area should be

to maintain the unique character and significance of views of the spires and to ensure that variability and interest in the skyline is maintained. Design of development in the foreground of views is also important. As well as not intruding through height, the design of foreground buildings should aid appreciation of view of the spires, rather than harming it through too great a level of uniform building height, bulk and massing that creates a flat and uninteresting foreground view that detracts from appreciation of the spires.

View cones

View cones are drawn as triangles from important viewing points to encompass the width of the area containing buildings that constitute Oxford's historic skyline. The 10 identified view cones do not represent an exhaustive list of viewing points that provide an important view of Oxford's skyline. There may be glimpses of the famous skyline in other locations, and tall buildings in particular that are proposed outside of the view cones might still have an impact on the historic skyline.

Within view cones, proposed new buildings must not detract from the skyline and composition, and even where they will not intrude directly on to it their effect as a frame to it must be considered. However, it is not just a bulky intrusion into the skyline that might be damaging; the foreground is also an important element of a view. Development of a low and uniform height that does not recognise the importance of rooftop detailing and modulation can detract from the view of the skyline in the whole, as well as having a negative effect on townscape.

*A View Cones Assessment (2015)*² has been endorsed by the City Council and is published on the City Council's website. It examines the contribution and significance of views, identifying their special qualities and elements. The View Cones Assessment sets out a methodology for heritage assessment of the Oxford views and applies this to each of the 10 view cones. The Study enables a greater understanding of the significance of all parts of the view, not just the skyline. It is designed to aid understanding of the impact of proposals on views, and should be referred to, understood, and reflected in designs within the view cones and the setting of view cones that might impact on the experience and heritage significance of the view. It should be remembered that, while some protected views are partly obscured by tree cover (especially in the summer), trees may become managed in the views in the future, so protection of the views is still important. Some views are from points outside the City Council's administrative boundaries. The City Council will work with Vale of White Horse to ensure these views are protected.

Roofscape and views

Views into the historic core from the surrounding landscape, including from the view cones, views out from the historic core, revealing the landscape setting of Oxford, and views across the core and from its edge to the green hills and floodplains are also important to consider. Even where buildings do not intrude directly into the skyline they may form a frame to it, and design choices should respond to this. To create more visual diversity that enhances the experience of the skyline, articulation of roofscape, and relatively short units of building are encouraged, with features to create a break in the line. A maximum ridge or parapet length of 25 metres without either a substantial vertical or horizontal break or interrupting features is a rule-of-thumb guideline that will

be followed for Oxford's skyline. The City Council will resist the loss of any features, such as chimneys, if the loss would result in a simplification of the skyline.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Taller buildings may be an appropriate built response to existing context.
- Successful design of taller buildings requires a particular range of considerations and design choice about height of buildings should consider a range of factors.
- These factors include the context of the immediate surroundings and the impact on surrounding amenity, the impact on views and heritage, and design to ensure a good and sustainable living environment.
- Within the city centre, there is a high potential that tall buildings may intrude on and potentially negatively affect the historic skyline.
- There are defined view cones, which protect the views of the historic skyline from key viewing points. Within these view cones, there is potential for poorly designed buildings to negatively affect these important views of the historic core.

How the policy responds to these draft considerations:

- The Policy identifies that the historic core area is particularly sensitive to high buildings.
- The requirements for design quality and evidence of impacts is particularly high for this historic core area.
- The policy references the High Buildings TAN, which provides significant guidance about determining appropriate heights.
- For any tall building (which is defined clearly by the policy), extensive evidence of its impacts is required.

Draft Policy HD9 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011f of Background Paper 011.

DRAFT POLICY HD9: VIEWS AND BUILDING HEIGHTS

Planning permission will only be granted for development that will retain the special significance of views of the historic skyline, both from within the historic core area and from outside the historic core area.

Planning permission will be granted for developments of appropriate height or massing. If the proposal is for development above the prevailing heights of the area and could impact on character or views, the application must demonstrate how all of the following criteria have been met:

- a) design choices regarding height and massing have a clear design rationale; and
- b) regard should be had to the guidance on design of higher buildings set out in the High Buildings Study TAN. In particular, the impacts in terms of the four visual tests of obstruction, impact on the skyline, competition and change of character should be explained; and
- c) it should be demonstrated how proposals have been designed to have a positive impact on important views including both into the historic skyline and out towards Oxford's green setting, through their massing, orientation, the relation of the building to the street, and detailed design features including roofline and materials (including colour); and

- d) taller buildings have been designed and orientated to avoid potential negative impacts, including on neighbouring amenity, such as overshadowing, overbearing and overlooking, reduced internal daylight and sunlight and wind-tunnel effects.

The area within a 1,200 metre radius of Carfax tower (the Historic Core Area) contains all the buildings that comprise the historic skyline, so new developments that exceed 18.2m (60ft) in height or ordnance datum (height above sea level) 79.3m (260ft) (whichever is the lower) are likely to intrude into the skyline. Development above this height must be limited in bulk and must be of the highest design quality.

Applications for any building that exceeds 15 metres (or the height that the High Buildings TAN says may be impactful in that area if that is higher) will be required to provide extensive information so that the full impacts of any proposals can be understood and assessed, including:

- e) a Visual Impact Assessment, which includes the use of photos and verified views produced and used in a technically appropriate way, which are appropriate in size and resolution to match the perspective and detail as far as possible to that seen in the field, representing the landscape and proposed development as accurately as possible (produced in accordance with the Landscape Institute's GLVIA 3d Edition and Technical Guidance note TGN 06 19 or updated equivalents); and
- f) use of VuCity 3D modelling (or equivalent if updated by the City Council in future), shared with the City Council so that the impact of the development can be understood from different locations, including any view cone views that are affected; and
- g) heritage impact assessment if harm would be caused to the significance of a heritage asset or its setting (or a group of assets and their settings) informed by the methodology outlined in the Assessment of the Oxford View Cones report, a full explanation of other options that have been considered that may be less harmful, how that harm has been avoided or minimised, a justification that the benefits outweigh the harm and open book viability assessment if relied upon in the explanation.

Any proposals within the Historic Core Area or the View Cones that may impact on the foreground of views and roofscape (including proposals where they are below the Carfax datum point, for example plant) should be designed carefully, and should meet the following criteria:

- h) they are based on a clear understanding of characteristic positive aspects of roofscape in the area; and
- i) they contribute positively to the roofscape, to enhance any significant long views the development may be part of and also the experience at street level.

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposed within a View Cone or the setting of a View Cone if it would harm the special significance of the view. The View Cones and the Historic Core Area (1,200m radius of Carfax tower) are defined on the Policies Map.

ENSURING THE WELLBEING OF OCCUPANTS OF NEW AND SURROUNDING BUILDINGS

It is important to ensure that new buildings create spaces that are of an adequate size and layout, with sunlight and daylight so that they provide a high quality, well-functioning environment for occupiers. The impact on the amenity of surrounding occupants of existing buildings must also be considered. Buildings should provide an internal space that is flexible to meet the needs of a wide range of people and takes account of how needs may change over time.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The built and natural environment is a key determinant of our health and wellbeing, and therefore it is crucial that through the planning system we plan for and design healthier built environments. Healthy built environments encourage and support good physical and mental health and also help to reduce health inequalities. To ensure that development in Oxford promotes and contributes to healthy place shaping, proposals should consider health outcomes from the outset.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Health Impacts are an established tool for identifying how the proposed development will impact upon the relevant population groups and the key health issues, inequalities and priorities in the local area help
- HIAs should include relevant contextual analysis to help inform an assessment of impacts on the health environment and also consider the local health issues, inequalities and priorities with reference to published evidence/data where relevant, such as public health statistics.
- The analysis presented within the HIA should be of a sufficient level of detail to allow the Council to make a clear determination as to impacts the development will have on the health environment of the city.
- The analysis should be evidence based and set out how design of the development has taken into consideration the relevant health concerns and how it addresses these including where opportunities have been taken to achieve positive impacts and to avoid or mitigate negative impacts that could exacerbate issues and inequalities.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Applications for major development are expected to undertake and submit a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in support of their application.
- The scope of assessment for the HIA, including the issues it needs to cover, will vary with the nature of the development, however the structure of the assessment will need to follow a logical format that addresses the key steps outlined in the policy.

Draft Policy HD10 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 010a of Background Paper 10.

DRAFT POLICY HD10: HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is required to be submitted as part of the planning application for major development proposals.

The analysis within the submitted HIA should be of a sufficient level of detail to allow the Council to assess the potential impacts of the development on the health environment of the city and its residents. As a minimum, the assessment should include the following:

- A) a description of the physical characteristics of the proposed development site and surrounding area, including the current use; and

- B) identification of relevant population groups that could be affected by the development and associated health issues, inequalities and priorities in the area, which should be supported with appropriate evidence/data; and
- C) an assessment of the impacts of the proposal on the identified population groups and local health issues, inequalities and priorities, including any potential positive and negative impacts, along with any mitigation measures incorporated into the design to reduce identified negative outcomes; and
- D) details of monitoring which will be undertaken in relation to the proposed mitigation to be implemented.

The level of detail should be proportionate to the development and agreed with the relevant case officer. Applicants should refer to the additional information and guidance contained in Appendix 6.2 and the Council's Technical Advice Note.

PRIVACY, DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

Ensuring all homes are built with adequate privacy, daylight and sunlight (internal and external) helps to ensure the wellbeing of residents. It is also important to consider the impacts of proposals on neighbouring residential properties to ensure they do not lose their sense of privacy. This is particularly important in the context of Oxford, where high density development is expected in some areas of the city to make efficient use of land.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- It is important that new developments, in particular new homes, are designed to create positive living environments, homes that do not provide a good quality living environment are likely to need to be redeveloped in time which is not a sustainable approach.
- When planning new developments, regard should always be paid to the impact of windows overlooking other homes' windows (including French windows and patio doors) and gardens. Potential for unacceptable overlooking will depend on the proximity of windows to neighbours' habitable rooms and gardens and the angles of views and gardens.
- New homes' access to daylight and sunlight will depend both on the way new and existing buildings relate to one another, and the orientation of windows in relation to the path of the sun. Windows that are overshadowed by buildings, walls, trees, or hedges, or that are north facing, will receive less light.

How the policy approach responds to these considerations:

- The policy approach will ensure that new development provides adequate daylight and privacy for new residents
- The proposed policy will ensure that privacy and daylight in existing development is not reduced to an unacceptable level for neighbours.

Draft Policy HD11 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 010b of Background Paper 10.

POLICY HD11: PRIVACY, DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

Planning permission will only be granted for new development that provides reasonable privacy, daylight and sunlight for occupants of both existing and new homes and sensitive workplaces such as schools. Proposals should demonstrate consideration of all of the following criteria:

- A) whether the degree of overlooking to and from neighbouring properties or gardens resulting from a proposed development significantly compromises the privacy of either existing or new homes (or existing other uses where there might be a safeguarding concern, particularly schools); and
- B) the size and orientation of windows in both existing and new developments in respect of access to daylight, sunlight, and solar gain (i.e. natural heating from direct sunlight); and
- C) room depths in relation to maximising natural light; and
- D) existing and proposed walls, hedge, trees, and fences, in respects of protecting or creating privacy and also in respect of their impact on overshadowing of both existing and new development.

To assess access to privacy, sunlight, and daylight in residential developments, the 25 degree and 45-degree guidelines will be used as illustrated in Appendix 6.3, alongside other material factors. On constrained sites with proposals for specialist accommodation, developers may use other methods to demonstrate that dwellings will receive adequate daylight.

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that has an overbearing effect on existing homes.

INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is important to ensure that new homes are of an adequate size and layout to provide high quality, functional homes that meet the needs of a wide range of people and take into account how those needs might change over time. This should apply to development at all scales, from large strategic sites to infill development, which represents an important contribution to meeting Oxford's housing need. In addition, minimum bedroom sizes for HMO are governed by the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018.

Things to consider when drafting the policy

- The pressure to make efficient use of land, and the fact that dense development is to be encouraged, makes it particularly necessary to ensure that the internal living environment of new homes is adequate.
- The Government has set out nationally described standards. No local standards may be set; either policy can require use of national standards, or there can be no policy requirement.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- There is considered to be a local need for space standards because of the pressure for land and potential for this to lead to very small units. There is no viability impact of taking

such an approach that would prevent delivery of homes, therefore, it is proposed that the optional nationally described standards will be adopted into policy.

Draft Policy HD12 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 010c of Background Paper 10.

POLICY HD12: INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission will only be granted for new dwellings that provide good quality living accommodation for the intended use. All proposals for new build market and affordable homes (across all tenures) must comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards.

In flatted schemes, communal areas must be designed to enable neighbours to meet and interact, for example some fixed seating, and wider areas of corridor or lobby space.

OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

The adequate provision of outdoor amenity space is a key factor in supporting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents, allowing occupants to enjoy fresh air and light in privacy. Where high density development and subdivision of properties are expected and where many sites are infill development, high standards for the delivery of good quality outdoor amenity space become increasingly important. Usable outdoor space should provide a space to dry clothes, and grow plants and vegetables, and it can provide shade and limit urban heat-island effects. In addition, if the space is designed with permeable surfaces it can contribute towards flood risk management.

Things to consider when drafting the policy

- How to balance provision of outdoor space and maximising the capacity of the site
- How to ensure outdoor space is attractive and useable
- How to allow a more flexible and communal approach to outdoor space, whilst ensuring occupants will feel comfortable in the space

How the policy approach responds to these considerations:

- The draft policy allows balconies or private terraces to be provided for flats.
- The proposed policy allows for shared outdoor space, with small areas of private space for houses and larger flats.
- The size of garden required for houses (which could be part of a communal garden) is large enough for children to play in, and for family activities.
- Criteria are included to ensure high quality, useable outdoor amenity space is provided.

Draft Policy HD13 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 010d of Background Paper 10.

POLICY HD13: OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

Planning permission will only be granted for dwellings (HMO and Use Class C3 except self-contained student accommodation) and the subdivision of dwellings, that have direct, well-related and convenient access to an area of private open space (in addition to bin or bike storage space), to meet the following specifications:

- a) 1- or 2-bedroom flats and maisonettes should provide either a private balcony or terrace of usable, level space, or have direct and convenient access to a private or shared outdoor space.
- b) flats and maisonettes of 3 or more bedrooms must provide private outdoor areas with space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres depth by 3 metres length. This may be either a private balcony or terrace of useable level space, or direct and convenient access to a private garden or shared garden with some private space (which should not feel isolated).
- c) all houses should provide a private garden, of adequate size and proportions for the size of house proposed, which will be at least equivalent in size to the footprint of the dwelling as built originally. Where a directly accessible private outside area is provided, the remaining requirement for outdoor amenity space could be met by provision of shared private amenity space that can be directly and conveniently accessed. The private outdoor areas should allow space for outside dining and/or clothes drying, with reasonable circulation, which will require a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres deep by 3 metres long.

It should also be shown how the following factors have been considered in order to ensure an outdoor space that is adequate and attractive to use:

- d) the location and context of the development, in relation to the layout of existing residential plots, and proximity to public open space; and
- e) the orientation of the outdoor area in relation to buildings and the path of the sun so that the whole outdoor space will not be continuously in shade or over-exposed; and
- f) the degree to which enclosure and overlooking impact on the proposed new dwellings and any neighbouring dwellings; and
- g) the overall shape, access to and usability of the whole space to be provided; and
- h) clear delineation between public and private space; and
- i) for communal spaces that there is a variety of space, including provision of space to sit and to play, and that space is adaptable to the changing needs of residents, being easy to maintain with resilient materials, but with opportunities for communal gardening or food growing.

ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE HOMES

Housing provision across the city should meet the needs of everyone, which means provision must be made for those with disabilities. As such, it is important to consider the demands and requirements people will have from their homes and how this may change over time. Homes need to be built with the flexibility to be adapted to the changing needs of residents.

Adaptability is important to respond to changes to the size and compositions of households, and an ageing population.

Providing opportunities for residents to maintain their independence is important and can help to alleviate pressure on health and social care if older people can remain in their homes, adapted

for their needs. In addition, housing needs to be adapted to support those with chronic health conditions and specialist housing needs.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Oxford has a markedly young population compared to neighbouring districts and the UK, mainly because of the substantial number of students. This trend is likely to continue; however, people are living longer and there will be an increase in the number of older people resident in the city. The Census 2021 showed 5.3% of the population of Oxford are 75 or over (lower than the national average), a section of the population more likely to need adaptable homes in order to remain living in them for longer.
- The Census 2021 shows that 29% of households in Oxford have one or more people with a disability. Some of those households will need specialist adaptations to their homes, so providing housing that is adaptable will play an important role in ensuring that these people have an adequate choice of homes available to them. The Government has found that 34% of disabled people have had to make adaptations to their homes <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-disability-survey-research-report-june-2021/uk-disability-survey-research-report-june-2021>. Therefore, at least 15% of general market homes should be adaptable according to current needs.
- To ensure available provision for the full range of households on the housing register, and to avoid exclusion, for affordable homes all new homes should at least meet the M4(2) requirement to be accessible and adaptable.
- Local authorities can adopt a policy to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability through Requirement M4(2) Accessible and adaptable dwellings and/or M4(3) Wheelchair user dwellings in 'Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings'⁴.
- Some typologies of development will not be suitable for providing homes that meet M4 requirements because these require level access to the front door, and so must have lifts if the entrance is not at ground level. Lifts have installation costs and ongoing maintenance costs (which are likely to affect residents' ground rents). This will affect viability and will not be feasible unless a certain number of units are served by one lift shaft. This will be less likely on lower blocks of flats.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings are set out in the policy to ensure the range of needs that will exist in Oxford can be met.
- Given the increasingly aging population and the proportion that are already over 75, the policy requires that 15% of market homes meet Category 2 Standards of Part M of the Building Regulations
- There may be other options, such as provision of one and two bed units in terraced houses instead of flats, maisonettes with accessible homes below and so on. But these options will often not be feasible, in which case the policy allows schemes with fewer or no dwellings that meet Part M of the Building Regulations.

Draft Policy HD14 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 010e of Background Paper 10.

POLICY HD14: ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE HOMES

Proposals for residential development should ensure that all affordable dwellings and 15% of general market dwellings on sites of 10 or more dwellings are constructed to the Category 2 standard as set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M4.

5% of all dwellings for which the City Council is responsible for allocations or nominations, on sites of more than 20 dwellings, should be provided to Category 3 (wheelchair user) standards as set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M4. These M4(3) dwellings should be able to be adapted to the needs of the household who will be occupying them, ahead of their occupation.

An exception will be made for flatted schemes that are of two storeys or fewer and/or that are smaller than 50 units, whereby planning permission will be granted when no dwellings meet the requirements of Building Regulations Approved Document M4, if the following conditions are met:

- A) it can be demonstrated that there are strong design reasons for providing blocks of flats with a small number of storeys, and it is not purely to circumvent the requirement; and
- B) it can be demonstrated that options to provide affordable units in an alternative way that enables level access have been explored, including where possible providing the dwellings required to meet M4 standards on the ground floor.

BIN AND BIKE STORES AND EXTERNAL SERVICING FEATURES

Good design is not only important to the internal layout of development but for a home to function properly and look attractive. Attention needs to be given to the design and location of storage facilities for bikes and bins at the initial stages of the design process. Servicing features such as meter cupboards, pipes and gutters, flues, vents, and aerials should also be considered early as they can collectively have a significant impact on the visual appearance of a property.

Things to consider when drafting the policy:

Examples of good practice can be found in the Parking and Bike Parking Technical Advice Note⁵.

Consideration should be given to non-standard bike storage such as cargo bikes and trikes.

- As so many residents cycle in the city and we want to encourage more cycle trips instead of using the private car, new development must incorporate well designed, secure and easy to use bike storage facilities.
- It is essential that new development optimises the opportunities for residents to recycle as much waste as possible. Ensuring that there is adequate, well-placed space for the range of bins required will enable this.
- The location of bin stores needs to be accessible to be collected efficiently
- Stores and servicing features can detract from the appearance and amenity of the area if not well designed.

- Guidance on the numbers and sizes of bins that are required for different types of development and design and placement of stores is set out in the Technical Advice Note on Waste Storage⁶.
- Servicing features can also create a cluttered appearance and detract from the design of the development, but they can sometimes be designed as an integrated element of the architecture that can contribute positively to the overall design of the buildings or development. Detailing of these features can be an important contributor to the character of the area.
- As the city moves towards becoming net zero there will need to be infrastructure to support this to include sufficient EV (Electric Vehicle) chargers, which needs to be carefully designed into new developments.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy approach seeks to ensure that careful attention is given to the positioning, design and materials used for external servicing features in new development, or if added to existing development.

Draft Policy HD15 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 011g of Background Paper 011.

POLICY HD15: BIN AND BIKE STORES AND EXTERNAL SERVICING FEATURES

Bin and bike stores should be provided in new development and these and external servicing features should be considered from the start of the design process. For new schemes, planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) bin and bike storage is provided in a way that does not detract from the overall design of the scheme or the surrounding area, whilst meeting practical needs including the provision of electric charging points for e-bikes where applicable; and
- b) external servicing features have been designed as an integrated part of the overall design, or are positioned to minimise their visual impact; and
- c) materials used for detailed elements such as for stores or rainwater goods are of high quality so they enhance the overall design and will not degrade in a way that detracts from the overall design.

Planning permission will be granted for new bin and bike stores relating to existing developments unless they would cause significant harm to amenity through poor design and siting.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A LIVEABLE CITY WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

FOCUSING TOWN CENTRE USES IN OUR CITY CENTRE AND DISTRICT CENTRES

- 7.1 Oxford is a very liveable and accessible city which, owing to its compact nature that means that most people have access to a range of services to meet their daily needs within a 15–20-minute walk or by a short cycle ride. If the facilities that people need to reach are not accessible on foot or by bicycle, then the good network of public transport across the city can be used to reach locations which may be further away such as the hospitals, the greater range of facilities available in the city centre or district centres.
- 7.2 The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted to us all the importance and value of having a variety of easily accessible facilities and their role in helping create strong communities and “liveable cities”. A range of policy tools can be used to help achieve, support and sustain liveable cities. These include, protecting certain facilities, maintaining the vibrancy of our centres, managing parking, and requiring travel plans and transport assessments when new developments are proposed and implemented. This ensures traffic is well managed and that walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised, consistent with Oxfordshire County Council’s adopted *Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan*¹ and the transport user hierarchy policy it promotes.

CITY, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES

- 7.3 The city and district centres are areas that are highly accessible mobility hubs and that include a broad range of facilities including shops, hospitality, community and leisure facilities. They have an important role to play in creating liveable neighbourhoods. Local centres are more entwined with quieter residential areas, have less activity than district centres and may not be key transport interchanges or have parking facilities. However, they will have a mix of uses, usually that include offices as well as shops, often cafes or pubs and potentially other facilities and community uses such as dentists, post offices and community facilities.

¹ [Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan](#)

Key things to consider when drafting the policy

- The city and district centres are areas that are highly accessible mobility hubs and that include a broad range of facilities including shops, hospitality, community and leisure facilities. Centres have an important role to play in creating liveable neighbourhoods.
- The NPPF approach should be followed, which is that town centre uses should be directed to the city centre, district, and local centres, then edge of centre locations and only outside of these where no alternatives are available, and the site is suitable.
- Use Class E is very broad (including commercial, business and service uses including retail, cafes and restaurants, leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres), health centres, GPs and clinics, offices) and premises can change freely (without planning permission) between these uses.
- The NPPF says that an impact assessment should be required for retail and leisure development outside of town centres and not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan. The threshold may be set locally.
- Because Use Class E is so broad, and these uses are all allowed in principle in any defined town centre (which includes district centres and local centres) it is important the defined locations are suitable for these uses
- The NPPF is clear that small parades of shops with a purely local function do not meet the definition of local centres, so most parades are not included in this category, but their local importance is still significant in terms of creating liveable cities.
- The availability of hot-food takeaways can encourage unhealthy eating habits that are harmful to health, so limiting new hot-food takeaways could be beneficial, although these uses can also be popular and help to support local centres.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy proposes continuing to identify the city centre and long-established district centres as town centre locations
- Many local centres have also been defined for some time, and it is proposed to continue to define those as they all are more than a parade of shops of only neighbourhood interest

- In addition, Underhill Circus and Magdalen Road are proposed as local centres. The significant community facility at Underhill Circus and the importance of the area locally mean it is a suitable location for town centre uses. Magdalen Road has a variety of businesses, including office and employment buildings and cafes that have a greater than local reach.
- Local centres are suitable for Class E (commercial) uses and local community facilities (Class F.2) but not student accommodation or hotels. Visitor and cultural attractions and institutional and educational uses may be suitable, depending on the existing character of the centre and the exact nature of the use proposed (see Policy C4 and C5).
- New hot food takeaways are not permitted outside of town, district or local centres, preventing their spread outside of areas where they are already prevalent.

Draft Policy C1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 013a of Background Paper 013.

DRAFT POLICY C1: CITY, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES

The city centre and district centres defined on the Policies Map are:

- City centre
- Cowley centre
- Cowley Road
- Summertown
- Headington
- Blackbird Leys

Local Centres defined on the Policies Map are:

- St Clement's;
- Walton Street and Little Clarendon Street;
- High Street east;
- Rose Hill;
- North Parade Avenue;
- Magdalen Road
- New Marston; and
- Underhill Circus.

In the city, district centres and local centres, new Use Class E and other main town centre uses will be permitted where compatible with other policies in the plan, which include:

- Retail, cafes and restaurants;
- Leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres);
- Health centres, GPs and clinics;
- Offices, research and development and light industrial;
- Community facilities;
- Residential (where compliant with the active frontages policy, including student accommodation in the city centre and district centres, but not in the local centres);

- Visitor attractions (Sui Generis uses including pubs, cinemas, live music venues, concert halls, dance halls);
- Short stay accommodation.

Proposals for new hot food take-aways will not be permitted outside of the city, district or local centres.

A sequential approach should be taken for locating new town centre uses. Applicants must demonstrate how the sequential approach has been applied if town centre uses are proposed outside the city centre, district and local centres, looking at edge of centre areas first then accessible locations well connected to the town centre.

Where the applicant demonstrates an out-of-centre location is justified as no alternative sites are available and where this is not contrary to other policies of the Plan, planning permission will only be granted where all the following criteria are met:

- It has good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- impacts on the road network can be mitigated; and
- That no unacceptable harm or loss of amenity will be caused to adjoining land uses.

Planning permission for retail and leisure proposals outside of a defined centre of greater than 350m² floorspace, will only be granted if a retail impact assessment is submitted with proportionate evidence to demonstrate there is no negative impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres, by assessing:

- The impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposals;
- The impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment.

MAINTAINING VIBRANT CENTRES

7.4 The city centre and each district centre have a distinct character, with a different mix of uses and different strengths and weaknesses. To maintain the strength of the centres, development should respond to and enhance the individual character of the centres.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Securing activity at ground floor level is important to achieving vibrancy;
- Sufficient flexibility is important to respond to changing needs and habits;
- Retaining the vibrancy of existing centres where uses are clustered is important to reduce travel and enable linked trips.
- The centres are transport hubs on main routes and able to sustain densification, for example because parking is not required and dense infilling

of some height is generally acceptable. This can help meeting needs, such as housing need

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Policy provides design principles to guide future developments and ensure opportunities are taken to enhance and strengthen the character and attractiveness of the centres, helping maintain their robustness by encouraging people to visit and linger.
- Active frontages defined where a minimum threshold is set for the proportion of Class E (commercial, business and service uses) at ground floor level.
- The thresholds are set at a level that all centres are currently achieving so the focus of the policy is on retention.
- Any proposed new use, even when the overall frontage would remain above the threshold, will be expected to show how activity will be maintained. This can be done by demonstrating that it will attract footfall, retain an active window display, and not adversely affect the amenity, availability of services or appearance of the frontage.
- Blackbird Leys District Centre does not have a defined active frontage because the nature of that centre is as a vital community hub, with a wide range of important community functions, many of which are not Use Class E.

Draft Policy C2 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option set 013b of Background Paper 013.

DRAFT POLICY C2: MAINTAINING VIBRANT CENTRES

The city centre and district centres defined on the Policies Map are:

The densification and growth of district centres and the city centre is encouraged. High density development is generally expected in the city centre and district centres as set out in Policy HD8, and this should be low car.

Planning permission will be granted for new development within the district centres and city centre where it takes opportunities to deliver the following, where relevant:

- a) improved permeability and connectivity to existing development and wider transport links;
- b) intensification of development to create a high-density centre, including by more efficient use of land, by consolidating uses and through infill;
- c) more residential development, including on the upper floors of existing commercial premises;
- d) enhancement of existing buildings and improvement in their relationship to the street by creating active frontages;
- e) rationalisation of public car parking so it is well-located, limits surface-level parking and is reduced where possible, and makes better use of workplace surface-level car parking;
- f) public realm improvements for cyclists and pedestrians and public transport users and rebalancing of the space within streets from vehicles to pedestrians;
- g) improved pedestrian connections across the main roads through the centres;

- h) enhancement and new opportunities for public realm and landscaping such as tree planting, including incorporation of small green spaces where people can stop, dwell, socialise and play;
- i) better integration of the landscape setting and surrounding green spaces;
- j) enabling of the continued successful operation of any street markets;
- k) improvements to shopfronts and signage;
- l) enhance and better reveal heritage assets and their setting.

Active frontages

Planning permission will be granted at ground floor level of the defined Active Frontages (as set out on the Policies Map) for town centre uses that promote the vitality of the centre, and where the proportion of units at ground floor level does not fall below the threshold percentages of Use Class E set out below. Proposals for any new use within the defined active frontages of the city, district and local centres, even when the overall frontage would remain above the threshold, will be expected to promote the vitality of the centre. Planning permission will be granted if it can be demonstrated how activity will be maintained by:

- a) attracting footfall; and
- b) creating and retaining an active window display; and
- c) not adversely affecting the amenity, availability of services or appearance of the frontage.

Centre name	Threshold % of Use Class E
Headington District Centre	80%
Summertown District Centre	80%
Cowley Road District Centre	75%
Cowley Centre District Centre	80%
City Centre primary frontage	90%
City Centre secondary frontage	70%

Planning permission will only be granted for development of upper storeys of the Active Frontages for housing, student accommodation and other uses appropriate to a town centre, as long as the functioning of the ground floor unit(s) in the active frontage is not undermined.

Local Centres

Planning permission will only be granted at ground floor level within the Local Centre Active Frontages for main town centre uses that promote the vitality of the centre and where the proportion of units in the Local Centre at ground floor level in Use Class E does not fall below 80% of the total number of units.

Planning permission will only be granted for development of upper storeys of units in the Local Centres for housing and other uses appropriate to the location.

The City Centre, District Centres, Local centres and Primary and Secondary Active Frontages and Local Centre Active Frontages are all defined on the Policies Map.

COMMUNITY, INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

- 7.5 It is important that our communities are supported by the appropriate infrastructure and community facilities. Providing and improving access to educational, health and community facilities greatly improves the quality of life for residents, builds strong communities and helps to address inequalities.
- 7.6 Cultural and community facilities can be very wide ranging and fall within different use classes. Facilities important to local communities may include community centres, schools, children's centres, meeting venues for the public or voluntary organisations, public halls and places of worship, leisure and indoor sports centres, pavilions, stadiums, public houses, club premises or arts buildings that serve a local community. These are important in meeting social, economic, health, leisure, cultural and religious needs of Oxford's diverse communities.
- 7.7 In seeking social inclusion and a high quality of life, the City Council's approach is to make accessible a diverse range of facilities, from performance venues to libraries. Sometimes co-locating multiple facilities on a single site can be an efficient way to improve accessibility and support the principles of a liveable city.

PROTECTION, ALTERATION AND PROVISION OF NEW LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 7.8 Community facilities make a valued contribution to the health and wellbeing of local residents. Local community facilities fall into Use Class F.2 of the Use Classes Order. This includes halls or meeting places mainly for the local community, indoor and outdoor pools, and skating rinks, and the policy applies to these. However, Policy C3 does not apply to places for outdoor sport and recreation (which are within the Use Class F.2), because these are dealt with in Policy G1. The City Council will seek to protect existing local community facilities and will support improvement and more intensive use of existing sites. Shops of no more than 280m² in size and 1km from a similar facility are classed as having a local community use within Use Class F.2.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Sometimes facilities might not be fit-for-purpose, or they may provide poor accessibility, so improvements on site or nearby might be more sustainable.
- Co-locating multiple facilities on a single site can be an efficient way to improve both quality and accessibility.
- Some local community facilities may have scope to provide some affordable workspace in accordance with Policy E3 to support small startup businesses whose location complements these local community uses.
- All other shops are Use Class E and can change freely to any commercial use.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- It provides criteria to assess new developments against, including that opportunities are taken to secure community use agreements.
- It seeks to protect facilities, setting out the criteria which must be met if a loss of facilities is proposed, ensuring that community function is re-provided.
- To protect local community shops, their expansion to a size where they would fall outside of Use Class F.2 will not be permitted.

Draft Policy C3 set out below is the preferred approach from the options considered in option sets 013c and 013d of Background Paper 013.

DRAFT POLICY C3: PROTECTION, ALTERATION AND PROVISION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Planning permission will be granted for new local community facilities and the improvement and expansion of existing facilities where the City Council is satisfied that the following criteria are met:

- a) the location is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- b) the proposal will not result in an unacceptable environmental impact or loss of amenity.

Opportunities will be taken to secure community use and joint user agreements.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of such facilities unless:

- suitable replacement can be provided on-site, or at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; or
- there are facilities nearby and within the neighbourhood that can be enhanced to ensure none of the local community function and accessibility is lost; or
- the proposal is for an alternative community facility for which there is greater need or demand.

Planning permission will not be granted for the expansion of shops that meet the definition of a local shop within Use Class F.2 if they would become large enough to be classed as Use Class E rather than F.2.

PROTECTION ALTERATION AND PROVISION OF LEARNING AND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS (INCLUDING SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP)

- 7.9 Schools, libraries and places of worship all play an important part in servicing the needs of Oxford's communities. Close partnership working will be essential to ensure that communities continue to have the best possible access to facilities. The City

Council has been working closely with partners including Oxfordshire County Council as the Local Education Authority to plan the educational needs of the city and will continue to work in partnership to ensure that new development is provided with access to school places, and that existing access is enhanced and improved when opportunities arise.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- These facilities can attract large numbers of people, sometimes from quite a wide area, so it is important that new facilities are in accessible locations that minimise any potential traffic impacts and that there is no loss of amenity to existing surrounding uses.
- When a facility is to be redeveloped it must not conflict with existing uses but complement and enhance them.
- The City Council welcomes the opportunity to see the most effective use of buildings, which shared use and public access to facilities could help promote.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Existing facilities are protected, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that they are no longer required to meet the community's needs.
- Criteria are included to consider new uses against to ensure they are suitably located and potential harmful impacts are mitigated.
- The policy supports the use of joint user/shared user agreements where possible.

Draft Policy C4 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 013e and 013f of Background Paper 013.

DRAFT POLICY C4: PROTECTION, ALTERATION AND PROVISION OF LEARNING AND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS*

Planning permission will be granted for new learning and non-residential institutions (use Class F.1) where the following criteria are met:

- The development will be accessible to those who will use it by walking, cycling and public transport and will not create unacceptable traffic impacts; and
- The proposal will meet local needs or an existing deficiency in provision or access, or the proposal will support regeneration or new development; and
- The proposal will not result in an unacceptable environmental or local amenity impact; and
- Where possible, joint user and shared user agreements are made.

Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F.1) where it can be demonstrated that:

- If there are any new uses to be introduced, these will not conflict with the existing use and any loss of floorspace of the existing use will not result in it not being able to function and meet needs;
- The development will be accessible to those who will use it by walking, cycling and public transport and will not create unacceptable traffic impacts;
- The proposal will not result in an unacceptable environmental or local amenity impact; and
- Where possible, joint user and shared user agreements are made.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of learning and non-residential institutions (Use Class F.1) from a site unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer a need or foreseeable need, or there is overriding demand for an alternative use on the site that is of benefit to the local community; or
- Suitable replacement provision can be provided on-site, or within an alternative suitable location that would continue to be easily accessible to its users by walking, cycling or public transport; or
- It can be demonstrated that the use can no longer feasibly be provided in its location.

*This does not apply to academic institutions exclusively for 18+ students such as the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

PROTECTION, ALTERATION AND PROVISION OF CULTURAL VENUES AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

7.10 Oxford has a wide range of cultural and visitor attractions and venues ranging from large places that attract people from far and wide to more local facilities important to local communities. These venues include theatres, cinemas, pubs, museums and music venues. These venues may attract visitors from within the city and beyond, including tourists. The events held at these places are the cultural lifeblood of the city for many people and as such should be celebrated and protected.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- It is important that the city's social, cultural and visitor attractions are protected as they often add a unique vibrancy to the city.
- They may also bring social benefits and provide a meeting place for different groups of people as well as providing locations for events and for showcasing the work of different artists.
- Most cultural venues and visitor attractions such as theatres, nightclubs, pubs, casinos and concert halls are classed in the planning system as 'Sui Generis', which means use cannot switch to or from them without planning permission, and proposals can all be considered on their own merits.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The criteria provide a framework to determine applications for these cultural venues and visitor attractions against.
- In some instances, there may be scope to explore opportunities to improve the operation and management of the business and this need to be demonstrated that it has been fully explored as part of the marketing expectations as set out in Appendix 7.1

Draft Policy C5 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 013g and 013h of Background Paper 013.

DRAFT POLICY C5: PROTECTION, ALTERATION AND PROVISION OF CULTURAL VENUES AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Planning permission will be granted for new cultural, social and visitor attractions that add to the cultural and social scene of the city, provided that:

- the use is located in compliance with the sequential test in Policy C1 and is appropriate to the scale and function of the centre; and
- they are realistically and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport for most people travelling to the site; and
- they will not cause unacceptable traffic harm or adversely affect residential amenity; and
- there is no negative cumulative impact resulting from the proposed use in relation to the number, capacity and location of other similar uses (existing or committed) in the area; and
- they are well related to any existing or proposed tourist and leisure related areas.

Applications to increase capacity, improve access and make more intensive cultural/community use of existing sites will be supported. This may include diversification of pubs or similar through the provision of short stay accommodation (which must be in accordance with draft Policy E5) on upper floors where it does not detract from the operating capabilities of the business and where it does not conflict with other policies of the Plan.

The City Council will seek to protect and retain existing cultural venues and visitor attractions. Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions, except in the following circumstances:

- a suitable new or improved cultural venue or visitor attraction meeting similar needs will be provided on the site or at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; or:
- evidence is provided to support the application which demonstrates all the following criteria have been met:
 - there has not been wilful neglect that has resulted in the venue being unattractive to market; and
 - all reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for its existing use, or an alternative cultural or visitor attraction use that meets similar needs (according to Appendix 7.1); and

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ it is demonstrated that suitable alternative facilities exist to meet the needs of the local community that may be met by the existing facility. |
|--|

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT IN OXFORD TO HELP CREATE A LIVEABLE CITY

- 7.11 An effective transport system is fundamental to the vitality and liveability of the urban area, yet movement of people and goods into and around Oxford continues to be a huge challenge. Oxford has an ongoing challenge to improve air quality and cut carbon emissions from the transport sector, as well as reducing the volume of traffic and the need for land being used for vehicular parking. An integrated approach is required to redress the balance in favour of space efficient, low emission transport modes across the area.
- 7.12 Oxford City Council in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority has a key role to play in ensuring development is sustainable in both design and location. As such, it seeks to work with Oxfordshire County Council, the local highways authority, to ensure that new development encourages sustainable and active travel that offers joined up travel options.

TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS, TRAVEL PLANS AND SERVICING AND DELIVERY PLANS

- 7.13 It is important that new major development proposals seek to optimise active travel and public transport opportunities and aim to limit the increase in car journeys which would add to air pollution and congestion across the city. Key tools used to appraise and determine the transport impacts of a development proposal are transport assessments (TA), transport statements (TS) and travel plans (TP).
- 7.14 A TA is a comprehensive and systematic process to ensure that the transport impacts of the development are properly considered and where appropriate includes measures to help mitigate development impact. A TS is a shorter version of a TA. A TP is a package of measures tailored to the needs of an individual site and focused on reducing dependence upon the private car. TPs can also specifically address the delivery and servicing requirements of a development proposal through Delivery and Service Management Plans (DSPs) and the construction traffic associated with the development proposal through Construction Management Plans (CMPs). TPs, to be effective, need monitoring, managing and where necessary enforcing.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- The requirements for the transport assessment and travel plans are set out in Oxfordshire County Council's document Implementing Decide and Provide in Transport Assessments².
- Transport Assessments will be considered in the context of Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and its supporting strategies including the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan, Active Travel Strategy, Innovation Framework and Mobility Hub Strategy.
- New development proposals must all ensure the layout takes into consideration the principles set out in Oxfordshire County Council's Street Design Guide³.
- Construction Traffic Management Plans must incorporate the Construction, Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards⁴.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Sets thresholds for the type of development proposals that must be accompanied by a transport assessment/statement (TA/TS).
- Identifies what should be included in any TA/TS submitted in support of a development proposal
- Identifies when a Travel Plan, Delivery and Service Management Plan or a Construction Traffic Management Plan may be required to support a development proposal.

Draft Policy C6 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 012a of Background Paper 013.

DRAFT POLICY C6: TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS, TRAVEL PLANS AND SERVICE AND DELIVERY PLANS

Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals if the City Council is satisfied that necessary transport-related measures will be put in place.

A Transport Assessment (TA) or Transport Statement (TS) must be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement, in accordance with the thresholds set out in Appendix 7.2.

² <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport/ImplementingDecideandProvideTARrequirements.pdf>

³ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/DesignGuidePublication.pdf>

⁴ <https://clocs.org.uk/the-clocs-standard>

Transport Assessments must assess the multi-modal impacts of development proposals and demonstrate the transport measures which would be used to mitigate the development's impact to ensure:

- a) there is no unacceptable impact on highway safety;
- b) there is no severe residual cumulative impact on the road network;
- c) pedestrian and cycle movements are prioritised, both within the scheme and within neighbouring areas;
- d) access to high quality public transport is facilitated, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- e) the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport are addressed;
- f) the development helps to create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards as set out in the Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guide¹¹;
- g) the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles is allowed for; and
- h) charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles is enabled in safe, accessible and convenient locations with designated bays and priority for car clubs

A Travel Plan, which has clear objectives, targets and a monitoring and review procedure, must be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement in accordance with the thresholds set out in Appendix 7.3. Travel Plans must support outcomes (a) to (h) set out above.

Where a Travel Plan is required under this policy and a substantial amount of the movement is likely to be in the form of delivery, service and dispatch vehicles, a Delivery and Service Management Plan will be required.

Where a Delivery and Service Management Plan is provided this should set out how deliveries will be managed and demonstrate how impacts will be minimised including congestion, safety, noise and how zero or ultra-low emission and last mile opportunities will be considered.

A Construction Management Plan (CMP) must be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement during construction. This CMP must incorporate the CLOCS (Construction, Logistics and Community Safety) standards where applicable.

BICYCLE AND POWERED TWO WHEELERS PARKING

7.15 Increasing the uptake of cycling further will be an important tool in helping Oxford to achieve its ambitions of improving air quality, reducing congestion, enhancing the public realm and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Safe, secure parking is an essential part of ensuring people feel confident to cycle.

- Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards for New Developments sets out the parking standards for bicycles and powered two wheelers; these parking standards reflect the need for bicycle storage as shown by research evidence.
- As well as parking facilities, changing rooms, showers and locker facilities in places of work can be important in enabling people to cycle.
- There have been cases where the level of provision for student accommodation has been too high because students living close to campus often do not feel the need to bring a bike.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- The policy links to Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards for New Developments.
- Criteria for where the Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards are silent, including powered two wheeler parking for non-residential development.
- Criteria set out where a lower level of parking for student accommodation may be acceptable.

Draft Policy C7 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 012b and 012c of Background Paper 012.

DRAFT POLICY C7: BICYCLE AND POWERED TWO WHEELERS PARKING DESIGN STANDARDS

Planning permission will only be granted for residential developments* that comply with or exceed the minimum bicycle and powered two-wheeler parking requirements as set out in Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards for New Developments (as shown in Appendix 7.4).

Planning permission will only be granted for non-residential developments that comply with or exceed the minimum bicycle and powered two-wheeler parking requirements as set out in Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards for New Developments (as shown in Appendix 7.4).

Provision of bicycle parking lower than the minimum standards may be acceptable for new student accommodation if it is:

- a) located close to the institution where most of its occupants will be studying; and/or
- b) where it is adequately demonstrated through a transport assessment that there is existing unused bicycle parking capacity available, in appropriate locations and of an appropriate design standard on site, to accommodate the increased number of bedrooms.

Bicycle parking should be well designed and well-located, convenient, secure, covered (where possible enclosed) and provide level, unobstructed external access to the street.

Bicycle parking should be designed to accommodate an appropriate amount of parking for the needs of disabled people, bicycle trailers and cargo bicycles, as well as facilities for electric charging infrastructure to charge batteries for E bikes.

Changing room, showers and lockers should be provided at commercial/non-residential new development in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 7.5.

* For the purposes of this policy, residential development includes C3 dwellings, C4 and Sui Generis, HMO, and all C2 development (residential institutions).

MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING DESIGN STANDARDS

7.16 Alongside the range of measures to reduce the need to travel and to encourage active travel modes, the policies in the Plan also seek to reduce the opportunities for parking across the city. Over time this will help to reduce car use leading to improvements in congestion, air quality and the environment for walking and cycling. In addition, with fewer private car trips on Oxford roads, public transport services can flow more freely further enhancing the attractiveness as an alternative to using a private car for journeys in and around the city.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards for New Developments considers parking levels in new developments.
- Oxfordshire County Council's Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) which sets out the transport strategy for Oxford and travel connections between the city and Kidlington, Eynsham, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington and Wheatley.
- Controlled Parking Zones in Oxford and the aspirations of both the City and County Councils for Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) to cover the whole of the city during the plan period.
- Opportunities across the city for the delivery of low car residential developments.
- Whether different standards should apply for different size/ types of residential development – e.g. HMO and student developments (consideration of draft Policy H9 and Draft Policy H10)
- Whether different standards should apply for residential and non-residential developments
- Whether different standards should apply for different locations across the city

- Parking provision for pool cars/car clubs, delivery and servicing vehicles and blue badge holders.
- On and off-street parking provision for those using the city centre and district and local centres for both business and leisure (public parking).
- The implications of the 3 traffic schemes that Oxfordshire County Council is seeking to implement during the Plan period: traffic filters, expanded zero emission zone and workplace parking levy.
- The extent to which supporting evidence including Transport Assessments and Travel Plan influences parking provision.

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Identifies different parking standards for residential and non-residential developments - these reflect Oxfordshire County Council's parking standards.
- Criteria set out for where low car residential developments are expected.
- For non-residential development, the starting point is to have no additional parking.

Draft Policy C8 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 012d of Background Paper 012.

DRAFT POLICY C8: MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING DESIGN STANDARDS

Residential developments

Where the following circumstances apply, planning permission will only be granted for residential schemes* that are low car:

- a) in Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs); and
- b) where the site is located within a 400m walk to frequent (15-20 minute) public transport services; and
- c) within 800m walk to a local supermarket or equivalent facility with a minimum floor area of 130m² of retail space which sells essential items such as milk, bread, pasta and fruit and vegetables

(measurements taken from the midpoint of the proposed development)

In these low car residential developments, no car parking spaces allocated to a particular housing unit are to be provided, but only a small number of shared spaces and spaces for blue badge holders, for pooled cars/car club cars, for servicing and delivery vehicles and for working drivers, for example NHS community staff. The numbers of blue badge holder spaces and servicing spaces, pooled car/car club spaces required in all residential developments is set out in Appendix 7.6

In all other locations, planning permission will only be granted where the relevant maximum standards as set out in Appendix 7.6 are not exceeded.

On large residential schemes of 100+ units, car club or pooled cars should be made available according to the standards set out in Appendix 7.6.

Parking spaces should be located to minimise the circulation of vehicles around the site and so that they are well integrated into the landscaping scheme.

Non-residential developments

In the case of all non-residential developments, the starting point is for no additional parking except for blue badge and servicing only. The Council will seek a reduction for highly accessible sites.

Any additional parking provision should be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure the successful functioning of the development, with the need being demonstrated through the submitted TP.

A comprehensive TP should be submitted that justifies proposed parking levels based on the development in the context of the whole site. This TP must take into account the objectives of this Plan to promote and achieve a shift towards sustainable modes of travel and should set out measures introduced to maximise use of sustainable transport modes and demonstrate that there will not be unacceptable impacts on the transport network. The TP will be required to be reviewed to ensure that future opportunities to encourage a shift towards public transport and active travel are taken. The requirements for a TP are set out in Appendices 7.3 of the Plan.

Parking spaces should be located to minimise the circulation of vehicles around the site and so that they are well integrated into the landscaping scheme.

*For the purposes of this policy, residential development includes C3 dwellings, C4 and Sui Generis, HMO, and all C2 development (residential institutions).

ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING

7.17 Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles is addressed by Part S of the Building Regulations. This covers both residential and non-residential developments with specific levels of requirements set out for each use. Policy C9 therefore seeks to ensure that chargers are well located and designed for ease of use.

Key things to consider when drafting the policy:

- Approved Document S: infrastructure for charging electric vehicles⁵
- Future proofing electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVI)

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6218c5d38fa8f54911e22263/AD_S.pdf

- Overlap with Policy HD15 Bin and Bike Stores and External Servicing Features and also with the design checklist (Appendix 1.1)
- Whether requirements should differ for residential and non-residential developments
- Parking requirements for blue badge holders/ car club parking bays

How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Identifies requirements for EV charging infrastructure in residential and non-residential developments.

Draft Policy C9 set out below is the preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue considered in option sets 012e of Background Paper 012.

DRAFT POLICY C9: ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

New build residential development

For each new residential development, the proposed number of EV charging infrastructure points must be a minimum of either the number of parking spaces or the number of dwellings the parking serves.

When off plot parking is proposed within a new residential development it should incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure to enable the charging of electric vehicles on the street in accordance with the Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guidance.

All new blue badge parking bays and all car club parking bays must provide access to live electric vehicle charging infrastructure that is ready for use.

New build non-residential development

In all non-residential development at least 10% of the car parking spaces should have EV charging infrastructure.

All new blue badge parking bays and all car club parking bays must provide access to live electric vehicle charging infrastructure that is ready for use.

Implementation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure

The location of charging points in development proposals should allow for easy and convenient access to the charge point from the relevant parking space and avoid negative impacts.

Both the charging point and electric infrastructure and cabling should be designed and located so that it can be maintained as required. It should be live and ready for use.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INFRASTRUCTURE AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 Provision of infrastructure will need to be funded and delivered in a timely manner to support development and deliver upon the Local Plan vision for 2042, the spatial strategy and plan objectives. The draft policy S3 as set out in Chapter 1 addresses the overarching requirements for infrastructure delivery and new development, including how the Council will seek to ensure contributions are provided towards meeting key infrastructure needs. Additionally, however, the provision of digital infrastructure is an important consideration that applicants will need to factor into their proposals.

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 8.2 Digital infrastructure is playing an increasingly important role in our day-to-day lives, supporting people to meet various needs, as well as the wider economy and the services businesses provide. It is important that this type of infrastructure is factored into the design of new development as with any other type of infrastructure.

- 8.3 Key considerations for the policy:

- Connections have been improving greatly in Oxford over the last ten years. Developers are encouraged to engage early with a range of network operators, to ensure that development proposals are designed to be capable of providing this level of connectivity to all end users.
- Oxford at present is broadly covered by mobile networks, but access to the newer 5G network, which can offer more reliable connections in busier places and for higher intensity data transfer, is still limited.
- Data centres can play an important role in a successful modern economy.

- 8.4 How the draft policy responds to these considerations:

- Requires new development to ensure it is serviced by appropriate digital infrastructure.
- Provides support for data centres in appropriate locations.

Table 8.2: Policy options set 014b: Digital Infrastructure to support New Development

Draft Policy I1 is the identified preferred approach from the various options relating to this issue. It is considered within the four options set 014a of Background Paper 014

DRAFT POLICY I1 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT NEW DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals should support the delivery of full-fibre or equivalent digital infrastructure, with particular focus on areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

Development proposals should:

- a) ensure that sufficient ducting space for full fibre connectivity infrastructure is provided to all end users within new developments, unless an affordable alternative 1GB/s-capable connection is made available to all end users;
- b) meet expected demand for mobile connectivity generated by the development;
- c) take appropriate measures to avoid reducing mobile connectivity in surrounding areas, and providing mitigation if that is unavoidable;
- d) where required support the effective use of buildings, outdoor spaces and the public realm to accommodate well-designed and suitably located mobile digital infrastructure; minimise impacts of digital infrastructure on the visual amenity, appearance and character of buildings and surrounding areas, and minimise impacts on the amenity of occupiers and neighbours of development.

Data centres play an important role in supporting a modern economy. New, expanded or upgraded data centres will be supported on suitable sites in appropriate locations in accordance with other policies of the development plan.

AREAS OF FOCUS

8.5 Traditional Local Plans have policies only at individual site level, which means that cumulative impacts can be overlooked. As such, we propose identifying several 'Areas of Focus' across the city which we have defined as areas where changes are anticipated over the Plan period resulting from new development. The Areas of Focus will each include an overarching policy. Areas of Focus policies will include some key development principles specific to that area. Each Area of Focus will also contain a number of site specific allocations.

8.6 The benefit of identifying the broader Areas of Focus in addition to site allocations is that, as development sites come forward, they can be determined against some key policy principles relevant to that area and thus can be considered in the wider context of the area and the other potential developments. Where these cumulative impacts are overlooked, they can have a detrimental impact on place making, design and infrastructure provision, which we are seeking to minimise through this approach. Policies that apply across defined Areas of Focus will help ensure the approach to movement and connectivity, enhancing and creating high quality public realm and open space can be considered more strategically.

8.7 We have grouped the areas of focus within each of the four IDP quadrants as follows:

8.8 North Area quadrant of city

- The Northern Edge of Oxford Area of Focus

South Area quadrant of city –

- Cowley Branch Line, Littlemore and Leys Area of Focus

East Area quadrant of city –

- Marston Road and Old Road Area of Focus

West and Central Area quadrant of city

- West End and Botley Road Areas of Focus

NORTHERN EDGE OF OXFORD AREA OF FOCUS

8.9 This area is adjacent to urban extension sites in Cherwell District Council.

8.10 Reasons for identifying this Area of Focus are:

- The development of the urban extensions surrounding the city, must be well integrated with the city in terms of improved pedestrian, cycling and public transport connectivity.
- There are opportunities reduce and rationalise public and workplace car parking to optimise the most efficient use of land.
- Generally low density suburban development therefore has potential for intensification
- Severance by some key routes and junctions best addressed by area-wide approach
- Lack of connections with adjoining area outside city (in Cherwell District) that development should take the opportunity to improve
- Limited open space in west of the area and opportunities can be taken to increase public access to green spaces •

- Area close to the SSSI at Port Meadow which is sensitive to air quality and recreational impacts that need to be addressed by a holistic approach.

COWLEY BRANCH LINE, LITTLEMORE AND THE LEYS AREA OF FOCUS

8.11 This Area of Focus includes the area around the Kassam Stadium, and the proposed Cowley Branch Line (CBL) where several of the city's key employment sites lie, including the large employers of MINI Plant Oxford, Oxford Science and Oxford Business Park.

8.12 Reasons for identifying this Area of Focus are:

- There is currently severance by some key routes and junctions, areas of poor air quality and of poor connectivity
- There will be significant opportunities for improving and enhancing connectivity to this part of the city by modes other than by private car.
- The opening up of passenger services along the Cowley Branch Line will provide a welcome public transport alternative for this area of the city.
- Two stations are proposed along the line at Oxford Science Park and in the vicinity of Oxford Business Park/Oxford Retail Park.
- This area will experience considerable change over the Plan period as developments on the edge of the city in adjoining South Oxfordshire are built out as allocated strategic sites, particularly the Land South of Grenoble Road (Policy STRAT 11) and Land at Northfield (Policy STRAT 12)¹⁶.
- There are significant regeneration opportunities throughout the area and potential for high density developments, supported by public transport improvements.
- The public transport improvements and ambitions for better use of land also give the opportunity to seek a reduction in car parking across the area •
- Consideration across the whole area enhances the ability to design higher density developments effectively, considering impacts of heights for example, and the best way across the area to increase access to green spaces.
- Ensure good urban design and place making opportunities are taken
- Increase opportunities to enhance existing tree cover which is the lowest canopy cover across the city •

MARSTON ROAD AND OLD ROAD AREAS OF FOCUS

- 8.13 This Area of Focus extends from the southwest part of Marston Road, incorporating Oxford Brookes and the Old Road Campus and the hospital sites. Range of uses including educational, residential, research and hospital.
- 8.14 Reasons for identifying this Area of Focus are:
- The area around this part of the Marston Road includes some underutilised sites with development potential.
 - It is a sensitive area because of proximity to important parks, proximity to the River Cherwell and several listed buildings.
 - There are some significant archaeological sites within this area including Civil War defences and the Fairfax siege line.
 - The area has an attractive and important natural setting and there are important views both into and out of the historic core of Oxford.
 - recognises the need for this development to be well linked to the city in terms of both design and connectivity across the ring road.
 - New development offers the opportunity to ensure good connectivity by foot and cycle and public transport across the area, e.g. with safe, attractive routes, and to manage parking on the hospital sites.

UNIVERSITY AREAS NORTH OF THE CITY CENTRE AREA OF FOCUS

- 8.15 The area to the north of the city centre is dominated by several University of Oxford buildings of a wide range of styles, ages and sizes.
- 8.16 Reasons for identifying this Area of Focus are:
- As many sites are controlled by one landowner there is more scope to ensure that new development and redeveloped buildings relate well to one another to create a better urban form and public realm.
 - Opportunities should be taken to improve the permeability of this area and the use of some of the institutional buildings at ground level where achievable to bring a wider range of people into the area.

- The interface with University Parks is important and needs consideration beyond individual site areas
- There is often a lack of definition between public and private space, which could be improved, for example some routes are public but not obviously so, exacerbated by servicing features of the science buildings such as delivery areas, chemical storage tanks, vents and extractors
- There is currently little public use of the institutional buildings but this could improve
- The area is sensitive as it includes and is in the setting of significant heritage assets (e.g. Central Conservation Area, Radcliffe Observatory, North Oxford Victorian Suburbs, Jericho and Walton Manor Conservation Areas and University Parks) Impacts of heights on views, including from University Parks an important consideration and roofscape, including the impacts of planting
- Many buildings individually of very high quality, although they do not always relate well to each other or their surroundings

WEST END AND BOTLEY ROAD AREA OF FOCUS

- 8.17 This area of focus includes several key West End sites, extends across the river to include Osney Mead and extends along the Botley Road to the retail park area. Most of this area is covered by the West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Area contains a wide variety of buildings and uses including brownfield land, commercial premises
- 8.18 Key area of public transport provision for rail and bus, and Seacourt Park & Ride along the Botley Road
- 8.19 Reasons for identifying this Area of Focus are:
- This area offers some significant development and regeneration opportunities but for them to be fully realised there are some key infrastructure priorities.
 - The SPD seeks to ensure that development in the area is brought forward in a coordinated way that contributes to the wider vision for the area.
 - The Area of Focus incorporates the Botley Road retail park as there are several changes happening there in a piecemeal way.

- There are areas of high flood risk within this area of focus and OFAS will be near to The retail park currently is a car dominated area and a difficult environment to navigate on both foot or bicycle, so there is significant potential for improvement
- There is a significant opportunity to create high-density urban living with good provision and access to open space and a vibrant mix of uses, and also that make a significant contribute to the knowledge economy
- There is potential for enhance public realm, particularly around the waterways and enhanced accessibility and permeability of the area through good pedestrian and cycle links. •
- The redevelopment of Oxford railway station presents the opportunity to create an easy and attractive transport interchange between rail, bus and active travel
- Careful consideration of heights of buildings is need as this area is sensitive in terms of views into and out of the historic core.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE ALLOCATIONS

- 8.20 A site allocation is a planning policy that describes what types of land use, or mix of uses, would be acceptable on a specific site, or protects the site for certain types of development. Many sites will come forward without ever having been identified or having a site allocation policy, and the generic policies of the plan should provide a sufficient framework for assessing applications for these sites. However, site allocation policies give guidance and certainty to developer and landowners, and they help local people understand what may happen in their neighbourhood in the future.
- 8.21 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Economic Land Needs Assessment identify sites and their capacities. Not all of the sites identified will be taken forward for a site allocation, if there is little need for further guidance because they have little opportunity for net gain and there is no proposal to change their use.
- 8.22 Sites have been identified from a range of sources, including:
- Previously allocated sites in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and any additional sites that were being considered in the Oxford Local Plan 2040
 - Further sites submitted to the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Examination
 - Sites in historic planning policy documents such as the West End AAP and Sites and Housing Plan
 - Call for sites inviting landowners and others to nominate sites

- Employment sites
- Green spaces (filtered out for further investigation if they are part of the identified core infrastructure network)
- Commitments (sites with planning permission or Prior Approval for housing)
- Sites refused planning permission or expired but potentially suitable for development
- Desk-based map survey.

8.23 Many sites were filtered out for further consideration for a variety of reasons, including lack of known landowner interest or because proposed uses would be contrary to the strategy of the plan.

CURRENTLY ALLOCATED SITES (ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN 2036)

8.24 The Oxford Local Plan 2036 includes a suite of site allocation policies. Some of these have already been developed, or development is underway. Of the remaining sites, continued landowner interest has been checked. A further process of assessing the sites and landowner intentions against the emerging strategy of the Oxford Local Plan 2042, as well as any other relevant changes of context, will be followed before the site allocation policies are developed ready for the next stage of consultation.

SHLAA Ref. Number	Site Name	Suitable uses- based on existing site allocation policies and known and checked landowner intentions and existing lawful uses, still compliant with local plan strategy
11	Canalside Land, Jericho	Housing-led
12	Churchill Hospital	Suitable for a wide range of uses, although the principal use will remain as hospital use.
14	Templars Square (formerly Cowley Centre, Between Towns Road (includes Templars Square shopping centre))	Suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, community and commercial uses.
16	Cowley Marsh Depot, Marsh Road	Housing site
17	Crescent Hall	Housing site
18	Diamond Place and Ewert House	Suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, community and commercial uses.

21	Faculty of Music, St Aldate's	Housing (student)
24	Government Buildings and Harcourt House (023 + 024)	Residential-led (student) development with replacement employment use.
26	Jesus College Sports Ground (Herbert Close)	Housing site
27	John Radcliffe Hospital	Suitable for a wide range of uses, although the principal use will remain as hospital use.
31	Manor Place	Housing (student)
49	Oxford University Press Sports Ground, Jordan Hill	Housing site
54	Ruskin College Campus	Housing site
61	Union Street Car Park and 159–161 Cowley Road (formerly Union Street Car Park)	Housing site
62	University of Oxford Science Area & Keble Road Triangle	Employment site
63	Warneford Hospital	Suitable for a mix of uses according to landowner intention to redevelop the hospital, increase research and development provision on the site and provide residential accommodation.
65	West Wellington Square	Housing (student)
70	Island Site (Park End Street/Hythe Bridge Street)	Suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, community and commercial uses.
76	Oxpens	Suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, community and commercial uses.
81	Worcester Street Car Park	Housing site
104	Former Iffley Mead Playing Field	Housing site
111	Oxford Stadium (greyhound stadium)	Housing-led development
113	Redbridge Paddock (land east of Redbridge Park and Ride) (formerly Green Belt land east of Redbridge Park and Ride)	Housing site
117	Land surrounding St Clement's Church	Housing site
120	Unipart	Employment site
124	Slade House	Housing site
173	Bayards Hill Primary School Part Playing Fields	Housing site
289	Sandy Lane Recreation Ground	Housing site
389	Land at Meadow Lane	Housing site
440	1 Pullens Lane	Housing site

467	Edge of Playing Fields, Oxford Academy	Housing site
497	MINI Plant Oxford	Employment site
574	Manzil Way Resource Centre	Housing site
579	ROQ Site	Academic-led development
586	Osney Mead (whole site)	Suitable for a mix of uses including retail, community and commercial uses.
587	ARC Oxford (formerly Oxford Business Park)	Employment site
588	Oxford Science Park	Employment site
624	Land south of Frideswide Square	Suitable for a mix of uses including retail, community and commercial uses.
006b	Banbury Road University Sites - Parcel B (formerly part of 006 Banbury Road University Sites)	Housing (student)
008a	Bertie Place Recreation Ground	Housing site
075 (a and b)	Oxford Railway Station and Becket Street Car Park	Suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, community and commercial uses.
1a1	Northern Gateway (Oxford North)	Suitable for a mix of uses
1e	Pear Tree Farm	Housing site
28a, 28c	Kassam Stadium, Ozone Leisure Complex and Minchery Farmhouse	Suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, community and commercial uses. 28c not currently part of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 allocation.
28b	Overflow carpark at Kassam Stadium site (formerly within #28)	Housing site
32, 234	Lincoln College and Jesus College Sports Grounds	Housing site
38a2	Thornhill Park (wider site) (formerly known as Nielsen House, London Road site #38)	Suitable for residential and replacement commercial uses.
42	Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre	Suitable for a wide range of uses, although the principal use will remain as hospital use.
439	Marston Road Campus	Suitable for continued academic use that may also include student accommodation, or a housing site.

PROPOSED NEW SITE ALLOCATIONS

8.25 In addition to sites in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, a number of potential new sites that may benefit from a site allocation policy have been identified. These sites need further investigation to assess their suitability for the proposed development.

SHLAA Reference Number	Site name	Use proposed by landowner (or noted from planning application)
20b2	Myers Briggs, Elsfield Hall, Elsfield Way	Landowner proposes site for conversion from office to residential accommodation
33	Littlemore Mental Health Centre, Sandford Road	Landowner intends to keep site in existing uses (hospital and staff/student accommodation), but with potential for intensification to introduce some employer-linked housing.
43	Old Road Campus	Landowner has put forward the site as having some potential for further intensification over the plan period. Landowner confirmed retaining for employment use only.
204	East Oxford Bowls Club	Landowner has proposed for residential development.
428	Rectory Centre	The landowner has put forward for residential development, subject to consolidating health use onto alternative sites
463	Ruskin Field	There is a site allocation for housing on part of Ruskin Field. The larger area of the field to the north has been put forward for development by the landowner. The northern part of the field has potentially better access than the allocated site. However, it is potentially more sensitive in terms of the heritage setting of the Old Headington Conservation Area. There is also potential for peat reserves on the site. Further investigation of the site is needed.
516	474 Cowley Road (Former Powell's Timber Yard)	Expired permission for residential care home.
613-615	Botley Road sites around Cropley Road including River Hotel and Westgate Hotel	Landowner has proposed for residential with potentially retail at ground level. Would mean loss of hotel uses, but potential in-line with strategy.
616	St Thomas School and Osney Warehouse	Mixed-use site. Some heritage interest that needs further investigation before drafting a site allocation policy.

639 & 204	Oriel College Sports Ground, Bartlemas and former Bowling Green	Landowner has proposed this site for housing. The site forms an important part of the setting of the Bartlemas Conservation Area. Further investigation of whether there is any development potential is needed before the next stage of consultation.
657	Clarendon centre	Planning permission for mix of uses (retail, offices, R&D, and student accommodation) suitable for the city centre location.
658	Barton 3b (Land to the rear of Harolde Close, previously included in the Barton Area Action Plan area and outline application)	Landowner proposed for housing. This site was within the now expired Barton AAP area and was included in the outline permission, but it would need permission for development, so is being considered for a specific allocation in the Local Plan 2042.
660	2 Harberton Mead	Currently student accommodation in a conversion. Landowner proposed site for residential use- general residential use or intensification of student accommodation.
664	Jowett Walk (South)	Proposed by landowner for student accommodation (currently house, garden, car parking)

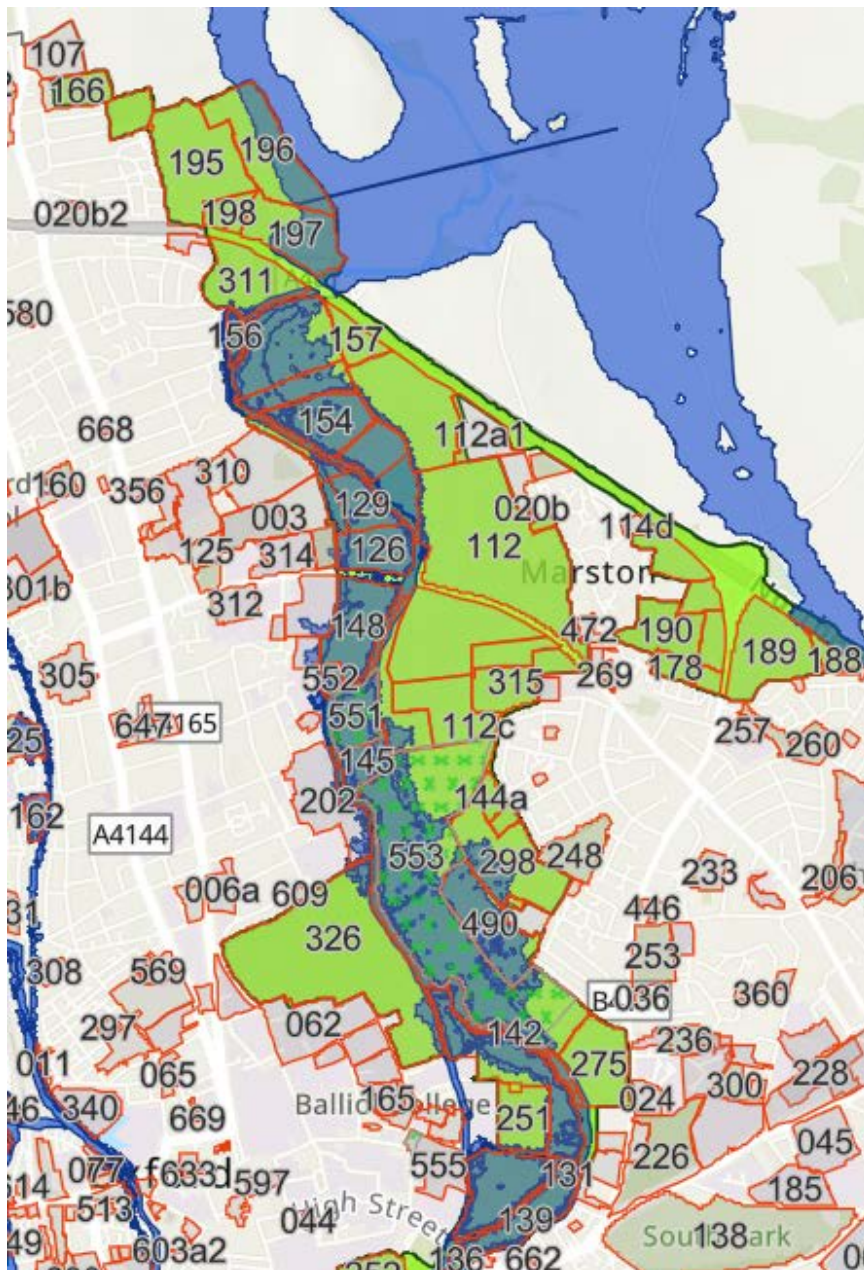
GREEN BELT AREA OF SEARCH

- 8.26 In addition to the above sites, we are also required to look at Green Belt. The NPPF is very clear that, where there is unmet need, sites within the Green Belt should be considered in order to help address this need (paragraph 146).
- 8.27 There are parts of the Green Belt which are intrinsically undevelopable, and footnote 7 of the NPPF makes this clear- in Oxford, we have ruled out for any further consideration the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC, Port Meadow), SSSIs and functional floodplain (greenfield flood zone 3b). For assessment purposes, Oxford's Green Belt has been divided into parcels, and of these 101 parcels, 61 are ruled out for any further consideration.
- 8.28 The remaining parcels have been assessed in the Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2025) to determine their Green Belt function; in many cases these are sites that had been assessed previously and the assessment has merely needed an update, but some additional sites were also added to the assessment.
- 8.29 Parcels assessed for their Green Belt potential at this stage will be subject to many other assessments and considerations before we move to the next stage of the local plan. Aside from Green Belt, important considerations will include whether

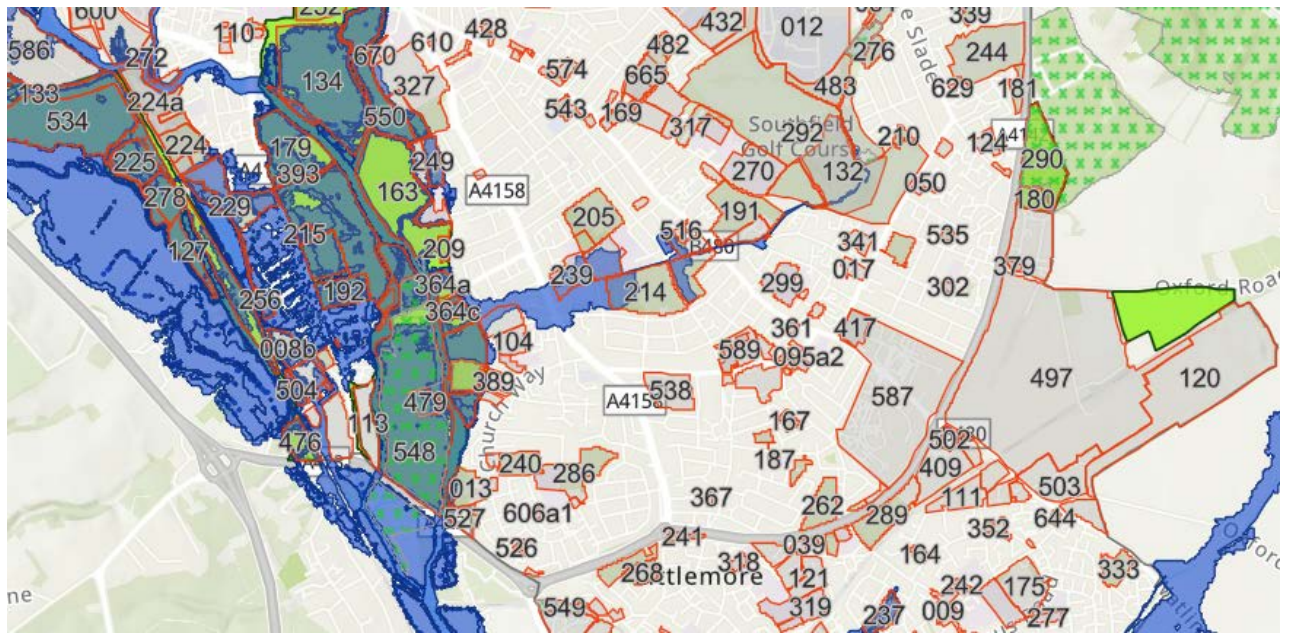
there is landowner interest, access issues, the use of the site (e.g. whether there are sports pitches that can't be moved and need protection) and biodiversity. Sites where development would be contrary to the strategy of the plan will still be protected, for example those in the defined Core Geen Infrastructure network and those with local wildlife protections (OCWS, LWS). However, they are included in the scope for the Green Belt Assessment.

- 8.30 The following maps show the Green Belt within the city (in bright green) overlain with functional flood plain (dark blue) and SSSIs and the SAC (shown with green crosses). The visible bright green areas are the only areas of Green Belt in scope for the Green Belt Assessment. The numbers in the red parcels correspond with the numbers in the Green Belt Assessment (LUC 2025). The purpose of that assessment is to assess how well these parcels perform against the purposes of the Green Belt (set out in the NPPF). It is reiterated that at this stage the parcels are being assessed for their Green Belt function, and once that is understood the next step is to consider whether any may be a suitable development site, or if development would be contrary to the plan strategy or otherwise unfeasible.

8.31 *North eastern area of Green Belt*



8.1 North western area of Green Belt



Term	Definition
Active travel	Refers to modes of travel that involve a level of activity. Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) – This plan sets out the transport strategy for Oxford and travel connections between the city and Kidlington, Eynsham, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington and Wheatley
Affordable Housing	<p>Affordable housing – This comprises of Social Rent, Affordable Rented, and intermediate housing (with varying levels of ownership of the home) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. The high property and rental values in Oxford are so extreme that many of the models for affordable housing do not achieve genuine affordability for people looking to rent or buy in Oxford. The most recent Tenancy Strategy will be used to assess whether proposed forms of affordable housing are genuinely affordable in Oxford. Affordable housing will also comply with one or more of the following definitions:</p> <p>a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent (see separate definition) or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); ii) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider except for any social rented element of the scheme. This may also include employer-linked housing); and iii) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent). <p>b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Income restrictions should be used to limit a household’s eligibility to purchase a starter home to those who have maximum household incomes of £80,000 a year or less (or £90,000 a year or less in Greater London).</p> <p>c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.</p> <p>d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant</p>

	<p>authority specified in the funding agreement.</p> <p>Campus sites of the colleges of the University of Oxford and of Oxford Brookes University - These are sites with academic accommodation existing at the time of the adoption of the Local Plan, and where academic institutional use would remain on the site, even with the development of some employer-linked housing.</p>
Affordable workspace	<p>Workspace that overcomes a market failure and is delivered to support certain social, or cultural or economic purposes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sectors that have social value such as charities, voluntary and community organisations or social enterprises; - Sectors that have cultural value such as creative and artists' workspaces, rehearsal and performance space and makerspace; and - Supporting start-up and early-stage businesses or regeneration. <p>Affordable workspaces should be provided using a discounted or "alternative" rent model, and/ or by providing suitable premises to meet end-user requirements (i.e., through the provision of a specific use class).</p>
Affordable workspace strategy	<p>A strategy which sets out the details of the affordable workspace to be delivered on site which will include details of the size, marketing, servicing, management and how the space provided will meet end-user requirements.</p>
Arterial road	<p>The principal routes for the movement of people and goods within the city. Arterial roads in Oxford include Botley Road and Iffley Road among many others</p>
Biodiversity	<p>A collective term for the variety of wildlife and flora that are present in a particular area. More species and greater variety is generally reflective of higher biodiversity, this can be important for ensuring greater resilience to pressures such as climate change and pollution</p>
Biodiversity net gain	<p>Biodiversity net gain is a strategy to develop land and contribute to the recovery of nature. It is a way of making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development</p>

Built environment	Refers to aspects of our surroundings that are built by humans, that is, distinguished from the natural environment. It includes not only buildings, but the human-made spaces between buildings, such as parks, and the infrastructure
Campus sites of the colleges of the University of Oxford and of Oxford Brookes University	These are sites with academic accommodation existing at the time of the adoption of the Local Plan, and where academic institutional use would remain on the site, even with the development of some employer-linked housing
Circular Economy	Unlike traditional linear economy whereby materials and products are created, used and then thrown away, a circular economy promotes conservation of energy, reduction in waste and extending the lifetime of products through various means such as sharing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible
Climate Change Adaption	A process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities
Climate Change mitigation	Actions to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system. Entails interventions to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, or to increase their storage within 'sinks' (adapted from IPCC)
Conservation areas	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance
Construction, Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS)	A set of requirements for construction vehicles and construction traffic operations designed to eliminate collisions with vulnerable road users and mitigate the negative community and environmental impacts of construction traffic
Contaminated Land	Where substances are causing or could cause: significant harm to people; property or protected species, significant pollution of surface waters (for example lakes and rivers); or groundwater or harm to people as a result of radioactivity.
Critical infrastructure	Facilities, systems, sites, information, people, networks and processes, necessary for a country to function and upon which daily life depends
DEFRA biodiversity metric	The biodiversity metric is a habitat based approach used to assess an area's value to wildlife. The metric uses habitat features to calculate a biodiversity value. Use of the metric is required to demonstrate net gain requirements in line with the Environment Act legislation
Demographic	The measures (such as age, gender and income) of a specific group of people.
District centres	District centres comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library

Ecological buffer zone	A primarily undeveloped area of land adjacent to the watercourse which is designed to secure benefits for nature and people, whilst also forming a natural buffer to the waterfront.
Ecological network	This is one component of the overall green infrastructure network and where the term is used in the Local Plan, this specifically relates to the collection of spaces in the city which play a particularly vital role in supporting ecology and have been designated for this primary purpose
Ecosystem services	The direct and indirect goods and services that nature contributes to our health and wellbeing, including benefits like food production, water quality, regulation of floods, resilience to soil erosion, as well as more intangible benefits like stress reduction and contributing to our sense of place and character of the city
Embodied Carbon	The carbon dioxide in producing materials, including the energy used to extract and transport raw materials as well as emissions from manufacturing processes. The embodied carbon of a building can include all of the emissions from the construction process and materials used throughout; as well as from deconstructing and disposing of it at the end of its lifetime (adapted from UCL fact sheet)
Employer-linked affordable housing	Housing that is provided on specified sites by key employers in the city for staff carrying out their work. The housing should be rented at levels that are affordable to a cross-section of the key employer's employees, and should be available at Affordable Rent levels in perpetuity.
Employment generating uses	The traditional employment generating uses are those sectors that are likely to generate requirements for office, research and development, industrial and warehouse space (i.e, referred to in planning terms as 'employment floorspace or land')
Existing university or college campus or academic site	An existing university or college campus or academic site is one that exists at the time the Plan is adopted
Flood zones	Areas with different probabilities of flooding as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change: Zone 1 (low probability) - Land having a less than 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding. Zone 2 (medium probability) - Land having between a 1% and 0.1% annual probability of river flooding; or land having between a 0.5% and 0.1% annual probability of sea flooding. Zone 3a (high probability) - Land having a 1% or greater annual probability of river flooding; or Land having a 0.5% or greater annual probability of sea. Zone 3b (the functional floodplain) - Land where water from rivers or the sea has to flow or be stored in times of flood. This is land that is designed to flood.
Frequent bus service	Every 15/20 mins in both directions.
Green infrastructure	A network of spaces and features including parks, playing fields, woodland, allotments, private gardens, green roofs and walls, street trees. The term also incorporates 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals, and the rivers
Gross Value Added (GVA)	This measures the contribution to an economy of an individual producer, industry, sector or region. It is used in the calculation of gross domestic product (GDP). GDP is commonly estimated using one of three theoretical approaches: production, income or expenditure. When using production or income approaches, the contribution to an

	economy of a particular industry or sector is measured using GVA
Heritage assessment	May also be referred to as a Heritage Statement or Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). This should set out the significance of a heritage asset or landscape within its wider setting and outline the proposal, assess the impact on significance and set out a mitigation strategy. The local Historic Environment Record should be consulted, and expert assessment will be required. It should have a level of detail appropriate to enable an informed decision to be reached
Heritage assets	A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and assets identified by Oxford City Council during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing)
Historic core	area of the city centre comprising the spires and towers that make up the historic skyline, and in which any additions of height will intrude directly into the view of the skyline.
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	A strategic assessment reviewing the supply of potential sites and their capacity to meet future needs for housing, and for economic growth.
Housing Delivery Test	A check run by the Government to check whether the level of housing delivery in each planning authority is meeting the housing requirement set out in the local plan
Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	A house, flat or building will be a house in multiple occupation (HMO) if it meets the definition under the Housing Act 2004 s254 or s257. A HMO is usually a house or flat that is shared by 3 or more people, who are unrelated, form more than 1 household and is their only main residence. There are 2 types of HMO: C4 HMO, and sui generis HMO. A C4 HMO is a small house or flat that is occupied by 3-5 unrelated people who share basic amenities such as the bathroom and/or kitchen. A sui Generis HMO is the same as a normal C4 HMO except that it is a large house or flat occupied by 6 or more unrelated people and can be subject to slightly different planning rules.
Housing Need	Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area (DLUHC).
Housing target/requirement	The number of homes set out to be delivered in the plan period to 2040, also expressed as an annual requirement. In the case of Oxford this number reflects the capacity rather than the need, as the need is greater than can be met
Inclusive economy	An Inclusive Economy is defined in Oxford's Economic Strategy 2022-32 as "growing prosperity that reduces inequality and is sustainable" (Plymouth Inclusive Growth Group). An Inclusive Economy offers a genuine progressive conceptual frame in which greater consideration is given to social benefits that flow from, and feed into, economic activity. (Centre for Local Economic Strategies)
Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP)	The IDP assesses the potential risks of infrastructure not being delivered in a timely manner to support development
Intermediate housing	Housing at prices and rents above those of Social Rent, but below market or affordable housing prices or rents. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), intermediate rent and other low cost homes. The

	Council will consider the suitability of other forms of intermediate housing, such as low-cost market housing, in light of its genuine affordability to those in housing need. NB: Key worker housing is defined separately from intermediate affordable housing
Key worker	<p>The broad definition of key worker is someone employed in a frontline role delivering an essential public service where there have been recruitment and retention problems. In Oxford, a key worker is any person who is in paid employment solely within one or more of the following occupations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) NHS: all clinical staff except doctors and dentists; ii) Schools: qualified teachers in any Local Education Authority school or sixth form college, or any state-funded Academy or Free School; qualified nursery nurses in any Oxfordshire County Council nursery school; Universities and colleges: lecturers at further education colleges; lecturers, academic research staff and laboratory technicians at Oxford Brookes University or any college or faculty within the University of Oxford; iii) Police & probation: police officers and community support officers; probation service officers (and other operational staff who work directly with offenders); prison officers including operational support; v) Local authorities & Government agencies: those providing a statutory service, including but not limited to social workers; occupational therapists; educational psychologists; speech and language therapists; rehabilitation officers; planning officers; environmental health officers; clinical staff; uniformed fire and rescue staff below principal level Ministry of Defence: servicemen and servicewomen in the Navy, Army or Air Force; clinical staff (with the exception of doctors and dentists); and vi) Unregistered Workforce (Support Workers): In Health roles may include: Assistant Practitioner, Care Assistant, Healthcare Support Worker, Maternity Support Worker, Nursing Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physiotherapy Assistant, Radiography Assistant, Speech and Language Therapy Assistant, Senior Care Assistant. In Adult Social Care roles may include: Activities worker, Day Care Assistant, Day Care Officer, Domiciliary care worker, Home care worker, Nursing Assistant (in a nursing home or a hospice), Personal Assistants, Reablement Assistant, Residential Care Worker, Senior Home Care Worker, Support Worker.
Listed Building	<p>A building deemed to be of special architectural or historical interest is placed on a statutory list maintained by Historic England. Such buildings cannot be demolished, extended, or altered without special permission from a local planning authority, which typically consults with Historic England before determining an application. The designation regime is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990</p> <p>Listed buildings are classified into three grades:</p> <p>Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest</p> <p>Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest</p> <p>Grade II buildings are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them</p>
Listed building consent	permission required from a local planning authority before making changes that affect the character or appearance of a listed building
Liveable city	Where essential needs can be met locally such as food, open spaces, cultural activities, community needs

Liveable neighbourhoods	A neighbourhood where local residents can reach facilities such as small shops, post office, primary school within a 15- 20 minute walk
Local centres	Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not classified as local centres
Local connection (for intermediate housing)	The applicant is currently resident in the local area and has been for a continuous period of at least 12 months, or the applicant is currently employed in Oxford and has been for at least the previous six months, or the applicant has close family members (parents or adult children) who have lived in the area for at least 5 years.
Main Town Centre Uses	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines main town centre uses as retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)
Market housing	Housing provided by the private sector with no intervention from public bodies and sold or rented via the private market
Micro-renewables	Small-scale non-commercial renewable energy installations such as a domestic solar panel array
Mobility hubs	An area in which a variety of transport modes and community assets are co-located for seamless interchange. These facilities provide added benefit to communities and combined they make up an easy-to-use transport network
Multi-functional	In the context of green infrastructure, the term multi-functional means the multiple benefits that features and spaces can provide simultaneously, often contributing to better health and wellbeing for people and the natural environment (e.g. supporting mental/physical health; providing space for biodiversity; climate resilience etc). Some types of GI may provide more benefits than others
Native planting	A native plant is one that has evolved naturally in its location without direct human intervention, as opposed to species that have not existed historically in an area but are introduced by human activities
Net zero carbon	A situation where any emissions of carbon dioxide are balanced out by removal elsewhere – equating to no net increase (adapted from IPCC)
Oxford Heritage Assets Register	A register of buildings, structures, features, or places that make a special contribution to the character of Oxford and its neighbourhoods through their locally significant historic, architectural, archaeological or artistic interest

Oxford Living Wage	The Oxford Living Wage is an hourly minimum pay that promotes liveable earnings for all workers and recognises the high cost of living in Oxford. For 2023-24 the rate is £11.35 per hour
Oxford Short Stay Accommodation Study	A study that provides a summary of findings with an analysis of the impact on the development of policies which will influence both the existing stock of short stay accommodation as well as the amount and type of future provision to meet future forecasted demand
Parking Standards for New Developments	A document produced by Oxfordshire County Council used to help determine the level of parking at new developments
Planning Practice Guidance	A web-based resource that brings together national planning practice guidance for England
Principal elevation	In most cases the principal elevation will be that part of the house that fronts (directly or at an angle) the main highway serving the house (the main highway will be the one that sets the postcode for the house concerned). It will usually contain the main architectural features such as main bay windows or a porch serving the main entrance to the house. Usually, but not exclusively, the principal elevation will be what is understood to be the front of the house. Where there are two elevations that may have the character of a principal elevation, for example on a corner plot, a view will need to be taken as to which of these forms the principal elevation
Registered Parks and Gardens	Registered Parks and Gardens are designed landscapes, such as parks and gardens, that have been identified as being of special historic interest. Each registered park and garden is listed on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).
Renewable energy	Energy that uses technologies which generally rely on the elements (e.g. sunlight, wind, rain), biomass, or on generating energy from the earth itself
Residual risk	Residual risk is the risk that remains after efforts to identify and eliminate some or all types of risk have been made
Resilience	Our ability to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner. When talking about climate resilience such events could include flash flooding or intense heatwave events
Retro-fitting	In the context of this chapter, retro-fitting describes improvement works to an existing building for the purpose of improving its energy efficiency (such as by making them easier to heat or by replacing fossil fuel systems with renewable energy-based systems), or its resilience to climate change
Scheduled Monuments	Archaeological sites and structures that have been recognised as nationally important due to their historical or cultural significance. These can include both above-ground and below-ground features such as standing stones, burial mounds, or the remains of monastic buildings, among others. Monuments are added to the Schedule by the Secretary of State if they are deemed of national importance.

Short stay accommodation	Accommodation providing residential tenancies, typically provided on a daily basis, principally for short stays by visitors. Accommodation will typically be in self-contained space consisting of complete furnished rooms or areas for living/dining and sleeping, with amenities (e.g. television, internet) included in the rent. This accommodation type includes hotels and bed and breakfast. Aparthotels or serviced apartments are treated as residential uses, for which affordable housing provision is sought, and are not considered as short stay accommodation for the purpose of the policy
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Areas identified by Natural England as being of special interest for their ecological or geological features. Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment
Site specific flood risk assessments (FRAs)	A study that determines how a proposed development will manage flood risk from all possible water sources to the site in question
Social Rent	Homes that are let at a level of rent set much lower than those charged on the open market. The rent will be calculated using the formula as defined in the Rent Standard Guidance of April 2015 (updated in May 2016) or its equivalent or replacement guidance (relevant at the time of the application).
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Special Areas of Conservation are areas that have been designated at a European level as important for nature conservation
Standard Method	The Government has set out a Standard Method for identifying housing need. This should be the starting point for assessing housing need and it identifies an overall minimum average annual housing need figure
Student accommodation	Accommodation whose main purpose is to house students in higher education, registered on full-time courses of an academic year or more in Oxford
Sui Generis	A term used to categorise buildings that do not fall within any particular use class for the purposes of planning permission. Such as petrol stations and cinemas
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs)	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are a sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water and protect against flooding. These include porous roads, high-level road drainage, swales, soakaways, filter trenches, wet and dry attenuation ponds and ditches. SuDS helps mimic natural drainage processes and can provide benefits in terms of sustainability, water quality and amenity
The City Centre Archaeological Area	Area of the city centre where archaeological remains are almost certain to be present
Traffic filters	Cameras that are intended to reduce traffic levels in Oxford by managing the use of certain roads in the city by private cars
Transport assessment	A thorough assessment of the transport implications of development

Transport statement	A 'lighter-touch' evaluation to be used where this would be more proportionate to the potential impact of the development (i.e. in the case of developments with anticipated limited transport impacts)
Whole building approach	In the context of retrofitting, taking a Whole Building Approach means that improvements are informed by an understanding of how the entire building and the different materials that it is comprised of currently performs, considering issues such as air quality, damp management and ventilation. It involves selecting fabric improvements and other upgrades that complement each other to ensure the best results for the long-term sustainability of the building and health of occupants and avoiding problems of maladaptation, whereby improvement projects can have unintended, negative consequences (such as excessive moisture build-up, or inadequate ventilation)
Working drivers	Residents and drivers who are dependent on their vehicle more than 50% of their working day to earn a wage. Where the vehicle is required to undertake multiple journeys in the city (or wider) to deliver the service provided by the business. Examples include NHS community-based staff, carers working for private care companies, delivery drivers, plumbers, electricians and other trades, mobile hairdressers, dog grooming, food bank staff
Zero Emission Zone	An area within Oxford that prevents vehicles that emit Carbon Dioxide for travelling through without an associated charge

APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC

APPENDIX 1.1 DESIGN CHECKLIST

Introduction

Purpose of this design code/guide - what it does

The design guide sets out the key considerations that applicants will need to respond to in order to demonstrate high-quality design in line with requirements of Policy HD7.

The guide also brings together broader design considerations in Oxford which will arise from the requirements of policies across the Local Plan.

Structure of this design code/guide

The design guide is structured as a series of questions which the City Council will look to see answered as part of a planning application. These answers will explain the design approach, most likely in the design and access statement. Under each question are a series of prompts intended to help flag key issues, the relevant Local Plan policies are noted, as are helpful guidance documents or information sources. Many of the topics are inter-related, cross references are provided where this is clear although the issues covered should also be considered as a whole. Context should always be the starting point of the design process, and the contextual analysis will inform many aspects of design. For major developments, where early consultation with the community is encouraged in the Statement of Community Involvement, this should include engagement on context and how that may inform design.

The structure of the document has been loosely guided by the key principles of high-quality design as set out in the National Design Guide, tailored to an Oxford setting.

Context

The context refers to the attributes of the site and its surroundings. Understanding and responding to context is complex. It applies to the physical, but also cultural and historic context. Understanding context is important, but an appropriate response will not merely be to copy existing built forms and densities. A thorough understanding of context is a key starting point in good design, as not only will it help to ensure a high-quality development, it will also help to identify the key opportunities and constraints that the design process will need to work at an early stage to ensure a successful application.

C.1 What are the key features identified in the contextual analysis that should inform the design?

The constraints and opportunities plan should form a key part of the design and access statement, explaining the design story and showing how the key features of the site have been identified and help to inform the design proposal. The analysis should therefore be wide-ranging, including but not limited to:

- What is the landscape/townscape character of the area (e.g. Riparian edge, clay hills, gravel raised bed) and the urban character of the area? What is the built-form in the area? Are there features that have a positive or negative impact on character, and how should this affect the design? Relevant may be roofscapes, materials, detailed features such as windows, boundary treatments and height and massing. Heritage assets on or near the site will need particular attention. See: Oxford in its Landscape Setting:

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1054/014_des_-_design_and_heritage

- What are the major movement corridors around the site – including roads, public transport routes, cycleways and footpaths. What is movement like along these corridors at present? Are there barriers or pinch points which constrict movement? What is access like into the site?
- What is the natural landscape like around and on the site? Is there green open space and what function does it provide? What is tree canopy cover like? Are there green or blue corridors or is there the potential to establish these by connecting up fragmented areas? What habitats are present and are there designated ecological or geological sites that could be susceptible to harm? Are there waterways or other blue features? See: [Oxford Urban Forest strategy](#); Green Infrastructure study 2022; Playing pitches study; Natural England mapping
- What is the heritage context of the area? This is expanded upon in section C2 below.
- What other constraints could be present (e.g. areas of flood risk, air pollution hotspots, noise environments)?
- What features/constraints could be present below the ground (e.g. utilities, soil quality/typologies; groundwater levels and movement; archaeology; contaminated land)?

Additional data sources (such as up-to-date satellite imagery, biodiversity/contamination/hydrology surveys) could be used to inform the site-specific context.

C.2 What is the heritage and cultural context of the site and are there any heritage assets that may be affected by the development?

The historic character of the city is unique and comprises a range of heritage assets, many of which are designated either locally or nationally.

- When considering whether there are any heritage assets that may be affected by the development, the setting of these must also be considered. If there is to be any impact on a heritage asset, a heritage statement will be required. This may be standalone or form part of the design and access statement. Policies HD1-HD6 and HD9 set out what is expected.

The following sources of information will help to identify whether any heritage assets or their setting may be affected by the development:

- Historic England List <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True/>
- Historic England Heritage at Risk Register <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>
- Conservation Area Maps and Appraisals https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20195/conservation_areas/871/conservation_area_s
- Oxford Heritage Asset Register https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20196/oxford_heritage_asset_register/874/oxford_heritage_asset_register_-_overview

Heritage assets offer an opportunity to maintain and inject local character. They are distinctive, and responding to them positively will help ensure a contextually rich design, as well as maintaining the significance of the asset.

C.3 How has the design rationale responded to the presence of important views across the city?

Views are particularly important in Oxford: there are wide-ranging views to and from and across the buildings in the historic core which include the internationally renowned skyline, which as an entity is considered a heritage asset; and views out towards the city's unique setting (which includes the green hills rising up around the city and the low-rise character of its suburbs). Also relevant are the views and setting of each individual tower and spire that comprises the iconic skyline, as this includes individually listed buildings of the highest significance.

Several types of views need to be considered:

- Long ranging views across the city that are protected (Policy HD9) - information on these can be found at: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20064/conservation/876/oxford_views_study
- Views identified in conservation area appraisals – typically shorter in range but important role in supporting the character of these areas – information on these can be found at: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20195/conservation_areas
- Views out towards the city's landscape setting and low-lying suburbs and landform which visually present the story of Oxford's history and development
- Locally important views that create or aid appreciation of the townscape and character of the area, including those potentially identified in neighbourhood plans.

The high buildings TAN identifies four principal visual characteristics that are worth considering when assessing views and how a building could impact on them:

- The iconic spires and silhouette of the historic city centre.
- The open and natural character of the river floodplains.
- The green (wooded or agricultural) backdrop to the city formed by the surrounding hills.
- The enclosed and often intimate views within the city centre.

As set out in policy HD9, the methodology outlined in the Assessment of the Oxford View Cones report will support in assessing potential impacts of high buildings on heritage significance.

Built form

Built form refers to the 3-D arrangement of streets, open spaces, development blocks and buildings. An appropriate built form and the design rationale will need to explain how the contextual analysis has informed this. It is important that the elements of built form set out below are not considered in isolation later sections in the guide such as movement and public space also play an important role in determining the correct arrangement for the site. Site layout and block arrangement

B.1 Has the proposed site layout been informed by the features identified through the contextual analysis? ;

The layout of development on a site and the siting of uses within that need to consider the contextual analysis. A comprehensive analysis should help to inform which parts of the site are more sensitive to development or need to be avoided completely. Policy HD8 sets out important considerations regarding the site's context that will affect the overall density of the development.

- Does the contextual analysis suggest that any areas of the site need to be left undeveloped, for example because of archaeological remains, valuable habitats, mature trees or areas of flood risk? These undeveloped areas will not only affect

site layout and block arrangement but also height/massing and density, and will influence the pattern of streets.

- Certain constraints may be able to be overcome through targeted design measures to allow development to come forward in an acceptable way – e.g. contaminated land could be remediated; noise concerns could be overcome with sufficient attenuation measures, open space may be able to be re-provided.
 - Other constraints may necessitate an arrangement of the site that completely avoids the concern – for example if part of the site is particularly high risk from flooding or to ensure a sufficient buffer to a sensitive ecological site nearby or a watercourse.
- The built form of the surrounding area will likely influence site layout. The design will need to respond to the way that buildings and spaces are arranged around the development site, including their heights, massing and density. Existing building lines should also be considered, and in most cases it will be appropriate to continue these where relevant. If that is not the design choice, the rationale should be explained.
- Movement will also be a key part of informing the site layout. The contextual analysis should identify existing accesses, roads and footpaths, and key destinations in the surrounding area. The Movement section has more detailed considerations but particular questions that may influence layout could include:
 - Are existing accesses adequate, or do they need to be moved or enhanced?
 - Can access be achieved (or are any additional accesses needed) for vehicles or just for cyclists and pedestrians to improve their choice of routes and to allow direct crossing of desire lines?
 - How direct is access through the site to surrounding destinations such as shops and bus stops and can it be made more direct?
 - How easy is it to navigate through the public realm? Key navigating points, or nodes, may be marked by buildings with notable features to make clear that it is a significant point in the network and to make routes memorable. Small block sizes can help maximise choice of routes.

B.2 What is the strategy behind the configuration of development blocks and how has this been tailored to the opportunities and constraints of the site?

Proposals should consider how different configurations of block typologies can satisfy the need of the development and respond to existing context. In general, key considerations will be the orientation of blocks, how they fit into the surroundings and maintain or create views and glimpses, the impact on solar gain, any wind tunnel effects and so on. The location of uses within blocks may need to be tailored to specific constraints on the site and surrounding area, for example noise pollution. Retail and similar uses that create activity will be best located on a frontage on primary streets. The uses proposed will influence the type of blocks. There are specific considerations for particular block arrangements:

- Standalone detached blocks may be more suitable for constrained sites or infill development, however standalone buildings can also be used in key locations on larger sites as statement buildings that can bring interest and improve legibility of site. Careful consideration needs to be given to the spaces between buildings to ensure they are integrated into their surroundings successfully. They typically give fewer opportunities to establish defined open space so the surrounding public realm will be particularly important establishing their character and setting.
- Courtyard or perimeter block arrangements establish more continuous building lines along the boundaries of an urban block and can offer more opportunities to contain shared space within. The shape and size of shared spaces within the

blocks can be varied based upon the needs of the occupants but should also be based upon wider environmental considerations such as presence of daylight/overshadowing.

- Where a site requires more flexibility but an appropriate amount of space more hybridised blocks arrangements can be more effective. This incorporates more breaks in building lines that can act as secondary access routes. Hybrid arrangements can allow for more variation in heights and massing, introducing more visual interest as well as opportunities to attain greater levels of floorspace whilst also keeping the footprint of the building minimised. Because of the more open nature of this type of arrangement, they can include semi-private amenity spaces that have a stronger relationship with the surrounding public realm.

B.3 How have the heights and massing of buildings been determined and how is this justified?

Oxford is particularly renowned for its spires and iconic skyline. Heights and massing of buildings should be informed by the context of the site (neighbouring uses and local built form and character) as well as the needs of the uses proposed.

- The height at which a building is considered to be high will be dependent on its surrounding context and will vary across the city. Even an increase in height of a single storey may constitute a high building. Building heights may impact views and Policy HD9 relates to high buildings. An understanding of context is critical. High buildings may offer visual interest and higher density. The choice of height should be design led, and the overall design will affect the impact of the height. Buildings at greater mass will often be more impactful at a lower height than a building of less mass. The impact on the heritage asset of the historic core is particularly important to consider.
- Vu City can be a useful resource for determining impacts of heights and reference should also be made to the methodology outlined in the Assessment of the Oxford View Cones report in accordance with policy HD9. In addition, the high buildings TAN sets out four visual tests which should be investigated as part of the design iteration process and included in the final submission proposal to demonstrate the potential effects a high building may have to the character, visual and heritage resource. These tests are:
 - Visual obstruction – the physical obstruction of a feature or component in the view caused by a high building.
 - Visual Competition / Complement – the siting of a high building within the same view as the feature such that the two are viewed together.
 - Skylining – when high buildings break the skyline, horizon or silhouette, which may be formed by built form or vegetation.
 - Change of character – occurs when the composition of a view is altered to the extent the character of the view is discernibly different to that of the existing.
 - There are other key design considerations when designing tall buildings. The profile or silhouette of the building is important. The articulation of built form should clearly respond and contribute positively to Oxford's skyline. The scope for diversity of profile / silhouette will depend on demonstrating a clear understanding of the context and positive contribution to the modulation of the city's skyline. High building designs should provide well organised and designed roof environments and contribute to the modulation of the city's skyline.
 - Microclimate is another important consideration as greater heights have greater potential to modify the microclimate. Effects may include the tunnelling of wind, partial or permanent shading of adjacent areas and / or intensification of solar irradiation. Privacy and access to light will also need

to be considered and the massing will need to be designed in a way that supports this.

- Think about how the visual impact of the development will be influenced by the bulk and massing of buildings including the relationship between different sections of the building (e.g. how its base, its middle and its top are balanced out). Larger, unbroken facades that form bulky or homogenous building lines can have a more significant impact on the streetscape and views from a distance, which may be more harmful in more sensitive areas of the city. Taller buildings of slender form are more likely to be more appropriate than bulky tall buildings.
- Whilst more complicated massing which results in a higher surface area (sometimes referred to as a high form factor) can come at a detriment to energy efficiency (see Resources section), consider how massing and building facades can be strategically designed to create visual interest through use of smaller components or features that can create depth and rhythm where appropriate (see Articulation of building features under the Identity and Character section).
- Consider the experience of people within the streetscape as they pass by and use the building. Think about how the building fronts onto the street and how design relates to the human scale so that spaces created between buildings are welcoming and pleasant to inhabit.

B.4 How do alterations to existing buildings respect the form, scale, character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area?

The same design principles apply when considering alterations to existing buildings; any alterations should respect the form, scale, character and appearance of the existing building. When extending a building, the impact on the existing building and surrounding buildings needs careful consideration.

The privacy and internal daylight and sunlight of the existing property and surrounding properties maybe negatively affected. Policy HD11 sets out expectations for levels of privacy, sunlight and daylight, including the 25o and 45o guidelines. With an extension there is more limited scope to consider orientation, meaning the height and length of the extension and any impacts on overshadowing will be particularly important, as well as the size and placement of windows and rooflights.

Movement

The quality of the movement network into and through a development plays an integral role in establishing its character and how it functions. Particular focus should be on enabling safe and easy walking and cycling as well as on the needs of those who are less mobile. A quality movement strategy will play a role in supporting people to access daily needs such as shops and facilities; employment and services; accessing open space and nature without having to rely on private vehicles. The way that streets are laid out can support social interaction and promote a safer public realm. Movement considerations will also need to address access to public transport for journeys beyond the local area and balance out the need for parking for those who do rely upon private vehicles.

M.1 Has movement into and through the development been considered and what is the strategy for this?

It is important that sites integrate well with the surrounding area. As part of the contextual analysis (as discussed in the Context section) movement corridors of various transport modes in and around the site should have been identified including barriers and opportunities to movement which new development could respond to.

- New developments should provide permeable streets to tie in with existing street networks and secure improved connectivity.
- Levels of movement will vary, with higher levels of activity likely to be located around particular uses like shops, schools and areas of employment and lower levels of activity in other areas such as residential streets.
- Very large sites may have streets across a hierarchy e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary routes. Even for small sites with a single access route, consideration of the position of this route within the surrounding street hierarchy should inform design.
- The street width, building height, enclosure, set backs and uses are likely to differ between the different street types to help distinguish between them (and therefore aid wayfinding) and to accommodate the level of activity of movement on them.
- Streets should not be vehicle dominated but should reflect a more human scale and allow for and encourage more active and sustainable modes of transport. Opportunities will be available for accommodating other design features, such as greening in the form of trees or SuDS, as well as street furniture and services but a balance needs to be struck to ensure that these spaces do not become cluttered.
- Narrower streets (secondary and tertiary routes) offer opportunities to slow down or remove through traffic and prioritise active travel like walking and cycling and are likely to be more fitting of residential areas. The design of new streets and alterations to existing ones should seek to encourage social interaction, natural surveillance and opportunities for active and sustainable traffic by prioritising the quality of the public realm and removing the dominance of the car in the street user hierarchy.

M.2 Has active travel been prioritised and how has design been used to ensure safety and security for all modes and different groups?

On routes of all sizes, pedestrian and cyclist friendliness should be maximised to ensure that all users are safe and comfortable throughout Oxford's movement network. The street user hierarchy should prioritise children, pedestrians, cyclists over motor vehicles and the built form and street design should reflect this.

Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan should be referred to and its Street Design Guide provides useful advice.

- Oxford's communities are diverse with varying needs and vulnerabilities that can modify their experience of the public realm at different times; this needs to be taken into consideration in designing movement routes. Is there sufficient pavement space for different users needs – e.g. those with pushchairs, individuals in wheelchairs or with other assisted mobility needs?
- Consider how route design will impact perceptions of security and promote safety for different groups, such as by facilitating desire-lines for pedestrians and cyclists wherever possible including across open spaces. Avoid creation of spaces and routes that feel cut off or lacking in visibility and take opportunities to reduce street crime/fear of crime and deter anti-social behaviour. Think about how different routes might be experienced at different times of the day and in different seasons, how could perceptions of safety change at night or in bad weather and how can street design be used to improve these (e.g. lighting, shade and shelter).
- Consider also how use of planting could be incorporated into roads, streets and paths to soften the urban fabric and encourage active travel across the site and beyond. Green features like trees that provide canopy cover can be beneficial for providing shade to pedestrians during the summer months as well as movement corridors for wildlife; careful placement of hedges can act as a buffer to air pollutants as well as softening noise impacts. However, care should be taken in choice of species and placement to ensure negative impacts are avoided – for

example certain species can produce pollutants that reduce air quality, whilst poor design can also trap air pollution (e.g. large tree canopies reducing air flow within narrower street canyons). See Nature section for more information.

- Think about how street design can support active travel in other ways, for example by providing secure storage for bicycles to ensure that people have somewhere safe to leave bikes in between travelling. Think about how and where these should be located, think about where the demand for storage would be. Is it convenient to use? Does it benefit from natural surveillance? Has situation avoided creating hazards for other road users?

M.3 How does the layout and design of streets promote access to public transport and create areas with minimal traffic

Lower traffic streets allow more space for social interaction and for children to play and have been demonstrated to increase 'neighbourliness' and access to active and more sustainable travel and freedom of movement for children. Even in a relatively small scheme, attention can be given to creating areas with low or no vehicular traffic.

- Placement of parking areas is important, particularly on schemes with only one vehicular access. Is it possible to position parking so that cars do not need to circulate around the whole development? Has permeability been maximised for pedestrians and cyclists?
- Most schemes in Oxford will be smaller, infill schemes on or near to existing bus routes, but will not have new bus routes within them. However, in cases where bus routes are needed within a scheme, these must be direct, wide and straight enough to be easily navigated for a bus driver with adequate space for passenger to wait comfortably, without conflicting with other road users.
- Think about requirements of other services like delivery vehicles and waste collection and design routes to ensure they can move efficiently. All streets should have some provision for emergency access, regardless of hierarchy. Solutions for otherwise pedestrian areas, such as designated delivery zones, may be useful.

High quality public spaces

Except for the smallest developments, most new developments will include public spaces. Multi-functionality is encouraged, from allowing movement and access to allowing social activities and recreation. The link with the Green Infrastructure strategy will influence whether there are long, narrow strips of green corridor, larger and more formal spaces, natural spaces or small pocket parks.

P.1 Are all spaces clearly defined, with a clear purpose, with no awkward or leftover spaces?

Public spaces should be well-defined and clearly distinguished from private spaces. The purpose of the public spaces should be clear, with a certain amount of flexibility about their future use. For example, if routes are segregated, with pavements or cycle lanes for pedestrians and cyclists, the divisions should be clear, but potential for change in the future should also be considered, for example to a shared space. Public open spaces should be obviously public, clearly visible, and accessible. Awkward patches of land that are too small to have an obvious function should be avoided. Landscaping and street furniture such as benches and carefully locating small spaces within the network to create a small social or stopping place will help to ensure they are functional and not wasted.

P.2 How are public spaces designed to give a sense of safety

When a public space is overlooked, with doors and windows fronting onto it, it can offer the user passing through a sense of security, this is particularly important at night and for more vulnerable pedestrians. Is there overlooking to create a sense of surveillance? Are all external public spaces such as streets and parks overlooked by windows serving habitable rooms in buildings and adjacent activity?

P.3 How do public spaces support social interaction and is there adequate space in the public realm to linger and walk side-by-side?

The public realm should do more than just enable people to walk from a to b. Except in the smallest infill sites with only a short access road, there should be an opportunity to design the public realm to include wider and more spacious areas that enable people to interact with others. Routes for pedestrians should not be so narrow as to require single-file walking. Oxfordshire County Council's [Street Design Guide](#) provides useful advice.

P4 How are any public open spaces designed with all ages and needs in mind?

Public spaces should be useable and attractive for everyone. Playable space and playful streets that are welcoming to all support sustainable communities and wellbeing. This is important in all of the public realm, not just large parks and squares and playgrounds. Smaller, informal spaces including pavements, pocket parks and small community gardens and growing spaces can all provide these opportunities. Those with visual or hearing impairments benefit from well-designed spaces that are easy to navigate and pleasant to use.

P.5 How has the public realm been designed to be flexible, adaptive and stimulating

Public realm should be able to respond and adapt to various uses and needs and it should also be engaging. Variety in the public realm will help achieve this. How will there be opportunities for children and adults to play games and be active or stop and watch the world go by? All senses should be considered, including the sounds that different planting and surfacing may make, visual variety and smells.

Identity and character

Identity and character are influenced both at a broad level as was discussed under the Built Form section, but also on a more detailed level, by the articulation of specific features of buildings and spaces as well as the choice of materials. Where these elements come together successfully, they can help to generate local character that makes a development distinctive and memorable and gives users a sense of pride as well as establishing places that are sustainable and resilient for the future.

Articulation of building features

I.1 Do the proposals contribute positively to the roofscape?

Oxford has a rich roofscape and new development needs to consider any impact on it. The positive design of roofscape will help to enhance any significant long views the development might be part of and also the experience of the place at street level. The contextual analysis undertaken on the development site will help inform an appropriate approach to the design of rooftops.

- How the design of roofscape sits within longer views will be particularly important where the development is sited within the protected views that cross the city, but also where it is sited within views identified within Conservation Areas Appraisals – See Views section.
- Along with the presence of protected views, consideration should be given as to whether there are specific characteristic aspects of roofscape in the area – this

will be of particular relevance where the site is located within a conservation area – for many of the CAs the style of rooftop is an important element in their designation.

- Variety in the roofscape through a mixture of flat and articulated roofs can help to provide visual interest. Think strategically about the appropriateness of additional features such as dormers or extractors. Where incorporated carefully, these can add visual interest and punctuate the roofline, but their incorporation needs to consider the wider context of the area as well as the overall balance of other features on the building.
- Where roofscape design is less constrained and particularly on larger developments or those within constrained site boundaries, consider how design could support the use of rooftops as communal areas or private amenity space. Equally, think about how rooftops can support wider environmental/sustainability objectives such as promoting biodiversity, and rainwater harvesting, as well as roof-mounted photovoltaics (which can be integrated with green or biodiverse/brown roofs). See Nature and Resources sections.

I.2 How have façade details such as windows and entrances been designed with consideration of any positive characteristics in the area?

As with roofscape, the articulation of façade features like windows and doors can play a major role in contributing to the character of the building and the setting of the wider area. Again, think about the contextual analysis and what factors might need to be considered in the design of these features.

- Articulation of the windows on surrounding buildings including their size, positioning and the types of materials used in their construction. Think about how the design of window/doors will fit in with the rhythm of adjacent buildings so that they respect and enhance the positive character of the area where possible. Where contrasting design choices are made, these should be justified.
- As well as the location of windows/doors, think about how the specific glazed features are designed, including how individual panes are subdivided. Large uninterrupted areas of glazing (e.g. a wide, undivided patio door) can give the impression of voids which may be detrimental to overall design depending on where they are located. Conversely, use of glazing that is subdivided on particular facades can draw attention to these elements in a positive way, but can be equally disruptive where multiple styles of sub-division, or uneven subdivision are located on one frontage.
- Think about the impacts of window/door sizing and spacing on internal amenity. Larger areas of glazing can allow for more daylight but could disrupt privacy, so may be more appropriate at levels higher than ground floor. Equally, size and positioning of glazing can impact solar gain and indoor thermal comfort – there are specific requirements for meeting overheating tests set out in the Building Regulations (Part O – Overheating) which need to be balanced out against design aspirations to ensure planning permission is not in conflict with building regulations. See Resources section.

I.3 Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

Design will need to take into account a range of external features servicing the development and its occupants; it is important that their impact is considered both in terms of their location and the materials they are devised from. Are external servicing features such as bin storage facilities, rainwater goods integrated into the design of the development with well considered placement?

- The positioning of features like bins and storage for outdoor equipment (including bikes) at the front of buildings can have a negative impact where they protrude inappropriately as well reducing the perceived activity of frontages which can

impact the street scene and reduce perceptions of safety. Think about how these could be positioned away from facades intended to provide active frontages, potentially to the rear of properties and away from the streetscene where possible, though it is important to ensure that there is good access for users and it is acknowledged this isn't always feasible. Where positioning away from street scene is not possible, there will be a need for high quality materials and more careful design that can reduce impacts.

- Think about the impact of other external features required to provide for essential services such as meter boxes, gutter pipes, satellite dishes and Electric Vehicle charging (see Resources section for more on EVs). Whilst these should again be located in a way that minimises their visual impact and best fits in with the character of the building and the local area, it may not be feasible to fully limit visual impact by position alone. Again, this is where it is important to pay attention to material choice and specific design characteristics like size, colour, and location and factor this early into the design process. Can these features be designed with a similar colour to the wider building? Can features like guttering be integrated into the façade?

I.4 How do the materials chosen reinforce the overall design concept, respect the local context and ensure high quality?

It should be explained in the DAS how the contextual analysis been used to inform the materials chosen. Considerations that may be of relevance as part of the design rationale for materials used could include:

- In many cases it is likely to be appropriate to select materials and vernacular used in the local area as well as wider Oxford. Where contrasting materials are deliberately chosen for example to create visual interest and distinctive style, the design rationale should be justified, including with regard to the impact on existing character.
- It may be appropriate to use combinations of materials or different materials on different parts of the building for example on different storeys or in order to articulate certain parts of the structure. In those cases, the change from one material to another should appear logical and be justified within the design rationale.
- The selection of materials should consider various characteristics including colour, variation, reflectivity, texture of materials. The extent and character of glazing will also influence the appreciation of a building. The use of prominent colours and materials should be carefully considered; muted colours that respect the existing character of Oxford may be most appropriate. Substantially glazed elevations should demonstrate sensitive appreciation of orientation and reflectance.
- Consider the way materials are seen and appreciated under different atmospheric conditions, for example in bright sunshine and at different times of the day and night. This should be tested through the provision of visualisations agreed during pre-application consultation.
- Materials utilised in external/detailed elements like rainwater harvesting (e.g. guttering), boundary treatments (e.g. fences, walls) and other extraneous features, also need careful consideration, particularly where these are publicly visible. Are these of a high quality, durable and in keeping with the wider context of the building and the local area?
- Consideration should also be given to how the materials will perform over time; they should be chosen to be long-lasting and wear and weather well, without degradation of their aesthetic appeal or functionality. This applies to materials used in the buildings and also external areas including private amenity space and public realm which will be subject to differing levels of wear (e.g. weathering). In

external areas, materials should be easy to maintain and repair, and when it comes to replacement, easy to source matching materials.

- Other considerations of relevance to material selection could include how they will support other design choices and sustainability. For example, considering the embodied carbon cost of particular materials, as well as thermal performance of fabric materials which is important for energy efficiency and maintaining a comfortable indoor environment throughout year (see Resources section and policies R1, R2 and G9).

Nature - Green Infrastructure and biodiversity

Given the constrained nature of the city and increasing pressures on landscapes and biodiversity arising from all sizes of development, it is essential that the provision of green and blue infrastructure are considered at the earliest stage in the design process. Natural and designed landscapes that integrate existing features and incorporate new features should offer multi-functional benefits including for health and wellbeing, biodiversity, water management and climate change. Impacts on existing biodiversity should be avoided and new spaces for wildlife and flora prioritised, integrating with the wider ecological network wherever possible, so that development can help to enhance biodiversity across the city.

N.1 How has design been informed by an understanding of the quality of existing Green Infrastructure features on and around the site and are these being retained/enhanced wherever possible?

Design should be informed by an understanding of the quality of existing green and blue features on and around the site and the value they contribute to the local area as well as wider GI network. A range of factors should be considered in determining quality – think about not only age and physical condition but also their value to wider amenity of the area as well as other functions that may not be as visible – such as benefits for biodiversity; climate adaptation and carbon storage; as well as being of heritage significance (e.g. Registered Parks) or contributing to the setting for heritage assets or for physical recreation.

- Retention of existing green infrastructure should always be the priority, particularly where this is high-quality and could be challenging or time consuming to replicate elsewhere. Mature trees and hedgerows for example take many years/decades to establish and it is preferable for development to be designed in a way that avoids adverse impacts such as their removal.
- Certain functions of green infrastructure are specific to their existing location, making them infeasible to relocate, for example where they contribute to setting of heritage assets; protect reserves of carbon heavy peat; or act as flood storage within the functional flood plain.
- The potential for enhancement of lower quality features should also be considered, this can help meet the requirements of the Local Plan such as for the Urban Greening Factor (Policy G3) or biodiversity net gain (Policy G4).
- It is important that design not only considers the site itself but also the areas that extend beyond the boundaries and the interconnections between green features wherever possible. This will help meet the requirements of Policy G2 on enhancement and provision of green and blue features.
- Consider whether there are existing linear features such as lines of trees, hedges, pockets of green spaces or watercourses that extend into or alongside the site. These can be important spaces for movement of wildlife and people and support an array of habitats. Consideration should be given to strengthening these existing connections, enhancing existing habitats, and avoiding any further fragmentation. Potential for recreation and movement should also be considered.

A range of tools and metrics are available to inform assessments of existing GI and should be utilised where relevant including existing information in the Oxford GI study 2022; the Council's Urban Greening Factor tool; Natural England's GI standards; the DEFRA Biodiversity metric as well as other best practice such as the British Standards for trees BS.5837:2012 (or its future equivalent). Refer to satellite mapping as well as other data sources that details the types of green features, spaces and habitats that surround the site.

N.2 How have new Green Infrastructure features been designed to deliver multiple functions/benefits for the sustainability of the environment and health and wellbeing of people?

Green infrastructure needs to be considered in design with the same level of importance as traditional 'grey' infrastructure like sewers and roads, particularly as it is often able to perform multiple roles that support the sustainability of a development and its occupants. This is especially important in Oxford where our green space is limited or unevenly distributed. Policy G2 sets out the various multi-functional benefits that new GI should seek to deliver, and green and blue features should be selected to meet the needs of the proposal and the wider area in this context. Highlighting where design features are addressing multiple policy requirements (for example providing green space for occupants as well as SuDS features that can reduce flood risk) will help in demonstrating the merits of an application and the overall approach.

- The functionality of open space and the role any type of provision plays in supporting occupants of the development should also be informed by an understanding of the wider local context as well as the needs of the users of the development. Consider what types of spaces are available already in the local area, whether there are deficiencies in certain types of space that could be addressed by the proposal.
- The scale of the development is likely to influence the levels of opportunity for provision of green spaces but all sites should be able to provide some level of high-quality greening – this will be an expectation on major development, to be demonstrated via the Urban Greening Factor (Policy G3). On larger sites, networks of green spaces can help to break up urban fabric as well as green corridors. For larger applications with public open space provision, engagement with the local community will help inform the type of space needed.
- Simple design solutions such as avoiding extensive areas of artificial surfaces like tarmac or concrete can be beneficial for the long-term sustainability of a site and can be beneficial in helping to meet specific policy requirements such as those set out for the Urban Greening Factor (Policy G3) and Soil quality (Policy R6).
- On building facades such as roof and walls, use of green features where carefully installed can further reduce artificial surfaces and promote more multi-functionality. This approach can be particularly helpful on more constrained sites, where opportunities are limited elsewhere.
- The plan for ongoing management and maintenance of green features should be set out. Care will be needed during the establishment period (including watering and feeding as well as replacement of failed specimens) but also ongoing care needs such as pruning of trees and shrubbery and maintenance of green spaces.
- Green spaces with a mixture of play features for young people will enhance wellbeing – these spaces do not have to be overly designed or dominated by fixed equipment, but could also be comprised of wild areas and facilities that encourage engagement with nature and free-play.
- Opportunities for communal food growing, which could be small scale and informal such as community orchards can also meet an important need not only for food but also social engagement and mental health.

Information is available published data sources from the Council (such as the Oxford GI Study 2022, the Playing Pitches study). National data sets such as the mapping accompanying the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework and OS data.

N.3 Are there protected species or other biodiversity/habitat features on the site or in proximity to the development and how has the design been tailored to avoid adverse impacts and/or enhance these features?

- Part of the contextual analysis informing design should be an understanding of the potential for protected species or other biodiversity value (such as important habitat) on the site and ensuring design responds in a way that avoids adverse impacts in line with the mitigation hierarchy and ideally enhance these features.
- The site layout will need to be informed by considerations arising from proximity to important habitats and take into account the potential for causing impacts even at a distance.
- Where a development is proposed in proximity to a designated ecological site, the layout of the site may need to be designed in a way that incorporates sufficient buffering – potentially through use of landscaping features and informed by appropriate ecological expertise. Buffering may also be required where there is proximity to blue corridors.
- Where there are sufficient indicators of species of interest, there may be a requirement for detailed biodiversity surveys which can ascertain the specific nature of species present and help inform any mitigation that may be necessary.

A range of information sources are available detailing the presence of biodiversity interests in the city, including a detailed set of records held by Thames Valley Environmental Records Service (TVERC); as well as habitat data from Natural England (Magic tool), and the network of ecological sites designated by Policy G5.

N.4 How have external areas and features provided on the site been designed to support biodiversity and allow wildlife to flourish?

It is important to consider the types of landscaping features and how these can support feeding and shelter of various forms of wildlife where possible. Care should also be taken in the design of site features which could impact wildlife.

- The inclusion of native and/or pollinator friendly planting, as well as species that bear fruits/nuts is encouraged in order to support feeding for example.
- Making space for areas of informal planting that can grow wilder during the year can provide opportunities for shelter and hibernation within the urban environment.
- Species selection should avoid invasive species or those that are particularly harmful to people or the wider environment.
- Consider how the design of external lighting could impact on the wider environment and avoid overuse of artificial lighting where it could be particularly detrimental to nocturnal species.
- Try to limit other sources of disturbance such as noise from plant equipment and emission of pollutants into the air or water – these are considerations which will be of equal importance during the construction phase as much as during the operational phase and will help to meet the requirements of Policy R7.

Resources

It is essential that development responds to the challenges of climate change. This includes meeting net zero carbon and having buildings that are resilient to hazards like overheating and flooding, and prudent use of natural resources. Many of the responses to these challenges, such as energy efficient design and efficiently performing buildings will need to

be thought about at the beginning of the design process. Careful design choices can secure efficient buildings and reduced impacts on the environment, whilst also securing high-quality design and benefits for the health and wellbeing of occupants.

R.1 How has development been designed to ensure it is net zero carbon in operation and in accordance with the energy hierarchy?

Policy R1 sets out the energy hierarchy and its application in the design of new buildings. The first step in the hierarchy is designing so that demand for energy to operate the building and its systems is minimised, this could be achieved in a number of ways many of which align with Passivhaus principles such as:

- Orientation - Design the orientation of the building so as to maximise solar gain in the winter (e.g. south-facing) and minimise overshadowing. Dual aspect, south-facing facades are particularly beneficial for this where a site allows.
- Massing - Consider how the massing of the building will influence energy required for heating/cooling. Be strategic in how the articulation of elements such as roof shape, the use of insets and overhangs as well as the grouping of dwellings are used to achieve character without resulting in excessive form factor (the ratio between the external surface area and the internal treated floor area) which will require greater amounts of energy to heat/cool. Also think about whether all spaces require heating/cooling - grouping of 'cold spaces' like garages and bike sheds can allow for a more efficient layout.
- Facades including glazing - Think about how the proportions of glazed surfaces like windows/doors can influence performance. Design glazing with considerations of orientation, daylight and thermal comfort in summer. It is important to minimise heat loss towards the northern elevations in winter, such as by incorporating smaller windows on northern facades, whilst solar gain needs to be maximised on southern facades where window sizes could be bigger. Equally, higher storeys are likely to benefit from more light so could include reduced levels of glazing than lower levels.
- Fabric-first - Take a fabric-first approach which seeks to incorporate high levels of insulation; a very air tight building fabric as well as minimising thermal bridges. Use of triple glazing in windows/doors will help with thermal efficiency of these elements.
- Ventilation - Include efficient ventilation systems in order to preserve good indoor air quality, avoid overheating and moisture build up. Because of the need for high air tightness in building fabric as outlined above, net zero carbon homes are likely to require some form of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery which will allow for a constant rate of ventilation. Consider the placement of these systems to allow for easy access and maintenance. Habitable rooms need to have openable windows – ideally try to ensure windows are placed on opposing sides of the building to facilitate purge ventilation providing bursts of fresh air through the building as required.

After minimising energy use, the second step in the energy hierarchy as set out in Policy R1 is that design should consider how energy is used as efficiently as possible and sourced renewably. Each development site will have its own considerations but some factors to consider include:

- Use of heat pumps that can secure cooling as well as heating and can be up to 3x more efficient than other heating systems. Where a building has followed the principles of high fabric efficiency above, they will be well set up for the more gradual heating method of technologies such as air source heat pumps.
- Consider the orientation of the roof and how this can maximise performance of solar photovoltaics and thermal technology. Consider the types of systems the

building will accommodate, the orientation of the roof to maximise solar irradiation, and the structural considerations to support pv in high winds.

- Careful design can allow solar pv and green roofs to exist mutually with the correct orientation and placement of panels – indeed the cooling effect of green roofs can support the performance of pv (which can reduce at very high temperatures).
- Design of the renewable energy generation system can be made more efficient through incorporating battery storage to make use of the renewably generated energy at times of low capacity. Space will need to be made to incorporate such systems.
- Design considerations for electric vehicles chargers such as location and placement, size of unit and colour for example will be particularly relevant where installing in a sensitive area of the city (e.g. conservation area). Properties without a driveway may need to consider potential for other solutions such as pavement cable channel as a priority before considering the need for creation of new driveways. There is additional information on the City Council [website](#) and the County Council's [website](#).

Where proposals involve the retro-fitting of existing buildings (including traditional buildings), policy R3 sets out the importance of being guided by a Whole Building Approach, as well as other guidance that should be considered in design. Reference should also be made to the Council's Retro-fitting Technical Advice Note as well as Historic England's advice note.

R.2 How has consideration of the carbon footprint embodied within the construction process been incorporated into the design?

The issue of embodied carbon in the construction process is not a simple one and will be influenced by various considerations such as the types of materials selected, where they are sourced from, how they are put together and their longevity. Nevertheless, having consideration of this issue upfront and throughout the design process will ensure opportunities to reduce carbon emissions embodied in the construction process are not missed. Think about:

- Reuse of buildings - consider whether demolition of existing buildings is really necessary and reuse buildings where possible (try to reuse demolition materials if not). Maximise recycling on the site and the use of recycled materials more generally and minimise waste.
- Source of materials - consider where materials are sourced from and how these are to be transported to the site. Can modular construction techniques be utilised to prepare parts of the building in advance and be brought to site? This is also a good way to reduce waste in the construction process.
- Types of materials - certain materials have a higher carbon cost to produce than others. Some materials can come in lower carbon alternatives such as low carbon concrete mixes. Natural materials like wood and hemp which may be used in the structure, insulation or the finishing, can even sequester (lock up) more carbon than is emitted in their production. In terms of the finishing, can elements be left open/uncovered without the need for additional finishes being applied?. For example, careful selection of the material used to construct the floor can mean there is no need for additional carpeting or other coverings.
- Maintenance - think about the entire lifespan of the building. Ensure that easy maintenance of the building and its systems are considered to support longevity.
- The future - consider how design of features and layout could allow the building and its spaces to adapted to alternative uses in the future. What will happen at the end of its life span? Plan for ease of deconstruction in selection of materials and construction methods.

R.3 How does the design consider resilience to the impacts of overheating and water stress/drought in a changing climate?

A highly fabric efficient building should be as good at keeping heat out during the summer months as it is in keeping heat in during the winter months. However, the performance of the building during high heat events should be an integral consideration in the design process and additional measures that can reduce the risk of overheating are greatly encouraged. There are certain requirements that will need to be met to pass Building Regulations (specifically the requirements of Part O: Overheating) - as these requirements can have a close relationship with design process, it is helpful to consider them together.

Policy R9 sets out the importance of design being guided by a cooling strategy which follows the principles of energy saving and efficiency in line with the energy hierarchy, promoting passive cooling options in the first instance before exploring more energy intensive measures. The following hierarchy should be used as a guide for selecting cooling interventions:

- Minimise internal heat generation and reduce amount of heat entering a building in summer through energy efficient design and careful building layout/design (e.g. orientation, shading, albedo, fenestration, insulation and green infrastructure)
- Manage the heat within the building through exposed internal thermal mass and high ceilings
- Passive ventilation
- Mechanical ventilation
- Active cooling systems (ensuring only most energy efficient technologies are used).
- Consider how the design of façade elements such as windows can reduce solar gain during the summer months. Windows on southern elevations will experience sunlight coming in at a higher angle in the middle of the day which can be easier to address through fixed shading like wider eaves (and other forms of overhang like balconies). Use of shutters and windows that open to allow rapid ventilation through the building can allow occupants to quickly respond to temperature extremes.
- Consider how water saving measures such as water efficient fixtures and fittings as well as grey water recycling can be incorporated into the design to reduce water use, alongside rainwater harvesting features to collect water for uses such as gardening. Where these features require elements on the roof, there will need to be sufficient space to accommodate these alongside other features like green infrastructure, renewables and plant equipment.

R.4 How does the design consider resilience to the impacts of flooding in a changing climate, avoiding increasing flood risk elsewhere and ideally reducing existing flood risk?

The approach to site layout needs to be informed by a comprehensive understanding of current and future flood risk on the site (taking into account the impacts of climate change) as part of the Flood Risk Assessment. There is a range of detailed guidance and data sources that should be considered. The Flood Risk Assessment needs to be integral to informing the design process and how the development is planned. Some general considerations that will need to be factored into the design process include:

- The current context of the site including existing land uses and how these may contribute to or increase flood risk. This includes whether there are areas of existing flood storage or natural features which contribute to mitigating surface run off (e.g green space and areas of planting).

- Taking a sequential approach to the layout of uses on the site with more vulnerable uses (see NPPF for vulnerability classifications) being located in areas of lowest risk from flooding on the site.
- Incorporating a range of design features into the fabric of the building itself to improve resilience to flooding and helping occupants to recover more quickly. Such measures are generally broken down into two categories: dry proofing, which seeks to keep water out at times of flood; and wet proofing which seeks to allow the building and its systems to continue to operate during flooding and be dried out quickly.
- Thinking about how design can support emergency management at time of flooding – are there clear and safe access/egress routes into the site and individual buildings, are evacuation routes easily identified for occupants including those who may have reduced mobility (e.g. elderly and disabled); how will emergency services access the site if necessary; what provision is there for alarm systems and alerts?
- Taking account of the age, construction and heritage significance of any existing buildings and structures on the site. Where retro-fit is being proposed, follow the guidance of policy R3 in relation to Whole Building Approach.

R.5 How have Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems been incorporated?

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) features should be an integral component of the design of outdoor spaces in line with the requirements of Policy G8. Applicants should refer to the Council's SuDS planning guidance as well as guidance prepared by the County Council in how to design SuDS features into the development, available [here](#). In particular, it is expected that high quality design in relation to SuDS will factor in a number of considerations including:

- Design of SuDS should follow a strategic process that seek to slow down and capture rainfall first, allowing as much of it as possible to evaporate or soak into the ground close to where it fell. The rest is then directed in a way that improves water quality towards the nearest watercourse to be released at the same rate and volumes as before development. The types of features selected should be informed by the context of the site. The Council's preference is that natural surface features which are primarily green are prioritised, these could include green roofs, ponds, wetlands and shallow ditches called swales.
- Additional context informing SuDS selection should consider the geological and hydrological conditions of the site, informed by appropriate ground investigations including percolation testing as well as testing to understand the potential presence of contamination. Issues that may be of relevance and may make certain types of drainage features inappropriate could include: unstable ground, contaminated ground, poor infiltration, proximity to buildings, the highway or other sensitive areas; presence of other services/infrastructure; as well as existing ground water levels/potential for pollution.
- Whilst SuDS features need to prioritise their water management benefits including flood retention and improving water quality of runoff, design should follow the principles of multi-functional design so that these landscape features can perform multiple benefits in the development throughout its lifetime, particularly when they are not in use at times of low rainfall. See guidance on multi-functional green infrastructure features in the Nature section.
- All SuDS should have a comprehensive maintenance plan in place in order to ensure they remain functional and safe for the lifetime of the development.

Homes and buildings

Well-designed homes and communal areas within buildings should provide a good standard and quality of internal space. The needs of occupants will relate not only to the internal space provision and how this allows them to live day to day (e.g. socialising, working and keeping active) but also to external space provision in the form of private or communal outdoor spaces. Well-designed homes also consider the varying needs of different groups in the community including the disabled and the elderly and are easily adapted to meet changing needs over time.

H.1 Are internal spaces of sufficient size and proportion for their intended functions?

It is important to ensure that new homes are of an adequate size and suitable layout to provide high quality, functional homes that meet the needs of a wide range of people, and consider how those needs might change over time. This applies to development at all scales, from large strategic sites to infill development. While there is added pressure to deliver as many homes as possible, this should not automatically result in the creation of smaller homes, or housing that has unacceptably small or poor functioning internal spaces that do not meet appropriate standards.

- Policy HD11 sets out the requirement for internal dwelling spaces to meet at a minimum the Nationally Described Space Standards. These are technical standards, distinct from the Building Regulations, that have been developed as a means to create a common baseline that can be applied across all planning authorities. It contains requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at defined levels of occupancy, and includes areas and dimensions for key parts of the home - notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.
- Along with living space, dwellings should allow for a usable amount of storage space integrated within internal layouts. Without it, people's belongings and items for everyday use will encroach on the space available within rooms and limit enjoyment of them. Space requirements should also consider other needs such as waste and recycling storage, which are essential for enabling people to live sustainably.
- Think about the more specialised accessibility needs of the disabled such as the need for wheelchair adapted housing, the requirements for which are contained in (Category 3 homes in Part M of the Building Regulations). Also is the dwelling designed to accommodate aging occupants and changing mobility over time? See lifespan section for more.

H.2 Does the development provide sufficient private and/or communal open space?

Occupants of new homes also need to have access to outdoor space for socialising, exercise and meeting other needs like drying clothes. Ideally there should be access to private outdoor space (such as gardens, balconies, roof terraces) but it may be appropriate to provide access to communal spaces also.

- Where outdoor space is provided, this should be easily accessible to the occupants of the development it is serving,
- Consider wider amenity issues that might affect the space such as privacy/overlooking, security, light and safety.

Lifespan

High quality design should consider how development will be sustained in the long term. Consideration needs to be given to how these places will be maintained and cared for in the future so that they can retain their quality for generations to come. Buildings and spaces

need to be flexible and adaptable to changing needs over time to allow them to remain usable and useful without needing to be replaced.

L.1 Is there a proposed management plan or approach in place for future maintenance and upkeep?

High quality design should mean that places are well-managed and maintained in the long term. For larger and more complex schemes, management and maintenance regimes should be established from the early stages of the design process and set out in a management plan.

- Consider the wide range of elements in a development and their on-going maintenance and management including buildings, landscaping, streets and open spaces, public art, sustainable drainage systems etc.
- Management and maintenance responsibilities should be clearly defined for all parts of a development. They should consider potential impacts on communities such as in the form of service charges or where management will pass into their control.
- Management of local waste, cleaning, parking, internal common spaces, shared spaces and public spaces are all considered from the outset. These include play areas, open spaces, streets and other public spaces.

L.2 How easy will it be to maintain, repair or source matching materials? Have the materials been proven to be robust and weather well?

Materials should be selected that are robust, easy to use and look after, and enable their users to establish a sense of ownership and belonging, ensuring places and buildings retain their aesthetic appeal and functionally for the long term.

L.3 How will the scheme be flexible to changing needs?

Well-designed spaces are adaptable to the changing needs of users and to evolving technologies and innovations. The aspiration is for public places that are inclusive to all. Well-designed private places, such as homes and gardens, should be designed to be flexible to adapt to the changing needs of their users over time. This would include changes such as growing households and mobility due to health changes as well as adaptability to remote home working. How easily can buildings and spaces be adapted without costly or extensive construction works?

- In keeping with the evolving nature of work, development should include adequate space and servicing to facilitate remote working. At the minimum, spaces must at least be flexible enough to be easily adapted for use as living and work and back again.
- There are broader changes to living patterns that should be integrated in design schemes, or sufficient flexibility to adapt to such changes as needed. These would include the reduction in emphasis on dedicated car parking spaces, access to EV infrastructure, adequate and integrated bin and cycle storage.
- Well-designed places should also have consideration for how digital and connectivity infrastructure can be integrated into designs from the outset, as well as how such infrastructure can be maintained and upgraded with the minimum level of disruption to wider users or compromising the functionality and aesthetic appeal.

APPENDIX 2- HOUSING

APPENDIX 2.1 METHOD FOR CALCULATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions for payments in lieu of providing affordable housing onsite (eg in relation to Policies H3 and H4) are based on seeking 40% of the value of the land being developed as a financial contribution (in other words the equivalent contribution if the land had been developed for residential use and delivered onsite affordable housing).

The formula that will be applied to calculate payments in lieu is:

$$X = ((A - B) \times C) - ((A \times C) \times D)$$

Where:

- X = the payment in lieu
- A = the market value of a square metre of floorspace in the development
- B = the value of affordable housing per square metre of floorspace (reflecting the blend between affordable rent and shared ownership)
- C = the notional number of square metres that would be required to meet the target in Policy H2
- D = additional developer costs (the difference between the profit applied to market housing and affordable housing; and marketing costs on the affordable units converted to private housing).

In addition to this, a 5% administration charge will be levied on the calculated sum payable.

APPENDIX 2.2 HMO CALCULATION

Policy H9 states that planning permission will only be granted for the conversion to or a new HMO where the proportion of buildings used in full or part as an HMO within 100 metres of street length either side of the application site does not exceed 20%.

The illustrations below show what is meant by this. The buildings highlighted in the examples would all be included in assessing whether the 20% threshold has been exceeded. It should be noted that, for the purposes of applying these guidelines:

- i. Buildings containing flats are counted as an HMO only if any one of the flats within the building are being used as an HMO;
- ii. Non-residential buildings are counted as an HMO only if any part of the building is in residential use as an HMO;
- iii. Buildings NOT counted as an HMO include all single dwellings that are occupied by a family, a homeowner together with up to two lodgers, or by up to 6 people receiving care (e.g. supported housing schemes for people with disabilities). Also NOT counted as HMO are social housing, care homes, children's homes, religious communes, and all buildings occupied by students and managed by the educational establishment (this includes student accommodation), as well as all buildings entirely used for non-residential purposes;
- iv. Any building on a plot with a curtilage that lies partially within 100 metres will be included in the calculation, although non-habitable buildings (e.g. garage blocks) will be excluded from the calculation.
- v. The 100 metres street length will include non adopted roads and footpaths.

In counting individual properties, the City Council will have regard to the number of houses, flats or buildings that are licensed HMO, or for which a licence application is pending. The Council may also count any other property for which reasonable evidence exists that the property is in use as an HMO.

APPENDIX 2.3 METHOD FOR CALCULATING THRESHOLDS FOR LINKING ACADEMIC FACILITIES WITH THE ADEQUATE PROVISION OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Student threshold calculation Policy H10 applies to full-time taught course students. To inform each annual Authority Monitoring Report the universities will be asked to provide information relating to their student numbers and the number of student accommodation rooms they provide and, in the case of Oxford Brookes, purpose-built student rooms they are aware are occupied by their students. A snapshot of information will be requested from a point in time in the Autumn of the monitoring year in question. The monitoring year is the one-year period from 1st April - 31st March. The 'snapshot' figures provided for the Annual Monitoring Report will be representative of the monitoring period and applicable to Policy H10.

If a university is shown in the snapshot to be in breach of threshold, but are able to demonstrate a reduction in numbers during the year that brings them under their threshold, this will be accepted as an update by the City Council alongside an application for development of academic, research or administrative facilities. The universities will be asked to state how many students they have and specify how many of them are in each of the following categories. The following categories of students are not relevant for the purposes of Policy H10 and they will be excluded from the total number used in the calculation under Policy H10. There may be students who fall into more than one of these categories and they should not be excluded more than once:

- Part-time and short-course students
- Students studying a research based post-graduate degree
- Students studying a Further education course or a foundation degree
- Vocational course students who will at times during their course be training on work-placements including student teachers and health care professionals who have a split study arrangement between the university and the NHS including student nurses, midwifery students, paramedics, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and student doctors
- Students with a term-time address outside of the city (OX1, 2, 3, 4)
- Students living within the city (OX1, 2, 3, 4) prior to entry onto a course
- Students not attending the institution or studying at a franchise institution
- Students studying outside Oxford (e.g. at Oxford Brookes' Swindon campus)
- Specific course exclusions (BTh Theology and MTh Applied Theology)
- Students who also have an employment contract with the university
- Students on a year abroad and other placement students away from the university

The following student accommodation types will be counted as university-provided accommodation:

- Purpose built student halls managed by the university
- Rooms in other student halls for which the university has nomination rights secured, or in the case of Oxford Brookes, also rooms in purpose-built student accommodation that they are aware their students are occupying during term times.

- Other university leased or owned housing stock

The number of students who meet the definition of the policy (i.e. the total number of students minus the exclusions detailed above) will be subtracted from the total number of student rooms provided by the university, and the resulting figure will be taken to represent the number of students living outside of university provided accommodation in Oxford.

APPENDIX 3 – EMPLOYMENT

APPENDIX 3.1 - KEY EMPLOYMENT SITES

The following university/ research sites:

- University of Oxford Science Area and Keble Road Triangle;
- Old Road Campus;
- Radcliffe Observatory Quarter;
- Northern Gateway/ Oxford North.

The following hospital research sites:

- John Radcliffe Hospital;
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital;
- Churchill Hospital;
- Warneford Hospital.

The following major publishing sites:

- Oxford University Press.

The following major manufacturing/research sites:

- Mini Plant Oxford (BMW);
- “Unipart” site.

The following Science and Business Parks

- Oxford Science Park;
- ARC Oxford (Business Park).

The following key knowledge / innovation sector centres:

- Wood Centre for Innovation

West End and Botley Road:

- New Barclay House, 234 Botley Rd;
- Osney Mead Industrial Estate;
- Former Botley Road Retail Park/ Botley Road Urban Science District;
- Former Oxpens site/ Oxpens Innovation Quarter.

Woodstock Road and Banbury Road:

- Jordon Hill Business Park, Banbury Rd;
- Summertown Pavilion, 18-24 Middle Way.

St. Clements and Cowley Road:

- Angel Court, St. Clements;
- The Gallery (Former Blackwells Publishing), Marston St;
- Newtec Place, Magdalen Rd.

Cowley and Horspath:

- Horspath Industrial Estate Pony Road, Horspath.

Garsington Road Cluster:

- Chiltern Business Centre, 198 Garsington Rd;

- Fenchurch Court, Bobby Fryer Close;
- Oxford Bus Company, Cowley House, Watlington Rd;
- Ashville Way, Watlington Rd;
- Oxford Trade Centre, Harrow Road;
- County Trading Estate, Watlington Rd;
- Huw Grays, (formerly Buildbase), Watlington Road.

Sandy Lane West:

- Eastpoint Business Park;
- Nuffield Industrial Estate, Ledgers Close;
- Oxford Trade City.

APPENDIX 4 – A GREEN BIODIVERSE CITY THAT IS RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

APPENDIX 4.1 - URBAN GREENING FACTOR

The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is a planning tool used to improve the provision of Green Infrastructure and increase the level of greening on new development. Policy G4 sets out that all major development will need to demonstrate how it has included urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design, demonstrating no net loss of greening score and that it meets the minimum target score for the development type (0.3 for predominantly residential and 0.2 for predominantly non-residential schemes). Its use is encouraged on other schemes as a way to assess current levels of greening and the changes proposed but is not mandatory.

The UGF score provides a figure for the proportion of urban greening in comparison to the total area of a given development site. It is based on the assessment of surface cover types within the site boundary, and is measured for the existing situation and post development conditions following building and landscape proposals. Each surface cover type is assigned a weighting factor (between 0.0 to 1.0) that reflects its environmental and social value in urban greening; its functionality in providing ecosystem services, including improving permeability; and its benefit in supporting biodiversity and habitat creation.

The UGF score is calculated by multiplying the area of each of the various surface cover types within the site boundary by its factor; each figure is then added together and divided by the total area within the red-line boundary of the development site. The result is assessed against the policy target score for the type of development.

Calculation of Urban Greening Factor Score :

$$\text{Urban Greening Factor Score} = \frac{\text{Sum of each Surface Area type (m}^2\text{)} \\ (\text{Surface Area A} \times \text{Factor A} + \text{Surface Area B} \times \text{Factor B} + \text{Surface Area C} \times \text{Factor C, etc.}}{\text{Total site area (m}^2\text{)}}$$

For the purposes of Policy G4, the Local Plan follows the categorization of green infrastructure elements and surface cover types set out in the Green Infrastructure Standards from the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework to calculate a UGF score. For surface cover types not specified on the list, a suitable approach will be to select the closest match in the description, in discussion with the Council where appropriate.

A copy of the assessment matrix is available on the website to download. This should be completed and submitted along with the application. All surface cover types utilised in the assessment should be clearly highlighted on associated landscaping/elevation plans.

Natural England's surface cover weightings* for the calculation of UGF Score.

No.	UGF Surface Cover Type	Category	Factor	General Description
1	Semi-natural vegetation and	Vegetatio	1.0	Protection and enhancement of

No.	UGF Surface Cover Type	Category	Factor	General Description
	wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	n & Tree Planting		existing vegetation within the development site including mature trees and habitats.
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	Vegetation & Tree Planting	1.0	New areas of vegetation and species-rich habitats within the development site that are connected to sub-soils at ground level.
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.9	Tree planting established within engineered and interconnected systems with structural soils to maintain tree health at maturity.
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.8	Dense linear planting of mixed native hedgerow species, at least 800mm wide and planted two or more plants wide.
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.7	Tree planting established within separate designed tree pits with structural soils to maintain tree health at maturity.
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.7	Areas and facilities provided for local allotment and community-based food growing including formal orchards with fruit trees.
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.7	New areas of mixed native and ornamental herbaceous and perennial plant species to support seasonal cycles of pollinating insects.
8	Mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.6	Dense linear planting of native or ornamental shrub and hedgerow species, closely spaced with one or more plants wide.
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.5	Areas of formal and informal non-native shrub and ground cover planting connected to sub-soils at ground level or in planters.
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	Vegetation & Tree Planting	0.4	Areas of short-mown grass and lawn used for active sports or informal recreation that is regularly cut and generally species-poor.
11	Intensive green roof (meets Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	Green Roofs & Walls	0.8	High maintenance accessible green roof with planting and a depth of growing substrate with a minimum settled depth of 150mm.
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	Green Roofs & Walls	0.7	Green roof with species-rich planting, with limited access, may include photovoltaics, the depth of growing substrate is 100 - 150mm.
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	Green Roofs & Walls	0.5	Low maintenance green roof, limited species mix in planting and with no access, the depth of growing

No.	UGF Surface Cover Type	Category	Factor	General Description
				substrate is 80 - 150mm.
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	Green Roofs & Walls	0.3	Low maintenance sedum green roof, no access, combined depth of growing substrate, including sedum blanket, is less than 80mm.
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	Green Roofs & Walls	0.5	Vegetated walls with climbing plants rooted in soil supported by cables or modular planted systems with growing substrate and irrigation.
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	SuDS & Water Features	1.0	Areas of semi-natural wetland habitat with open water for at least six months per year contributing to surface water management.
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	SuDS & Water Features	0.7	Bio-retention drainage features including vegetated rain gardens and attenuation basins that also provide biodiversity benefit.
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	SuDS & Water Features	0.5	Sustainable drainage systems to convey and temporarily hold surface water in detention basins with minimal vegetation cover.
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	SuDS & Water Features	0.2	Ornamental and generally chemically treated water features providing amenity value but with minimal biodiversity and habitat benefit.
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	Paved Surfaces	0.2	Porous paving using gravels, sands and small stones as well as recycled materials that allow water to infiltrate across the entire surface.
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	Paved Surfaces	0.1	Semi-permeable paving using precast units and filtration strips that allow water to drain through defined joints and voids in the surface.
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	Paved Surfaces	0.0	Impervious paving constructed of concrete, asphalt or sealed paving units that do not allow water to percolate through the surface.

**Correct as at time of publication. As the framework is new some information may be subject to change. Any updates will be published via the Green infrastructure and biodiversity TAN which applicants should refer to.*

***Canopy measurements should be based on their extent on maturity or 25 year growth*

APPENDIX 4.2 - BIODIVERSITY POINTS

In line with the requirements set out in Policy G5, applicants are expected to incorporate a selection of features as part of the design of their development to support local species. Applicants should select features from the biodiversity points list in line with the below requirements, moving through pots 1 to 3 in order.

Type of application	Pot 1 Mandatory requirements	Pot 2 Shelter and movement features	Pot 3 Supporting landscape features
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		requirements	requirements
Householder	All mandatory features (where applicable)	N/A	N/A
Minor development	All mandatory features (where applicable)	1 feature	1 feature
Major development	All mandatory features (where applicable)	2 features	2 features

The policy requires that biodiversity features selected to secure the required points for an application are clearly demonstrated on related landscape/elevations plans submitted as part of the application. Requirements/design specs. The biodiversity points list is included below, however, the intention is for this to be kept as a 'live list' updated and/or added to throughout the lifetime of the Local Plan, therefore, the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Technical Advice Note should be referred to for the most up-to-date version where appropriate (along with additional guidance on the requirements of the list).

Biodiversity feature	Priority areas in Oxford	Additional details to be provided in Technical Advice Note
Pot 1: Mandatory requirement - Household/Minor/Major		
At least one swift box or swift brick	If within an identified swift hotspot	Mapping and general guidance on location/maintenance of boxes
At least one bat box	If within 200m of rivers/ woodland	Mapping and general guidance on location/maintenance of boxes AND licensing requirements
Pot 1: Mandatory requirement - Minor/Major		
At least one bird box per dwelling (resi) or per 1000m2 footprint (non-residential), including consideration of building-dependent species.	City-Wide	General guidance where needed.
At least one bat box for every five dwellings (resi) or per 2000m2 footprint (non-residential)	City-Wide	General guidance where needed.
Choose two of the following: insect hotel, planting for pollinators, night-flowering species	In valuable areas/corridors identified in the TAN	Mapping and general guidance on species choice
Pot 2: Shelter and movement features for wildlife		
Hedgehog highways in new boundary fencing	City-wide	General guidance where needed.
Reptile hibernacula in suitable location	City-wide	General guidance where needed.
Amphibian hibernacula in suitable location	City-wide	General guidance where needed.
At least one insect hotels per dwelling	City-wide	General guidance

(residential) or per 1000m2 footprint (non-residential)		where needed.
Provision of at least one dark corridor through the site	City-wide	General guidance where needed.
Pot 3: Supporting landscape features for wildlife		
An appropriate amount of the trees and bushes on the site bear fruit/ berries and/or nuts	City-wide	General guidance where needed.
An appropriate amount of vegetation provides a range of food and host plants for local invertebrate populations	City-wide	General guidance where needed.
Suitable size freshwater pond(s) designed to support aquatic species (no fish or invasive plant species)	City-wide	General guidance where needed.

APPENDIX 5 – CARBON/RESOURCES

APPENDIX 5.1 - ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL GUIDANCE ON NET ZERO CARBON DESIGN

Guidance around designing buildings to net zero carbon standards is constantly evolving, however, there are a number of useful resources that can support applicants in designing buildings in ways that reduce their carbon footprint. Whilst the following are not Council resources and should be treated as independent, the below is a list of some external reference sources which may be helpful in implementing the requirements of policies R1, R2 and R3 of chapter 5:

- Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI)
- UK Green Building Council (UKGBC)
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
- Climate Change Committee
- Historic England -- retrofit and energy efficiency guidance for historic buildings
- UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard

A fuller list of guidance will be kept updated within the Energy and Carbon Technical Advice Note.

APPENDIX 6 – DESIGN AND HERITAGE

APPENDIX 6.1 - CONSERVATION AREAS

Oxford has 18 Conservation Areas at present. They include a diverse range of qualities from the compact college environment found in the city centre, the open green space found in the Headington Hill Conservation Area, to the vast meadows in Wolvercote and Godstow. See all conservation areas on a map. Architectural styles and landscape qualities are diverse, but they all have the common element of containing features that contribute to our historic past. It is the protection of these elements that need to be properly managed, ensuring future generations will value and enjoy their special qualities. Oxford's Conservation Areas:

- Bartlemas
- Beauchamp Lane
- Binsey
- Central (University and City)
- Headington Hill
- Headington Quarry
- Iffley
- Jericho
- Littlemore
- North Oxford Victorian Suburb
- Old Headington
- Old Marston
- Osney Town
- Oxford Stadium, Sandy Lane
- St Clement's and Iffley Road
- Temple Cowley
- Walton Manor
- Wolvercote with Godstow

APPENDIX 6.2 - HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Health Impact Assessment

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool used to identify the health impacts of a plan or project and to develop recommendations to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts, while maintaining a focus on addressing health inequalities. By bringing such health considerations to the fore, HIAs add value to the planning process.

When is a Health Impact Assessment required?

Policy HD10 requires that a HIA is undertaken for major development proposals (e.g. 10 or more dwellings or 1000m² or more of non-residential development).

How to undertake a Health Impact Assessment?

The Council recommends that applicants refer to the Health Impact Assessment toolkit created by Oxfordshire County Council for resources and guidance on completing a HIA,

which is available on their website¹. The scope of the assessment, extent of stakeholder engagement, as well as use of alternative HIA methodologies should be discussed and agreed with the relevant case officer to ensure a proportionate approach to the HIA is taken.

Whilst the specific details of what to include in the HIA will vary with the nature of the development, the HIA methodology should usually be structured into five key stages, which are outlined in greater detail in the Oxfordshire HIA toolkit:

- 1) Description of the proposed development;**
This will need to include a description of the physical characteristics of the site of the proposed development site and surrounding area, including the current use.
- 2) Identification of population groups affected by the development;**
Most proposals will not affect all individuals or groups across a community in the same way, so consider which groups of the existing population would be affected by the proposed development.
- 3) Identification of geographical area and associated health needs and priorities;**
Identifying localised health priorities will enable a HIA to focus on the key issues for a particular location of a development, ensuring any HIA submitted to a Planning Authority is targeted and appropriately scoped so that it provides the most benefit. The expectation set out in Policy HD10 is that analysis on health trends set out in the HIA is supported by appropriate evidence/data - for example from local health statistics.
- 4) Assessment of health and recommendations; and**
A series of assessment tables should be completed for each of the health priorities identified as relevant to a proposed development guiding the reader through the process of establishing a baseline of the existing situation, building an evidence base around health impacts associated with a health priority, and identification of likely effects (positive and negative), and the population groups likely to experience these effects. The policy requires that mitigation measures are identified that can address any identified negative effects and these should be presented as part of this assessment.

Typical health priorities likely to be affected by a proposed development could include: Housing, Physical activity, Healthy food environments, Air quality, Noise, Traffic and Transportation, Crime and anti-social behaviour, Economy and Employment, Education and Skills, Local natural environment and access to green spaces, and Access to Services.
- 5) Monitoring.**
The HIA should set out where the applicant will undertake monitoring in relation to the findings of the HIA. These should be linked to the proposed mitigation measures identified to address negative impacts from the development identified by the assessment and be S.M.A.R.T.

Please refer to both our [Technical Advice Note](#) and the online [Oxfordshire Health Impact Assessment Toolkit](#) for further information on how to complete a thorough HIA for major development in Oxford.

APPENDIX 6.3 - PRIVACY, DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT: THE 45 AND 25 DEGREE GUIDELINE

Many factors are significant in assessing whether new dwellings will enjoy adequate sunlight and daylight, both internally and externally, and the same factors must be taken into account when assessing the impact of new development on existing dwellings. Reflected light and the amount of sky visible affect daylight within a room or garden. Applicants must consider the function of the room or that part of the garden, and also whether other windows serve the affected room. Existing features including boundary walls, trees, proposed buildings and any change in ground level between sites are all relevant factors that also need to be taken into account. Applicants must also consider the impact on outlook - it is important not to create conditions that are overbearing (oppressive or claustrophobic) for existing or future occupiers. While development proposals will be considered in the light of these factors, as a guideline to assess their impact on daylight, sunlight and outlook, the City Council will use the guidelines illustrated below. In normal circumstances, no development should intrude over a line drawn at an angle of 45° in the horizontal plane from the midpoint of the nearest window² of a habitable room and rising at an angle of 25° in the vertical plane from the sill. If a main window to a habitable room³ in the side elevation of a dwelling is affected, development will not normally be allowed to intrude over a line drawn at an angle of 45° in the vertical plane from the sill.

Example 1 A single storey extension as shown below is generally acceptable if the projection is limited as shown in Plan (A). It may not be acceptable if the projection intrudes beyond the 45° line as shown in Plan (B)

Example 2 If the 45° rule is broken, generally the proposal will still be acceptable if the line drawn outwards at 45° is tilted upwards at 25° from the sill level, and is unbroken by the highest part of the extension. This is shown as Drawing (C). The example shown as Drawing (D) is unlikely to be acceptable.

Example 3 If a main window to a habitable room in the side elevation of a dwelling is affected, development will not normally be allowed to intrude over a line drawn at an angle of 45° in the vertical plane from the sill.

APPENDIX 7 – COMMUNITIES

APPENDIX 7.1 - MARKETING EXPECTATIONS

A property should be marketed for its existing use as a public house or live performance venue for a minimum period of at least 12 months, or for any other cultural or visitor attraction for its use or a use that meets similar needs.

The applicant should then submit a supporting statement to accompany a planning application for a change of use that contains evidence to confirm the length of time the site has been marketed for; details of the agent used; information to show where this marketing has taken place for example in the local press, through signs on site, on the internet and/or in journals or publications used by the trade.

The statement needs to confirm the price the property was advertised for to show that it has been pitched at a 'reasonable' rate to generate interest from potential operators. Finally there needs to be a summary of the interest received and the reasons why offers have not been accepted.

APPENDIX 7.2 - TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS

Where a Transport Assessment (TA) is required for a development proposal, it should be submitted alongside the planning application. The City Council may agree to the scope of TA being reduced if the development proposal is in a suitable location and in line with planning policy. TAs should address the desirable modal split and provide for a package of measures designed to reduce the role of car travel to the site. If the potential modal split is difficult to predict, the TA will need to consider whether and how far it may vary. The TA should be easy to understand for non-technical people.

Thresholds

The Transport Assessment will generally be required if the development:

- a. is likely to generate car traffic, particularly at peak times, in an already congested or heavily trafficked area;
- b. is likely to introduce a new access or additional traffic (any mode) onto a trunk road or other dual carriageway;
- c. is likely to generate significant amounts of traffic in or near the city centre air quality management area (AQMA);
- d. is for a new or expanded school facility; and
- e. would be refused on local traffic grounds but where mitigation measures can be implemented to overcome any adverse impacts

Proposals over the following thresholds will require a detailed TA:

Food retail	1,000m ²
Non-food retail	1,000m ²
Leisure	1,000m ²
Cinemas and conference facilities	1,000m ²
Stadia	1,500 seats
Offices	2,500m ²
B2 industry	5,000m ²
B8 distribution and warehousing	10,000m ²
Hospitals	2,500m ²

Higher and further education	2,500m ²
Residential	40 dwellings
Freight movements	10 per day

For mixed-use schemes, a detailed TA will be required where the combined effect of the uses proposed exceeds 10 freight or 200 vehicle movements a day, based on the general assumption that 100 vehicle movements are generated by 500m² commercial floorspace or 20 dwellings.

Proposals over 500m² or which may generate over 100 vehicle movements or 5 freight movements per day will require at least a transport statement. For residential development in Oxford, this equates to developments of 20 dwellings or more.

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All TAs and TSs must include a non-technical summary and must address:

- location and layout including access and egress points;
- size, in terms of site area and floorspace per activity; and/or number of dwellings and number of bedrooms per dwelling; and use of the site eg. staff, students, patients, visitors;
- proposed uses and activities; and
- issues such as timing and type of access requirements

Where a detailed TAs is required, this must additionally address the following:

- Potential travel characteristics: accessibility by all modes and predicted modal split. TA should consider ease of access and catchment areas by travel-to-site times for each mode.
- Measures: influencing travel patterns and minimising the need for parking using measures to improve access by walking, cycling or public transport in order to minimise non-essential car travel. TA should consider appropriateness of location, scale, density and uses of the site and development.
- Impact appraisal and mitigation: maximising accessibility by sustainable transport modes such as through minimising prominence of car parking, management of access and parking, and organisational policies. TA should determine whether the development is acceptable or not in terms of the transport impacts, and propose measures to mitigate the impacts in terms of accessibility, integrating modes of travel, reducing environmental impact and promoting safety.

APPENDIX 7.3 - TRAVEL PLANS

If a Travel Plan (TP) is required for a development proposal, it should be submitted with the planning application.

Thresholds

TPs must be submitted alongside planning applications if the development:

- is likely to generate significant amounts of travel in or near the city centre air quality management area (AQMA);
- is for new or expanded school facilities; and
- would be refused on local traffic grounds but where the TP sets out to overcome any adverse impacts.

Proposals over the following thresholds will require a TP:

Food retail	1,000m ²
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Non-food retail	1,000m ²
Leisure	1,000m ²
Cinemas and conference facilities	1,000m ²
Stadiums	1,500 seats
Offices	2,500m ²
B2 industry	5,000m ²
B8 distribution and warehousing	10,000m ²
Hospitals	2,500m ²
Higher and further education	2,500m ²

TPs must recognise the potential for modal shift and therefore the early stages of the TP are likely to focus on those car drivers “most able” or “most likely” to change their mode of travel. This does not mean that other categories should be neglected. Greater effort in terms of more measures will be needed in the longer term to address the needs of those less likely to switch from driving.

The reasons for car use, the distances travelled, and from where journeys start, and finish must be assessed. There are many ways that information could be assessed and represented in the TP.

For example, on a proposal to expand an existing site, surveys of current staff would be useful. For a relocated organisation, current staff surveys could indicate travel habits at the new site. An isochrone map can be useful in indicating distances from a site, accessibility by various modes, or potential catchment areas.

Modal split targets are normally displayed as percentages. However, this does not address the issue of rising staff numbers for example, and over time may in fact hide an increase in the number of cars being brought to a site. Targets should be stated as actual numbers as well as percentages.

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There is no right or wrong way to present a useful and effective TP. However, the following guidelines should be considered:

Background:

Information about the organisation must be stated clearly, including:

- Staff details such as numbers (for example, full-time/part-time, staff on payroll/fulltime equivalents⁴), times of travel (for example, Monday to Friday at 9am and 5pm or shift pattern), where they travel from, and how they currently travel;
- Site assessment including current access and egress (pedestrian/cycle/vehicular) into and within the site, cycle facilities, accessibility by public transport, accessibility of nearby shops and services, and car parking;
- Assessment of non-staff travel (for example, visitors, deliveries, fleet vehicles);
- Attitudes of staff towards travel to and from the site and towards their travel needs.

Objectives:

The statement of objectives should identify the motivation behind the TP and clearly state its purposes. (For example, reasons for a TP include reductions in car usage (especially single occupancy journeys at peak times), and increased use of walking, cycling and public transport). It may be relevant to address:

- Reducing traffic speeds, improved road safety and personal security (especially for people on foot or cycle); and

- b. More environmentally friendly delivery and freight movements, including home delivery services.

Measures:

The TP must identify what needs to be done to achieve its objectives and what measures need to be implemented.

Targets:

Targets must be specific, measurable, realistic and split into identifiable time frames based on the short term, medium term and long term and preferably dated by month and year.

Monitoring and Review:

The effects of TPs must be monitored, and they must state clearly how monitoring will take place (for example by stating what will be monitored by whom and when). Baseline data must therefore be provided (for example, as part of the background information). The outcome of monitoring may suggest that a review of the measures and/or targets is necessary. (For example, it is not necessarily a bad thing to discover through monitoring that a measure is no longer feasible, but new measures will then need to be set to meet the objectives of the TP.)

Enforcement:

The TP must set out arrangements for appropriate enforcement action in case agreed targets are not met.

APPENDIX 7.4 - BICYCLE AND POWERED TWO WHEELER PARKING STANDARDS

Bicycle Parking Standards:

Residential:

Houses and flats up to 4+ bedrooms 2 spaces per bedroom
HMO 1 space per bedroom
Student Accommodation 1 space per study bedroom
Hotel/Guest Houses At least 1 spaces per 5 non-resident staff (or other people). Plus 1 space per resident staff

Non – Residential:

Shops other than non-food retail warehouses, financial and professional services . . . 1 space per 113m²
Businesses 1 space per 90m² or 1 space per 5 staff or visitors
Food and drink 1 space per 40m² public floor space
Non-food retail warehouses including garden centres 1 space per 400m²
General industry warehousing/distribution traders' merchants . . . As B1 up to 235m² - 1 space per 5 staff or visitors
Places of assembly including cinemas, theatres, stadiums and concert halls . . . 4 spaces per 10 seats up to 1,000 seats; 1 space per 100 seats thereafter
Places of worship/community centres/public halls . . . 2 spaces per 20m² of seating/ assembly floor space
Libraries 1 space per 200m²

Medical clinics/dentists . . . 1 space per treatment room plus 1 space per 5 staff or visitors
Hospitals 1 space per 5 staff or visitors
Public sports facilities . . . 1 space per 5 staff plus additional provision to be determined on its merits with the following guideline; 1 space per 105m²
Nurseries and creches 1 space per 3 staff or visitors
Primary schools . . . 1 space per 5 pupils as and 2 spaces per 5 members of staff and visitors
Secondary/schools 1 space per 2 pupils - plus 1 space per 3 staff or visitors
Non-residential higher/further education . . . 1 space per 2 students (based on anticipated peak number of students on-site at any one time) plus 1 space per 5 staff

Other developments . . . To be treated on their individual merits, guided by the general principle of 1 space per 5 people

Bicycle parking provision should be made on the site. If there is a shortfall of on-site parking provision, a contribution may be sought towards off-site bicycle parking or associated facilities, based on the standards set out in this appendix.

The standards will be applied to ensure that there would be adequate provision if permitted development were carried out, unless applicants are willing to accept a condition restricting their permitted developments rights in this respect.

The reference to staff should be taken to mean the peak number of staff expected to be onsite at any one time, whether part-time or full-time.

The standards are intended as minimum standards for new development and where appropriate, change of use. One space means that one bicycle can be secured. A bike stand for example a Sheffield style stand, can provide two bicycle-parking spaces.

Bicycle parking should be future proofed to ensure that the infrastructure to support the charging of electric bicycles is supported.

Powered Two Wheeler Parking Standards:

Residential 1 space per 5 dwellings
Non-residential developments . . . 1 space per 400m² up to 2000m², 1 space per 1000m² thereafter

APPENDIX 7.5 - SHOWER, CHANGING ROOM AND LOCKER FACILITIES PROVISION IN COMMERCIAL/NON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The City Council will seek the provision of shower, changing and locker facilities in commercial/non residential developments on the following basis:

Office 1 shower per 500m² up to 1000m², 1 shower per 4,000m² thereafter
Warehousing and retail warehousing . . . 1 shower per 5,000m² up to 10,000m², 1 shower per 8,000m² thereafter
Other 1 shower per 2,500m² up to 10,000m², 1 shower per 4,000m² thereafter

The application of these standards will be subject to the merits of each proposal. Except where specified, all areas quoted refer to gross floor measured externally, i.e., where proposals are submitted to extend, consolidate or reconfigure an existing site, these

standards may be applied to the site as a whole rather than just the additional floor space, to ensure adequate provision on site.

APPENDIX 7.6 - VEHICULAR PARKING STANDARDS

Vehicular parking standards:

Policy C8 sets out Oxford City Council's policy on providing parking for new residential developments. The standards below should be read alongside Policy C8 and the supporting text.

Any dwellings* 1 space per dwelling (may be allocated or unallocated) to be provided within the development site

Houses in Multiple Occupation Parking standards to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Wheelchair accessible or adaptable houses and flats . . . 1 space per dwelling, to be provided on-plot must be designed for wheelchair users in accordance with Part M of Building Regulations)

Retirement homes 1 space per 2 residents' rooms

Sheltered/extra care homes 1 space per 2 homes plus 1 space per 2 staff

Nursing homes 1 space per 3 residents' rooms plus 1 space per 2 staff

Student accommodation 0 spaces per resident room. Operational parking and disabled parking to be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Policy H10

*Any parking provided on plot to be excluded from a permit for any future CPZ and only 1 permit to be provided per dwelling on street when not provided on plot.

Disabled Parking/Blue Badge Holders:

On developments of 4 or more homes, wheelchair accessible or adaptable homes should provide allocated for blue badge holders/disabled parking, irrespective of location. On sites of 20 or more homes blue badge holders/disabled parking should be provided for at least 5% of dwellings. Disabled parking should have level access to, and be within 50 metres of, the building entrance which it is intended to serve.

Low car parking standards for working drivers, pooled cars/car clubs and visitor spaces:

0.2 car parking spaces per 20 units should be provided on site for working drivers, service and delivery vehicles, pooled cars/car clubs and visitor spaces. For sites which are constrained evidence must be submitted to satisfy the local planning authority as to why this threshold should be reduced.

Non-residential development:

Existing employment uses No additional increase in parking spaces
All other uses . . . To be determined through pre-application meetings/planning applications in the light of their Transport Assessment and Travel Plan