

## Council **Local Plan Debate – Process for submitting amendments**

### **Opposition Group Amendments**

**Deadline:** These must be received by Committee and Members Services before 1.00pm on two working days before the meeting (Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026), and preferably earlier than that.

These are considered as substantive amendments to the submitted Local Plan and must be available in advance. These are published in the briefing note.

These must be discussed with the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services and include his commentary before Committee and Members Services will accept these for publication.

### **Minor amendments, or individual amendments, arising as a result of the debate on opposition group proposals**

**Deadline:** These must be set out clearly and legibly **on the form** (below) and emailed to Committee and Member Services in advance and by no later than **15 minutes before the start of this section of the debate**.

These must be discussed with the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services before acceptance for debate. The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services will review these and decide if an amendment is minor and can be taken; or substantive and cannot be taken at this late stage. His decision is final.

Council needs to be clear what is being suggested along with the implications for the budget so the form should set out

- What is proposed and why;
- Impact on the Local Plan;
- Commencement and duration of the proposal.

Amendments will be taken in the order given to Committee and Member Services.

### **Debating minor/ individual amendments**

These are taken separately or in groups as appropriate

1. Lord Mayor calls the amendment number
2. the amendment is taken as read – so the proposer and seconder should only speak briefly
3. the Lord Mayor will take one speaker from each Group.
4. If the seconder has not already spoken, they can do so.
5. Cabinet Member responds.
6. Proposer sums up.
7. Vote.

**Proposer: Rosie Rawle Seconder: Lois Muddiman**

**What is proposed**

**Chapter 2: Housing**

**Amendment 1: Securing more sites for Boat Dwellers**

In the Policy Context for H11, add the following new bullet point: “The City Council welcomes opportunities for the establishment of new moorings and will produce further planning guidance for those seeking to deliver new moorings in the City”.

Officer advice is that this proposed amendment is not necessary. One of the context bullet points currently notes that: *“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.”* Policy H11 sets out 5 criteria for new moorings which provides helpful advice for those considering proposing this. In addition, and despite the limited potential for new sites within the city, Policy SPS14 on Redbridge Paddock requires the provision of new residential moorings: *“Proposals should include residential moorings and associated servicing facilities.”*

*Should Council be minded to support this amendment, a bullet point could be added to the Policy Context of H11 to say: “The City Council welcomes establishment of new moorings and will produce further planning guidance for those seeking to deliver new moorings in the city.”*

**Chapter 3: Economy**

**Policy E3: Community Employment and Procurement Plans**

Officer advice:

As background to all the proposed amendments to CEPPs, it is important to keep in mind that a similar policy was removed in its entirety from the Oxford Local Plan 2036 when the Inspector was concerned it was too onerous on developers, and that it went beyond the realms of planning and the Local Plan in terms of its requirements. There are risks associated with attempting to push this policy too far, these include the possibility of losing the policy entirely at examination and or making the requirements so rigorous they inadvertently become too difficult for applicants to comply with. Therefore, the policy has been carefully worded as currently drafted to ensure that it does not go further than we think will be accepted by our Inspector as sound.

**Amendment 2a: Strengthening commitment to Community Employment Procurement Plans**

In Policy E3, delete: “CEPPs will be expected to demonstrate consideration of all the following measures:” and replace with: “CEPPs will be expected to demonstrate commitments in all of the following measures, or provide reasonable justification for why it is not possible or appropriate:”

Officers consider that this proposed amendment is not necessary. The CEPP policy as drafted requires consideration of a number of measures which are designed to support the local economy and employment opportunities. In order to ensure that the right range of inclusive economy measures are delivered across a range of sites we want to encourage that the listed measures are considered but want to allow enough flexibility to allow for a bespoke approach based on specific developments and their individual requirements. Also, the policy is currently worded to try to avoid some of the issues which arose during the Local Plan 2036 examination where the Inspector took out the CEPP policy. It is worth noting that there are also other policies in this plan which tackle this wider issue e.g. Affordable Workspaces (Policy E4).

Notwithstanding officer comments, should Council be minded to support this amendment, the additional text as proposed could be added to Policy E3.

#### Amendment 2b: An Oxford Living Wage for apprentices

In Policy E3, at bullet point f), add “although this is encouraged where possible”, after “other than apprentices” so that it reads: “f) Paying all employees (other than apprentices, although this is encouraged) the Oxford Living Wage”.

Officer advice is that the Oxford Living Wage is not itself a planning matter, and therefore the Local Plan cannot change the operational structure and parameters of the Oxford Living Wage, which is a defined scheme with multiple partners involved. It is not in the gift of the Local Plan to change how this applies or is operated. Policy E3 makes reference to the Oxford Living Wage as an indicator and measure which can be demonstrated through CEPs as to the community benefit of the proposed development. Adding wording to the Local Plan that is stricter than the established Oxford Living Wage is not justified in this context and risks making (at least this aspect of) the policy unsound. Any changes to the Oxford Living Wage scheme should be direct changes through that forum, rather than indirectly through the Local Plan, which can't change the Living Wage scheme itself.

It is also worth noting that apprentices are often not paid more than the minimum wage but as they will alongside their wages, also have their tuition fees/ study costs paid for and time off work to complete their learning, it is likely to be the case in many circumstances that the total monetary equivalent of these benefits would exceed the Oxford Living Wage. This said, the policy wording as currently drafted does not prevent employers from paying the Oxford Living Wage to apprentices if they want to do so.

Notwithstanding the risks to the policy noted in officers comments, should Council be minded to support this amendment, the additional text as proposed could be added to Policy E3.

#### Amendment 2c: The Oxford Living Wage as a minimum standard

In Policy E3, remove or “other social clauses appropriate to the development” in bullet point g). Officer advice is that the policy will work better if it includes some wording to allow for alternative wage models which achieve the same aims but agree this could be clearer if changed to the following:

*“g) Use of contractors who commit to paying the Oxford Living Wage or other recognised living wage models. Recognised living wage models are listed in the supporting TAN”*

#### Amendment 2d: Towards Living Wage Zones

In Policy E3, add the following bullet point to the list of measures: “Supporting the establishment of a Living Wage Zone, where payment of the Oxford Living Wage is secured for directly and indirectly paid employees who work on the site during and following construction”

Officer advice is that this goes beyond the independently agreed parameters of the Oxford Living Wage into operational decisions. It may be something that is explored within the context of the operation of the Oxford Living Wage but is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

### **Chapter 4: Blue and Green Infrastructure**

#### Amendment 3a: Preventing the net loss of playground space

In Policy G1, insert after “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of”, “playground space or”, so that it reads: “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of playground space, or other green infrastructure features such

as hedges or ponds where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity or ecological interest.

Officer advice is that this amendment is not necessary and also that it may have unintended negative consequences. There are many different types of play provision, some of which will be formal playgrounds but there are lots of alternative provisions which also provide play for children and young people (e.g. incidental play 'play on the way', spaces for girls etc.). Policy G1: protection of green infrastructure as drafted already states: *"Proposals impacting the following types of open space will need to be accompanied by additional evidence that demonstrates consideration of the following:...b) Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces: i) the role of the space in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), or as an escape from the urban environment,"* There are potential circumstances whereby loss of a playground is beneficial, for example if the need in the area is for a different kind of open space or facilities (e.g. where over time, the local homes are no longer predominantly occupied by families, or where the maintenance of the playground is not justified by its limited use) and the Plan should not prevent those beneficial changes.

However, should Council be minded to support this amendment, the proposed wording is considered appropriate wording.

#### Amendment 3b: Encouraging the provision of a City Centre playground

In the Policy Context for Policy G1, include a new bullet point: "The City Centre has a deficit of high quality, accessible playgrounds and the Council will welcome applications that seek to resolve or contribute to the resolving of, this deficit."

Officer advice is that this is not necessary because the Plan as drafted is already very supportive of play space and specifically in including this in our centres, for example: in Policy C2 about maintaining vibrant centres (which includes the city centre) states : *"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;"*.

There is already additional policy support elsewhere in the Plan, Policy G1: protection of green infrastructure states: *"Proposals impacting the following types of open space will need to be accompanied by additional evidence that demonstrates consideration of the following:...b) Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces: i) the role of the space in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), or as an escape from the urban environment,"*

Also, at Policy G2: enhancement of green and blue infrastructure which says that proposals should demonstrate how they've considered: *"Health and wellbeing, including facilitating recreation and play for people of all age groups and abilities, particularly children and teenagers;"*

More broadly, the City Council supports the concept of a play space in the city centre, however, without a site having been identified, there is little more the Local Plan can do to deliver it.

However, if Council is minded to support this amendment, the following wording is recommended to be added to Policy G1: *"The City Council will in particular welcome proposals which seek to make provision for play space within the City Centre"*

#### **Chapter 5: Environment and Net Zero**

##### Amendment 4: Welcoming community-owned energy projects

In the Policy Context for Policy R1, add the following as a new bullet point: "The development of local renewable energy projects will be especially welcomed where they are community owned or owned by non-profit making organisations."

Officer advice is that this amendment is not necessary.

If Council is minded to make this amendment, the proposed wording could be added as the sixth bullet point in the Policy Implementation section of Policy R1.

## **Chapter 7: Communities**

### Amendment 5a: Promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing in our communities

In the Policy Context for Policy C1, “Establishments that promote community cohesion, health and wellbeing are particularly welcomed in the city centre, local, and district centres.”

Officer advice is that this amendment is not necessary. The list of town centre uses that will be appropriate in our centres at Policy C1 includes a number of such uses including: leisure, indoor sport, health centres, GPs and clinics and community facilities amongst others. In addition, Policy C5 also provides for this, making it clear that applications for new cultural and social venues, or increased capacity/more intensive use of existing venues, will be supported in all the centres in line with Policy C1; similarly that the City Council will seek to protect and retain existing facilities.

However, if Council is minded to support this amendment, the proposed words could be added as the third bullet point in the Policy Context section for Policy C1.

### Amendment 5b: Building better local centres

In Policy C1, remove “and local centres” and add “and” after “city”, so that the sentence beginning “In the city,” reads “In the city and district centres, new Use Class E and other main town centre uses will be permitted where compatible with other policies in the plan, which include:”

After the list of Class E uses, add the following:

“In local centres, the following use classes will be welcomed where compatible with other policies in the plan:

- Retail, cafes and restaurants;
- Leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres);
- Health centres, GPs and clinics;
- 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);

New applications for the following will also be accepted in local centres:

- Short stay accommodation (in accordance with Policy E5 and where compliant with the active frontages policy C2).
- Offices, research and development and light industrial;”

Officer advice is that this proposed amendment would make the policy less effective (a key soundness test) because it is not clear how this would be applied when determining a planning application (e.g. would an application for short stay accommodation in a local centre be supported or not). It is not in the spirit of the NPPF, which clearly requires that all centres are deemed to be on the same level and treated the same (i.e. the important consideration is whether a site is within a centre or outside of a centre, not which type of centre it is) - the town centre definition applies to all district centres, local centres and the city centre).

Therefore the list of Town Centre uses is not one which has been designed for the Oxford Local Plan but one which is derived directly from the NPPF. The purpose of Policy C1 is purely to identify those centres which the City Council considers are suitable to accommodate that list of Town Centre uses. If the intent is to limit the uses which are suitable in the local centres, then the

alternative is to remove the list of local centres entirely and not deem them appropriate for Town Centre uses. Any proposals which did come forward for such uses in those centres would then be judged against the last three paragraphs of Policy C1 on a case by case basis.

However, please note we have given consideration to the comments made at Scrutiny and agree it would be possible to add another local centre to the list as the Greater Leys Local Centre.

#### Amendment 6: Protecting pubs

In Policy C5, after “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions”, “including pubs”, so that it reads, “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions, including pubs, except in the following circumstances.”

Officer advice is that this is not needed as pubs are already referenced in the definition of cultural and social venues for the purposes of Policy C5. This is made clear in both the Policy Context and Policy Implementation sections. This is also explicit at the second paragraph of the policy where the requirement relates specifically to pubs and the associated Appendix which relates to this). There is no benefit to the policy in making this addition.

However if Council is minded to support this amendment it could be done by amending the title of the policy to: “Cultural and social venues, pubs and visitor attractions”, or by adding the text as proposed to Policy C5.

### Reason

#### **Chapter 2: Housing**

##### Amendment 1: Securing more sites for Boat Dwellers

The Local Plan already states that there is additional need for residential moorings across Oxfordshire, and the majority of that need arises from Oxford. We are aware that there has been a reduction in moorings on Osney Island. We believe there is therefore a clear need for the council to welcome, encourage and search for further site allocations to meet the current levels of need.

#### **Chapter 3: Economy**

##### Amendment 2a: Strengthening commitment to Community Employment Procurement Plans

Currently, this policy asks only for developers to show that they have considered a range of measures, but not explicitly to show their efforts to meet them or otherwise prove why they are unable to deliver against them.

##### Amendment 2b: An Oxford Living Wage for apprentices

The minimum wage for an apprentice is £7.55 an hour - just over half the legal minimum wage for someone over 21 [1]. This is not a decent wage and problematically assumes that people undertaking an apprenticeship have another form of income, or are able to sustain themselves through family support, which is not always the case. In 2024, The National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) and National Union of Students (NUS UK) began a joint campaign calling for the minimum wage for apprentices to be raised to the Real Living Wage, describing the existing rate as “poverty pay” [2]. This amendment therefore encourages developers to pay apprentices the Oxford Living Wage, rather than explicitly excluding them from this criterion.

##### Amendment 2c: The Oxford Living Wage as a minimum standard

The final clause of bullet point g) entirely undermines the principle of the Oxford Living Wage. It suggests that a decent liveable wage is something that can be substituted by another social benefit.

The Oxford Living Wage defines the minimum rate of pay that allows for a decent standard of living [3]. It cannot be substituted. This is especially important for subcontracted workers where pay tends to be lower and contracts and hours tend to be less secure.

#### Amendment 2d: Towards Living Wage Zones

This amendment would seek to extend Living Wage commitments to the lifetime of the property.

Oxford City Council's Corporate Strategy for 2024-28 commits to "Increase the number of people paid the Oxford Living Wage to improve the minimum standard of living" [4]. This amendment would require developers to play an important role in ensuring that the Oxford Living Wage is not only paid to workers employed during the construction phase, but also those in the end user phase (i.e. those who go on to work on the site in available units once they have been constructed). This can be delivered through:

- Becoming an Oxford Living Wage accredited employer, or guaranteeing the Oxford Living Wage is paid to directly and indirectly employed workers on the site during the construction phase
- Requiring and encouraging new occupants that move into the properties to pay their directly and indirectly employed workers the Oxford Living Wage (especially if the developer remains the landlord of the property)

The Living Wage Foundation defines a "Living Wage Zone" as a geographically defined area in which multiple employers are based, where all directly and indirectly employed workers are paid at least the real Living Wage or London Living Wage. The Foundation works with local councils, developers and construction companies across the UK to support them to embed the real Living Wage into city regeneration, large scale developments and industrial parks. They can therefore provide support to establish, accredit and monitor these zones. Key examples of this work include the Olympic Park in East London and the Meridian Water Development in North London.

This amendment encourages developers to consider their role in supporting the development of Living Wage Zones through their Community Employment Procurement Plan.

### **Chapter 4: Blue and Green Infrastructure**

#### Amendment 3a: Preventing the net loss of playground space

Public playgrounds are vital community assets, providing a free, safe and secure environment for children to play. Following community campaigns for the protection and expansion of playgrounds across the city – from the campaign to Save Bertie Park [5] to the campaign for a playground in the city centre [6] – it is important that the City Council recognises the demand from residents. This amendment seeks to ensure that there will be no net loss of playground space across Oxford in the context of increasing pressures for development.

#### Amendment 3b: Encouraging the provision of a City Centre playground

As has been highlighted by a community campaign, the absence of playgrounds in the city centre means that children do not have a free, safe and secure environment to play, which is a barrier to families spending time in the city centre. Following a petition presented to Full Council on 25 November 2024, members voted in support of the principle of creating a children's playground in Oxford City Centre. This amendment seeks to ensure that this principle is carried into the new Local Plan.

### **Chapter 5: Environment and Net Zero**

#### Amendment 4: Welcoming community-owned energy projects

Community owned energy projects allow people and communities to take democratic control over their energy future, by generating, using, owning, and saving energy in their communities. They create community cohesion, based on a shared concern for the local and global environment, and

provide a source of long-term income to support community wealth building activities and other local causes. This fundamentally differs to renewable energy projects that deliver profits to private entities.

## **Chapter 7: Communities**

### Amendment 5a: Promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing in our communities

Our community districts and centres should encourage development that promotes community cohesion, health and wellbeing, rather than only a range of use-classes that may include establishments that deliver less value to communities or even generate harm to community health. This amendment seeks to demonstrate the council's support for and welcoming of applications that work towards providing a liveable city with strong communities.

### Amendment 5b: Building better local centres

Short stay accommodation, offices, research and development and light industrial uses are better suited to city and district centres, rather than local centres. Regarding the former, the intention is to limit the establishment of short stay accommodation in residential areas. Regarding the latter, such uses are unlikely to offer the same kinds of core amenities and community value as the other categories listed. This amendment therefore shows a preference for those that do.

### Amendment 6: Protecting pubs

The Guardian reported in that 366 pubs had been demolished or converted for other uses in 2025 as cost pressures take toll on the sector [7]. Pubs act as vital social hubs that can foster community cohesion and reduce isolation. These institutions require protection and our local plan should make this explicit. This amendment makes clear that they are included in the category of "cultural venues and visitor attractions", and the grounds of their protection explicit in our policy.

- [1] <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>
- [2] <https://www.nus.org.uk/apprentice-wage-gap-day>
- [3] <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/living-wage/oxford-living-wage>
- [4] <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/strategy/5>
- [5] <https://savebertie.com/>
- [6] <https://www.change.org/p/establish-a-children-s-playground-in-oxford-city-centre>
- [7] <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/dec/31/one-pub-a-day-closed-permanently-in-england-and-wales-in-2025>