

## 6. Enhancing Oxford's unique heritage and creating quality new development

### 6.1 Objectives

- To preserve and enhance Oxford's exceptional built form with its legacy of archaeology and monuments, historic buildings, modern architecture, important views and distinctive townscape characteristics
- To ensure that all new development delivers a high quality of urban design, place making, architecture and public realm, integrating the historic environment with modern needs

### Creating quality new development

#### National Planning Policy says:

6.2 The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) says that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56). Local planning authorities should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, and that are based on stated objectives for the future of the area and on understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Policies should ensure that developments function well over the lifetime of the development and establish a strong sense of place through streetscapes and buildings that create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Policies should ensure that developments optimise the potential of sites and respond to local character and history, whilst not preventing appropriate innovation; create safe and accessible environments and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and landscaping (paragraph 58).

6.3 The NPPF also suggests that local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development (paragraph 59). The PPG sets out more detailed guidance on the form and nature of design policies.

#### The Oxford story – background evidence and the Sustainability Appraisal:

6.4 Oxford is a unique city in terms of its built heritage and form and its relationship to the landscape in which it sits. It has a distinct physical form, of a floodplain overlooked by ridges, and much of its character is derived from its landscape setting and the presence of two rivers, and many river tributaries, creating a network of water throughout the city. It is highly recognisable by its iconic skyline and its architecture: Oxford



contains buildings from every period of architectural history from the 11th century. Delivering successful, high quality design in new development requires a full understanding of the existing character and heritage of the area. The second part of this section contains policies relating to heritage and conservation, but knowledge of the existing character should always underpin any policy approach to design.

- 6.5 Robust design policies can ensure that the pressures from both development and the tourism industry do not have a negative impact on Oxford's built environment. Design policies will ensure that new development enhances the city, through delivering high quality architecture and public realms, enhancing active travel modes, producing a safe and clean environment, and making efficient use of limited resources.
- 6.6 The SA highlighted how including a suite of strong design policies in the Local Plan would have significant positive impacts against the whole range of sustainability objectives from human health to transport and green spaces to economy. However it was clear that the level of the impact would be dependent on how any such policies would be worded. Detailed design criteria could help to ensure that new development maintains/enhances sense of place and local distinctiveness. However, there is a risk that overly prescriptive policies could stifle design innovation. The SA also identified a risk that if the same detailed design criteria were applied across the city it may result in repetitive or monotonous design and may not take into account differences in character in different parts of Oxford.

**Responses to first steps consultation:**

- 6.7 It is clear from the consultation responses that people have strong, and varied, feelings about the design of Oxford's built environment. Respondents specifically stated that design quality is important, and that a strong design steer is needed.
- 6.8 The character of Oxford, and in particular its historic centre, was clearly a prominent feature of opinions about design. A large number of people (198) agreed with the statement that views of Oxford's dreaming spires should continue to be protected by restricting tall buildings, and a similar number (182) agreed with the statement that new development should be planned to protect local character.
- 6.9 There was considerable negative feedback on the quality of the public realm, particularly in the city centre. Responses commented on unsightly central areas; poorly maintained public spaces and a poor street environment.
- 6.10 A large number of people agreed that policies should encourage new, modern architecture where appropriate and noting that modern architecture would be acceptable if it responds to Oxford's character and heritage.
- 6.11 Other issues connected to design included density and height (both of which are addressed in detail in other policy options); the configuration of buildings, focussing on encouraging interaction; and infill development on garden land. Some felt that there was already too much infill development and that it increases congestion, while others commented that infill development needs to be carefully managed. There were some residents in favour of building on garden land.

**Robust design policies can ensure that the pressures from both development and the tourism industry do not have a negative impact on Oxford's built environment.**

### Potential policy responses:

#### 6.12 High quality design

Growth is anticipated in the city, which will need to be planned and designed sensitively and carefully to ensure the existing built environment is not harmed. New development, if it is well designed, has the potential to enhance the City, and to create places which improve the wellbeing and quality of life of their residents, through pleasant, clean and safe environments. Design, particularly of new residential development, also has a significant influence on the transport choices of residents (bike storage, car parking), so it is important that this is taken in to account in order to help address the congestion and poor air quality in Oxford. Oxford will therefore need a robust set of policies to ensure that new development delivers these benefits and does not harm the existing built environment. Further more detailed guidance could also be provided in Technical Advice Notes. This could be particularly helpful in setting out guidance for explaining how a development proposal meets criteria in a Design and Access Statement, for applications where one is required.

- 6.13 N.B: These design options relate closely to the density and efficient use of land options considered in the “Making wise use of our resources and securing a good quality local environment” chapter.

#### Opt 61: Creating successful places

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy that sets out the best practice requirements and principles for successful place-making in all new development, including legibility, connectivity and integration in the context of Oxford.	This would ensure that new developments contribute to and enhance the built environment, create new communities that are integrated with and enhance existing communities. This will also ensure that new development responds to and respects the unique context of Oxford. It will also have the potential to encourage active travel and reduce car use and this, combined with a pleasant and well-designed living environment will have a positive impact on wellbeing. It will ensure that new affordable housing is well integrated into new developments and is of tenure blind design.
<b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy on place making but rely on national planning policy.	This option could result in mediocre development that fails to respond to Oxford’s context.

#### Opt 62: Responding to Oxford’s character and site context

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<b>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B):</b> Include a policy that requires new developments to respond to the unique characteristics of Oxford, and the immediate context of the site, identified by use of Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, in terms of natural and built environment; historic features including grain of the historic core; scale; massing; rhythm and articulation.	The Oxford Character Appraisal Toolkit helps to assess key positive and negative characteristics of an area. The toolkit does not guide design to copy existing features of the surroundings, but it does ensure that new development is undertaken in the context of understanding the existing characteristics of an area. This policy approach would ensure that new development responds to and enhances the distinctive character of Oxford and its immediate surroundings, and is of high quality. This would add to and enhance the NPPF guidance by referring specifically to Oxford. This will ensure the quality of public realm, in the city centre and in the rest of Oxford, is maintained or enhanced through new development. In residential developments, this would help to balance the demand for housing quantity with housing quality, and by ensuring good design this would have a positive impact on wellbeing.
<b>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B):</b> Include a policy that sets out design criteria for development of residential gardens.	Areas of private residential gardens are fairly often proposed for new homes in Oxford. These developments are not necessarily ‘backland’ development, but frequently on the street frontage or adjacent to existing building plots. Design of development on gardens does not count as ‘greenfield’ development. Design of development of garden land will need to pay particular attention to issues such as the impact on local character, biodiversity and the living environment of new and existing dwellings.

<p><b>C) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy on design character and responding to site context but rely on national planning policy.</p>	<p>This could lead to new developments which do not adequately consider the character of Oxford in the design. This could lead to new developments which do not adequately consider the immediate site context.</p>
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### Opt 63: Creating an integrated high quality public realm and setting of buildings

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B + C):</b> Include a policy setting out requirements for the design of streets, including hierarchies, proportion, wayfinding, relationship of buildings to the street, opportunities for play, car parking design, and cycle parking and storage design.</p>	<p>This will ensure that new development enhances the existing character and amenity of Oxford as part of high quality placemaking. This will help to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm, and will help to create environments that are more accessible and legible to a range of users, and environments that are conducive to cycling and walking because they are pleasant, feel safe, and wayfinding is easy. This would have a positive impact on wellbeing and air quality. It could also ensure parking in new developments is incorporated in a way that maintains active frontages and overlooking from homes onto the street. It would ensure that consideration of provision and design of cycle parking was integral to the design process and not an afterthought.</p>
<p><b>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B + C):</b> Include a policy on landscape design, including requirements for quality, amenity, sustainability and enhancing biodiversity.</p>	<p>This will help to ensure that open spaces delivered as part of new developments are useful, pleasant and provide good amenity. This will improve the quality of the public realm, and also has the potential to enhance biodiversity, and improve resilience to climate change through the requirement of SUDs, or the planting of particular species etc. In residential development, this will contribute positively to the happiness, wellbeing and quality of life of residents.</p>
<p><b>C) Preferred option (Combination of A + B + C):</b> Include a policy requesting incorporation of a Public Art in certain new developments, supported by a Technical Advice Note.</p>	<p>Public art can help to contribute to the good design and distinctiveness of a development. National policy recognises the importance of good design, but does not refer specifically to public art, so if there is a desire for more developments to provide public art, incorporating this policy would help to ensure its delivery. More detailed requirements in a technical advice note could guide the design and quality of public art to maximise public benefit, and incorporate opportunities for play and engagement. Public art in new commercial/retail developments could also significantly improve the quality of the public realm.</p>
<p><b>D) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy on creating and integrated public realm and setting of buildings, but rely on national planning policy.</p>	<p>This could result in a poor quality public realm which may deter walking and cycling and lead to increased car use. A poor quality environment can impact negatively on the well-being and quality of life of our communities.</p>

### Opt 64: Secure by design

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Continue to require proposals to demonstrate compliance with the Secure by Design scheme</p>	<p>Creating safe developments and streets is an integral part to ensuring wellbeing, and to increasing walking and cycling mode shares. Secure by Design provides well-established guidance on designing developments to minimise opportunities for criminal and anti-social behaviour, and to create spaces that reduce the fear of crime. Developers will be familiar with this guidance, and therefore will have experience of following it. Whilst Building Regulation Approved Document Q – Security – Dwellings sets out some requirements for security, these relate more to the design of individual buildings, and the security of windows and doors etc. It does not address the broader safety and design considerations covered in Secure by Design. Secure by Design also goes into greater detail than guidance in the NPPF, and so will form stronger policy in the local plan.</p>
<p><b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy requiring compliance with the Secure by Design scheme.</p>	<p>The NPPF refers broadly to creating safe environments where crime, and the fear of crime, do not undermine community cohesion, but there are not specific standards set out that ensure these aims are met. If compliance with Secure by Design was not required, it would be harder to ensure new developments helped achieve these objectives.</p>

### Opt 65: High quality design of new buildings

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy on the design of new buildings requiring that they are of high quality design.</p>	<p>This will ensure that new dwellings are built to the highest standard of design to maintain and enhance Oxford's reputation as a world class city. Well-designed, distinctive buildings are also more sustainable, as they will remain useful for longer, and are therefore an efficient use of resources. Poor or 'standard' design can have a negative effect on an environment, the well-being of communities and would lower standards.</p> <p>The policy could include information on aspects of design such as roofscape (including amenity, adaptability, biodiversity and treatment of services). This will ensure that new development does not have a negative impact on the visual amenity of the existing roofscape. They could also encourage developers to consider the integration of services and utilities infrastructure from an early stage in the design.</p>
<p><b>B) Rejected Option:</b> Do not include a policy on the design of new buildings, but rely on national planning policy.</p>	<p>This could result in poor or 'standard' quality design of new buildings which add nothing to the streetscape or local environments and would lower standards. Poorly designed buildings have a shorter lifespan and a negative impact on the wellbeing of residents.</p>

### Opt 66: Building heights

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy setting out requirements for taller buildings, including appropriate location/ height; expectations for intensification of sites in district centres and on arterial roads; massing; orientation; the relation of the building to the street; the potential impact of taller buildings on important views including both in to the historic skyline and out towards Oxford's green setting; and exceptional design, supported by a Technical Advice Note.</p> <p>(Options below relating to 'High buildings, view cones and high building area' are linked to this option.)</p>	<p>In a city like Oxford where land is scarce and there is an imperative to use land efficiently, taller buildings can positively contribute to increasing density, enabling a more efficient use of land, and may also be an appropriate built response to the existing context in certain areas of Oxford, for example in district centres and similar highly accessible locations. This will ensure that, in locations where this will be appropriate, taller buildings can be permitted, but will ensure they contribute to the existing character, and do not detract from the amenity of their surroundings. The aim will be to ensure that variability and interest in the skyline is maintained.</p> <p>Importantly, tall tower blocks often do not make efficient use of land, as large areas of land are needed around them to ensure overshadowing is avoided and to ensure sufficient natural light. It is often mansion block and courtyard style developments of moderate height that make the most efficient use of scarce land.</p> <p>Oxford's iconic historic skyline means that particular care needs to be taken over the design and placement of taller buildings. Taller buildings should not negatively impact on views of the iconic skyline. The impact on views from the historic core to the green hills surrounding Oxford are also important to consider. The section below: 'Enhancing Oxford's Unique Built Environment and Heritage' contains a set of options on how to consider this historic skyline.</p>
<p><b>B) Rejected Option:</b> Do not include a policy on tall buildings, but rely on national planning policy.</p>	<p>Due to the high demand for housing, and the potential pressure to densify around transport hubs, it is inevitable that there will be increased pressure to build taller buildings. Without a policy, this could result in taller buildings in inappropriate locations, and that detract from the amenity of the street.</p>

### Opt 67: Altering existing buildings

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy on the extension of existing buildings to ensure they respond appropriately to the existing form, materials and architectural detailing; retain the legibility and</p>	<p>This should ensure that extensions to existing buildings enhance the existing character of Oxford. This will enable land to be used efficiently, and has the potential to extend the life of existing buildings, which is an efficient use of resources.</p>

hierarchy of the built environment and do not have an adverse impact on the existing building or on neighbouring buildings.	
<b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy on extending existing buildings, but rely on national planning policy.	This could result in poor quality extensions to existing buildings, which have a negative impact on the existing buildings and the surrounding area.

### Opt 68: Shopfronts and signage

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy that sets out criteria for determining applications regarding detailed matters of design, for shop fronts, advertisements, shutters and canopies etc.	This would ensure that shops contribute to the design and character of existing buildings and their surroundings, and enhance the quality of the built environment and the public realm. It is likely to aid attempts to avoid visual pollution and clutter and thus would be a positive policy approach. It could also help to maintain Oxford's historic shopfronts.
<b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include policy on detailed design matters of shop fronts and signage but rely on national planning policy.	The NPPF does not address detailed design matters, so relying on the NPPF would equate to having no policy on these issues.

### Opt 69: Stores for bikes, waste and recycling

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy setting out requirements for bike storage and bin storage inside and outside dwellings, including space requirements, location, access and design. Require details to be submitted with applications.	<p>Bike storage is essential in Oxford, where travel by bike is already an important mode share, and where an increase is being encouraged. Retro-fitting of bike stores can lead to poor facilities, which detract from the overall design of the development. For flats particularly, convenient, secure cycle parking needs careful thought, early in the design process.</p> <p>Given that the total amount of waste generated in Oxford is expected to rise (due to the rise in the number of households) maximising the potential for residents recycle as much waste as possible will be very important. Ensuring that there is adequate space for the range of bins required will enable this, and also ensure that these bins do not detract from the appearance or amenity of the street. It can also ensure that bins are located and stored in such a way that they can be collected efficiently. Bin storage should be integral to the design of new development, and this should be considered from an early stage in the design process, to ensure that it is designed in the best way.</p>
<b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy on bike storage or bin storage, but rely on national planning policy.	This could lead to inadequate bike storage facilities, residents being unable to recycle their waste, and to storage of bikes and bins that detracts from the appearance and amenity of the development and the street.

## Enhancing Oxford's unique built environment and heritage

### National Planning Policy says:

- 6.14 The NPPF says pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment (paragraph 9). Paragraphs 126 to 141 of the NPPF set out a series of requirements for heritage specific policies and decision making. The objective of the policies is to maintain and manage change to heritage assets in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. Heritage significance is the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of

its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. All grades of harm, including total destruction, minor physical harm and harm through change to the setting, can be justified on the grounds of public benefits that outweigh that harm taking account of the 'great weight' to be given to conservation and provided the justification is clear and convincing (paragraphs 133 and 134). Public benefits will most likely be the fulfilment of one or more of the objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF, provided the benefits will endure for the wider community and not just for private individuals or corporations.

#### *The Oxford story – background evidence and the Sustainability Appraisal:*

- 6.15 A robust understanding of heritage value is required in order to ensure continued development pressure does not adversely affect assets. As part of its Heritage Plan, the City Council has produced a number of studies and toolkits to help strengthen understanding of heritage and its significance, including the Assessment of the Oxford View Cones, the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit and A Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting.
- 6.16 A good understanding of heritage value will be required to ensure continued development pressure does not adversely affect heritage assets. A policy setting out how the impact of development on heritage will be assessed could have a positive impact on a number of SA objectives including vibrant communities, because it would ensure that local significance of assets and their contributions to local distinctiveness is taken into account.
- 6.17 The SA recognised the very special character and quality of the city in terms of its heritage assets; it therefore identified the risk of harm that would likely result from a loosening of policy requirements or reliance on national policy in this area. A strong policy framework was shown to have positive impacts on the sustainability objectives of urban design and heritage and sustainable tourism, but also vibrant communities. Conversely it found that there was a potential risk with taking a very protectionist or restrictive policy approach in terms of missing out on opportunities to provide increased numbers of homes or jobs.

**A good understanding of heritage value will be required to ensure continued development pressure does not adversely affect heritage assets.**

#### *Responses to first steps consultation:*

- 6.18 Historic England emphasised the importance of the city's heritage assets and said their protection should not be subject to meeting its development needs. A few people commented that the protection of the historic environment in general should be prioritised, one person said there should be more conservation areas and another said heritage should not make the city unaffordable. One respondent (a college) was concerned that stringent policies in areas including archaeology, heritage and conservation could add unnecessary cost, complexity and uncertainty to the planning process.

#### *Potential policy responses:*

- 6.19 **Understanding heritage significance to inform design**  
Oxford has a unique built environment which needs to be enhanced and protected. Good design will start with an understanding of existing context. In Oxford it is particularly important that design takes place with a full understanding of the significance of heritage assets that may be affected. In order to properly understand heritage significance, it will be helpful if the Local Plan or supporting documents give guidance on what is locally important and should be protected and enhanced.

### Opt 70: High Buildings, view cones and high building area

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Continue to define view cones and a high buildings area but instead of a rigid height limit introduce a set of criteria for assessing the impact of proposals on the skyline (based on the View Cones Study).</p>	<p>A strong emphasis on a height restriction can lead to all buildings being built to the maximum height, without enough regard to what height works best in a particular location, and also with the potential consequence of creating a very flat, monotonous and uninteresting roofline. This also risks preventing new potentially positive interventions on the Oxford skyline from coming forward.</p> <p>A new criteria-based approach should ensure that, instead of a blanket approach, full consideration is given to how new development will impact on the skyline. This will open up the opportunity for new taller buildings that make a positive impact on the skyline. It will ensure that efficient use of land is encouraged, but not to the detriment of the unique character of Oxford's urban environment and in particular views of the 'dreaming spires'.</p> <p>A policy requirement for a Visual Impact Assessment, especially for larger developments, will be considered as this will help ensure effects are understood. The policy will need to refer to issues such as roofplant and massing. The buildings that are important in the skyline are identified and proposals would be required to show the impact on those.</p>
<p><b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Continue with the current policies that limit the height of buildings in the view cones area and central 'high buildings area'.</p>	<p>A strong emphasis on a height restriction can lead to all buildings being built to the maximum height, without enough regard to what height works best in a particular location, and also with the potential consequence of creating a very flat, monotonous and uninteresting roofline, which actually detracts from the skyline that the aim is to protect.</p>
<p><b>C) Rejected Option:</b> Remove all height restrictions in policy.</p> <p>Do not have a specific policy to protect views of the skyline.</p>	<p>It is likely this option would lead to increased heights in areas where there are currently controls, in the city centre particularly. This option could enable significantly more development in the city centre. However, it could lead to significant harm to the historic environment and views into and out of Oxford, damaging its uniqueness.</p>
<p><b>D) Rejected Option:</b> Review view cones and remove those where views have been lost because of trees etc.</p>	<p>The views from certain viewing locations have deteriorated over time, mainly because of trees. However, it is likely that management could enhance the view again so they are not irreparably lost.</p>

### Opt 71: Listed buildings and their setting

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a listed building policy in-line with the NPPF, which requires assessment of the significance of an asset, whether proposals will cause harm to this and whether harm can be mitigated or is outweighed by public benefit. Introduce criteria that require an assessment relevant to Oxford.</p>	<p>This option would help preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest and their setting. This approach could ensure development would respect, maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place, promote high quality urban design particularly with regard to distinctive features and character of Oxford.</p> <p>The details of the policy could also refer to details such as alterations for fire safety, accessibility and sustainability.</p>
<p><b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Include a listed building policy in-line with the NPPF, which requires assessment of the significance of an asset, whether proposals will cause harm to this and whether harm can be mitigated or is outweighed by public benefit.</p>	<p>This option would help to ensure development will respect, maintain and strengthen distinctiveness and sense of place and promote high quality urban design. It would help preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest and their setting. This option would not include a criteria requiring an assessment of the asset's relevance to Oxford.</p> <p>This option would be, in effect, relying on the NPPF policy only.</p>
<p><b>C) Rejected Option:</b> Do not have a policy relating to listed buildings and their setting, but rely on national planning policy and other regulatory regimes.</p>	<p>The NPPF provides guidance and protection in line with option b. However, not including a policy in the Oxford Local Plan will mean that the opportunity to reflect local circumstances would be lost.</p>



### Opt 72: Assets of Local Heritage Value

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Include a policy that requires development to consider heritage assets of local importance. The policy would also set out criteria for the assessing whether an asset has locally important heritage interest.</p>	<p>This policy will ensure that heritage assets of local importance will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. Locally important heritage assets can be added to the list when they are identified. The criteria will help understanding when assessing planning applications as to whether there is a heritage asset that should be added to the list.</p> <p>The City Council's nomination form for heritage assets already sets out criteria, including that the asset must possess heritage interest that can be conserved and enjoyed, must have a value as heritage for the character and identity of the city or area or community and they must have a level of significance that is greater than the general positive characteristics of the local area that have been identified.</p>
<p><b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Do not include a policy relating to assets of local heritage importance but rely on national planning policy.</p>	<p>The NPPF affords some protection even without a specific local policy. The NPPF says that heritage assets that make a positive contribution to local character or sense of place but which are not nationally designated or in a conservation area can be offered some protection by being identified on an adopted list of local heritage assets.</p>

### Opt 73: Conservation areas

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Identify Conservation Areas and include a general policy approach to determining applications in conservation areas in Oxford.</p>	<p>Setting out considerations relevant to applications in Conservation areas will help to add clarity. This approach will give the opportunity to put a local emphasis on assessing significance and can make reference to management.</p>
<p><b>B) Rejected Option:</b> Identify Conservation Areas but do not include a general policy, instead rely on Conservation Appraisals, national planning policy and other regulatory regimes.</p>	<p>The NPPF and other national regulations provide some guidance. However, not including a policy in the Oxford Local Plan will mean that the opportunity to reflect local circumstances would be lost.</p>

### Opt74: Important parks and gardens

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Do not include a policy relating to important parks and gardens but rely on other policies of the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Oxford has 15 registered parks and gardens. These Historic parks and gardens are protected at a national level. There is not considered to be any particular local commentary required relating to these areas. Several of these parks and gardens have been assessed as being part of the Green Infrastructure network.</p>
<p><b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Include a policy in the Local Plan protecting important parks and gardens</p>	<p>There is not scope for a policy that does much more than repeat national guidance relating to already protected areas, so there are not obvious benefits to including this policy.</p>

### Opt 75: Scheduled Monuments

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Do not include a policy on Scheduled Monuments, but rely on national planning policy and other regulatory regimes.</p>	<p>Oxford has 10 Scheduled Monuments, which are the City Walls, the Castle, Seacourt Medieval Settlement, Osney Abbey, Rewley Abbey, Godstow Abbey, the Swing Bridge, Old Abingdon Road Culverts, a section of Grandpont Causeway, and the ring ditches and burrows of Port Meadow. The NPPF and other national regulations provide sufficient guidance on protection and enhancement of these and Historic England also maintains a register for assets at risk (currently the Swing Bridge is one of only two assets on the at risk register).</p>

**B) Alternative Option:** Include a policy to say that development must not have an unacceptable impact on a nationally important monument.

There is not scope for a policy that does much more than repeat national guidance relating to already protected monuments, so there are not obvious benefits to including this policy. The options below on 'Provisions for sites that include archaeological remains' address non-scheduled monuments of national significance and Oxford's distinctive archaeological legacy.

## 6.20 Archaeology

Oxford has a rich archaeological heritage, from prehistoric times to the modern day. This archaeology has the potential to aid understanding of our heritage. It is vital in Oxford that opportunities to investigate archaeological remains are fully realised when development takes place. The options below are designed to ensure that development results in a thorough investigation of archaeology where this is relevant.

### Opt 76: Defining areas likely to have archaeological deposits

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<b>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B):</b> Continue to define a city centre Archaeological Area as an area where it is suspected archaeological deposits will exist, and where information defining the extent and character of deposits should be included in an application.	This is a long-standing policy approach. The magnitude and wealth of deposits in the area means that any groundworks are likely to have an impact on archaeology, so is sensible to identify this area in policy.
<b>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B):</b> Highlight (Outside of the city centre Archaeological Area) where there is a strong likelihood of archaeological deposits within allocated development sites, for example with a symbol within the policy as in the current Sites and Housing Plan.	This will alert developers to the potential archaeology on allocated development sites enabling early consideration to be given to this matter. However, this approach would not enable easy, early identification of the likelihood of deposits in areas outside of the city centre Archaeological Area and outside of allocated development sites.
<b>C) Alternative Option:</b> Define other areas (outside of a city centre Archaeological Area) that are also highly likely to contain archaeological deposits and should therefore provide information in a planning application.	This will alert developers to the potential archaeology in areas of the city outside the city centre with a strong potential for there to be archaeological deposits enabling early consideration to be given to this matter. However, because the identification of the likelihood of archaeological deposits would rely on an array of data sources, it will be difficult to precisely identify boundaries for these areas on the Policies Map.

### Opt 77: Provisions for sites that include archaeological remains

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<b>A) Preferred option:</b> Set out requirements for dealing with known archaeological remains of national or local significance. Specifically, require that the potential harm of cumulative impacts is considered (in the central archaeological area), and whether this can be mitigated through recording and publication of results. Consideration should be given to provisions for storage where necessary.	<p>It is important that there is a policy to address Oxford's distinctive archaeological legacy. Recording and publication is likely to be important. In many cases it will be preferable if the remains can be preserved in situ. Where this is not possible, sometimes consideration will need to be given to the adequate recording and publication of archaeological information and storage of deposits. The concentration of archaeological assets in Oxford, as well as the strong development pressures, mean that cumulative impacts could begin to have negative effects if not properly considered. This policy approach would ensure that the type of deposits of national or local deposits could be highlighted, and also how they should be dealt with in a way appropriate in Oxford, including in terms of cumulative effects.</p> <p>The management and conservation of non-designated nationally significant assets will require particular consideration, including those that collectively make a major contribution to Oxford distinctiveness, encompassing assets associated with the 1st and 2nd terrace ritual and funerary prehistoric landscape, the local Roman pottery manufacturing industry, the development of the late Saxon town and the medieval University, medieval religious institutions and the urban defences.</p>

<p><b>B) Rejected Option:</b> Do not include a policy on requirements for how archaeological remains should be dealt with but rely on national planning policy.</p>	<p>This approach would result in reliance on national policy. It would mean that the Local Plan would not have a marker as to how archaeological remains should be considered and the opportunity to give an Oxford perspective would be lost.</p>
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**Opt 78: Archaeological remains within listed buildings**

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p><b>A) Preferred option:</b> Do not have a policy on archaeological remains in listed buildings, but rely on national planning policy and other regulatory regimes.</p>	<p>General policies relating to archaeological remains will apply to remains within and outside listed buildings, so there is little need for a specific policy. The policy that defines areas that are likely to have archaeological remains could reference listed buildings, which would ensure the potential for remains to exist is flagged up early.</p>
<p><b>B) Alternative Option:</b> Have a policy that requires a programme of investigation, recording and publication where it is considered a listed building conceals archaeological remains (to be secured by condition).</p>	<p>In many cases, work on a listed building will not require groundworks. If it does, other policies relating to archaeology will apply.</p>



