OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2040

ISSUES CONSULTATION PAPER

30 June to 25 August 2021

1.1   Oxford City Council is embarking on the development of the next iteration of the Local Plan. This document has been prepared to bring together the key planning and development issues that are facing the city and which the Local Plan will need to address. This is an early opportunity to engage on the development of the new plan and we are seeking your views on the scope of the issues we have identified. There will be further opportunities to engage on the preparation of the plan over the next couple of years.

1.2   The new Local Plan will set out the planning strategy for meeting the needs of the city going through to 2040. It will identify the locations for the new housing and set out the strategy for delivering housing and jobs to meet the needs of the community, including affordable housing. The Local Plan will also set out policies to protect open space, ecological habitat and areas of heritage; as well as helping to support the transition towards a zero carbon city. Furthermore, the Local Plan will have an important role in ensuring that principles of high quality design guide new development, as well as considerations of health and wellbeing, and addressing inequalities across Oxford.

1.3   Ultimately, the Local Plan will set out our strategy for ensuring the sustainable development of our city, developed collaboratively with the people who live and work here. Guided by a vision and a set of key objectives, overarching a set of detailed policies, it will support Oxford's growth over the next 20 years, whilst responding positively to various challenges including the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate and ecological emergency, the lack of affordable housing, changing technology and the need for meeting communities' daily needs in their local areas.

1.4   The following sections set out some of the key context and issues we have identified which will need to be addressed over the Local Plan period. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and the paper is supported by a number of topic papers which explore the various topics in greater depth. We conclude with a proposed vision and objectives for the new Local Plan, that have been prepared based upon the issues raised throughout the paper.

1.5   The consultation is also accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report which you are able to comment on as well.

How to comment

1.6   A number of questions are asked throughout this document. These are intended to guide feedback and you can respond to these in a variety of ways. It would be most helpful for us if you could complete these using our online consultation portal, found on our website www.oxford.gov.uk/localplan2040. Alternatively, a Word version of the comment form can be downloaded for printing or completing. These can be returned

by email to planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk, or by post to Planning Policy, St Aldate's Chambers, 109-113 St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1DS. If you could use the guiding questions this would help us to analyse the responses, but we will also accept letters and emails. In addition to the questions within these documents we have also produced a short leaflet and questionnaire. This can be completed online from the link on our website www.oxford.gov.uk/localplan2040.

2.WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW

2.1 What's changed – Covid-19

2.1.1 The ongoing Covid 19 pandemic has had significant adverse effects in terms of health, well-being and the wider economy and is continuing to impact our lives and shape our behaviours in a number of positive and negative ways.

Effects on the economy in the short-term

2.1.2 The implementation of social distancing measures and national lockdowns has led to more people working from home where possible. This has had a range of positive benefits including improvements to air quality, due to fewer cars on the road because of the reduced need to travel, helping to reduce climate change impacts. Some residents and workers may also have seen mental health benefits to not having to dedicate time to commuting, as well savings on cars, parking, or public transport fares to get to work. Equally, for those without adequate space at home, including those living in houses in multiple occupation and in overcrowded homes, or those with inadequate access to digital technology and internet, the change may not have been as positive.

2.1.3 For many other businesses and industries, particularly those in the manufacturing, service and commercial sectors, the shift to remote working has not been possible. In these sectors, there have been temporary closures, with people furloughed and requiring financial support and some businesses are likely to have been forced to close permanently due to the financial stresses imposed on them.

2.1.4 The closure of schools and universities during national lockdown has impacted on children and young people's learning and there will be a lot of catching up required. There is a challenge with analysing the current situation in that the cancellation of testing and examinations (e.g. GCSE's and A-levels) has also impacted on available data which can be used as a tool to determine how severely young people have been impacted.

2.1.5 The impacts of lockdowns and social distancing have clearly resulted in heavily reduced social interaction within society, with people being unable to see friends and family who they do not share a household with. The potential for this to exacerbate feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as negatively impact upon mental health are clear. This was already an issue across the country and amongst certain age groups in Oxford. This is touched upon in greater detail in the accompanying health and wellbeing topic paper.

2.1.6 Research from the ONS[1] suggested that nationally there was a 19% decrease in the number of victims of crime in England during the height of the first lockdown in 2020, this was largely due to a drop in thefts, with more people staying at home making such crimes more difficult to commit. ONS also reported that concerns relating to the impact of covid on people's' lives were more likely in disabled people, with many experiencing a reduction in the care they were receiving for ongoing conditions, as well as being less likely to have met up with other people than non-disabled people.

Likely long-term effects on the economy

2.1.7 What is unclear at this stage, even as the world continues to struggle through the pandemic, is how much of the changes that we have seen in the short term will remain in the longer term as well as what other long term effects could arise as a result of Covid-19. As has been noted, a significant proportion of Oxford's businesses have shifted to remote working and working from home, in some cases, it seems likely that the change to remote working may well continue in some form in the future, with some businesses likely to adopt a hybrid working practice that accommodates a split of time between the office and the home. The shift to remote working by certain sectors could have subsequent impacts for a variety of businesses on the high street that have typically relied on trade from officer workers previously.

2.1.8 Independent research by the British Academy[2] suggests that the long term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are likely to be felt for the next decade. The research puts forward that the pandemic, which has typically hit deprived communities hardest, has likely broadened and deepened inequalities in health and wellbeing which will take time to be addressed. It has also exposed inequality in access to digital technology and increased levels of poverty, particularly as those who might be considered more vulnerable such as those living in deprived areas are more likely to have been unable to work during the crisis, or to have lost their jobs since.

2.1.9 The stress that has been placed on the NHS has had a knock on impact on health and social care for other conditions such as cancer and routine operations. As the health service works through the backlog in delayed treatments that has been created it is likely that more people will be forced to live with life limiting conditions for longer periods.

Healthcare and links to research and development

2.1.10 The repercussions of the pandemic have been stark for healthcare provision across the world. The disease has been particularly severe for those already living in poor health, for the elderly and the disabled. There have also been knock on impacts for the provision of health care and the backlog of delayed treatments that was highlighted in the previous section.

---

[1]https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19rounduppeopleandsocialimpacts/2020-07-03#covidcrime
[2] https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/news/social-costs-of-the-pandemic-will-be-felt-for-a-decade-says-the-british-academy/

2.1.11 Strong links between healthcare in practice and research have been critical in mitigating the impacts of the disease. Research and development is one of the current growth sectors in Oxford linked directly to the universities and hospitals and the ground-breaking research on vaccines with the development of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine has helped to highlight Oxford's importance on the world stage and reinforce its contribution to the national and local economy. It has shown how important its cutting edge solutions are to meeting the challenges we face.

Changes in the way we live and what we need from our city and neighbourhoods

2.1.12 The restrictions on our everyday lives as a result of the pandemic have imposed all manner of changes on the way we live our lives and interact with our local areas. Arguably, the pandemic has prompted a rediscovery of our local areas and the various services and spaces that are just on the doorstep. The benefit of having access to local amenities, without needing to rely upon a car, like shops and pharmacies and open spaces in which to exercise and meet other people have become apparent for many. Yet as has already been highlighted, this proximity is not always equal, and a lack of access to such spaces has unfortunately become even more apparent for others.

2.1.13 Concepts like the 15/20 minute neighbourhood[3], whereby communities have access to all of their daily needs within a 15-20 minute walk or cycle ride, have become increasingly popular approaches to the way we think about the planning of our local areas. To have the majority of our shopping, health, socialising and recreational needs within a short walk or cycle would not only reduce the negative impacts of future pandemics, but also promote healthier and more active lifestyles as well as reduce our impacts upon the climate and the natural environment.

2.1.14 The pandemic has also exposed the importance of space. Not just access to open space where we can be active and meet others safely, but also the importance of space within the homes and offices in which we spend so much of our lives. Where we have been unable to go out, for many the home has become a space to work, to exercise and to teach our children. The adjustment has been far more challenging for those without ample indoor space such as those living in overcrowded accommodation, shared houses and homes that have not been built to a standard that can accommodate such use. Furthermore, as businesses begin to return to office settings, the need for ventilation, space for social distancing and flexible working styles is becoming ever more pressing.

2.1.15 The pandemic has also necessitated an increased reliance on digital technology and the internet. Not only have we relied on video calling technologies to make connections with others, either for work or for socialising, but more of us have also turned to using the internet for shopping, for ordering food, and consulting with doctors or learning. The digital divide has become starkly highlighted, and it is likely

---

[3] More information on this concept can be round here: https://www.tcpa.org.uk/the-20-minute-neighbourhood

that those without adequate access to technology, or with poor connectivity, have struggled far more to adapt to the changing world than those who do have access. Digital connectivity has become just as important to the way we live as physical connectivity.

2.1.16 The Local Plan will need to address this changing relationship with our local areas and the spaces in which we spend so much time. It will be important to maximise on the positive changes that have occurred since the pandemic, whilst also working to mitigate the negative impacts and growing inequalities that Covid 19 has exposed and intensified.

> **Q1 In your opinion have we raised the right issues about how Covid-19 has impacted Oxford?**
>
> *Yes/No (if no what have we missed?)*

> **Q2 What changes in your life do you feel may be long lasting that may be relevant to the Local Plan?**

2.2   What's changed- The climate emergency

The declaration and climate trends

2.2.1   Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing society today. The emission of carbon dioxide alongside other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere as a result of the burning of fossil fuels has already led to an increase in global average temperatures of around 1 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It is commonly accepted that a temperature increase of above 2 degrees Celsius will lead to catastrophic impacts upon natural habitats and resources, but without action, the world is currently on track for temperature increases of up to 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the century[4].

2.2.2   The warming that has already happened has produced variations in the climate and is expected to lead to further changes. In the UK in particular, the projections are that there will be changes in precipitation patterns, including increased incidences of heavy rainfall events, as well as hotter, drier summers. The Committee for Climate Change reports that the chances of hot summers have doubled in recent years and could rise to a 50% likelihood by 2050.

2.2.3   Internationally, the UK was one of many signatories to the Paris Climate Agreement committing them to "keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels; and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C".

---

[4] https://www.theccc.org.uk/what-is-climate-change/

Nationally, in 2019, parliament amended legislation set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 requiring the UK to achieve net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and has committed to a further amendment that would require a reduction of 78% of emissions against 1990 levels by 2035 which will be enshrined in law in the near future[5].

2.2.4   Climate action is now central to everything that the Council does and pursuing a zero carbon Oxford is one of the City Council's 4 corporate priorities during 2020-2024. The Council joined many other local authorities in declaring a climate emergency in September 2019 and the Council has set ambitious zero carbon targets for its own estates and operations and the wider city[6]. These targets include:

- Zero emissions council by 2030, or earlier
- Net zero city by 2040 - put forward by, and adopted by, Oxford City Council and 20 other major local organisations in the newly formed Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership. (Includes 5-yearly interim targets).

2.2.5   The planning system is ideally placed to help deliver action on climate change and national policy is clear that this is vital to good planning. Addressing climate change successfully means engaging in two complementary and equally important approaches of action. There are those actions which seek to reduce and prevent greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation), this will be important for contributing to achieving the UK's legislated goals of being net zero by 2050. However, just as important are the approaches which seek to build resilience to the changes in climate that we are witnessing now, and expect to witness in future, despite actions to reduce emissions (climate change adaptation). Each of these topics will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Actions needed to reduce our contribution to climate change

2.2.6   Reducing and ultimately eliminating Oxford's impact on climate change means securing radical reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and decoupling growth from emissions (which have traditionally risen as development increases). There are a number of sources of emissions in the city, though the principal contributors come from the built environment, primarily in the form of heating and powering buildings, as well as the burning of fossil fuels within combustion engines in the transport network. A more detailed analysis of this topic and the current picture of emissions in Oxford can be found in the carbon reduction topic paper.

2.2.7   The development coming forward in the city today is likely to be around for the next 50-100 years thus anything built now will need to be fit for a zero-carbon future if the city is to reach net zero objectives by 2040. This means that it will be essential for energy to be used leanly in new buildings, and that what energy is used, is sourced

---

[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-enshrines-new-target-in-law-to-slash-emissions-by-78-by-2035
[6] https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1781/council_sets_out_action_plan_to_bring_about_a_zero_carbon_oxford_by_2040_or_earlier

from clean, renewable sources. It also means that heating (and cooling) systems will need to be comprised of low and zero carbon technologies, rather than traditional forms of heating such as boilers burning natural gas or oil. A more significant challenge, and one where the body of research into addressing it is still developing, will focus on reducing the carbon that is emitted as part of construction processes, also known as embodied carbon. It is likely that changes outside of the planning system, such as incoming updates to Building Regulations will play an increasingly important role in supporting such changes.

2.2.8 New buildings are responsible for a relatively small proportion of the total emissions coming from the built environment, however. An ongoing challenge, and one that the Local Plan has less influence over, is the need to pursue an extensive programme of retro-fitting measures to deliver carbon reduction in existing buildings in the city. It will be important for planners to work with colleagues across the Council and in the wider city to consider how retro-fitting can be supported through the planning system wherever possible.

2.2.9 The other significant contributor of emissions is the transport network in the city. It is likely that emissions from private vehicles will drop independently as the UK phases out sales of petrol/diesel cars by 2030, however uptake of electric vehicles in their place will rely on appropriate support from the city's policy framework. Regardless of this transition, it will be equally important to support modal shift towards public transport alternatives, as well as walking and cycling, which has complementary benefits for health and wellbeing of residents in the city and can reduce congestion. The Local Plan can help to enable more active travel by locating development in a sustainable way with easy connections to the wider city and public transport hubs, as well as through delivery of appropriate infrastructure and simply making routes more pleasant through ample greening. Decarbonising the transport system is discussed more in the transport and connectivity topic paper.

2.2.10 The Local Plan will also have a role in reducing the use of resources in new development. This could involve recycling and reusing materials within redevelopments, as well as encouraging prudent use of natural resources and supporting residents to recycle waste.

2.2.11 Achieving net zero carbon by 2040 will be an immense challenge for the city, and the Local Plan will make an important contribution to this. It is likely however, that eradicating all emissions may not be achievable within this timeframe. At least in the short to the medium term, consideration may need to be given to offsetting measures that can help to balance out emissions that cannot easily be tackled at source. Supporting offsetting via the Local Plan will again be a topic to think about going forwards.

Actions needed to adapt to climate change

2.2.12 Unfortunately, regardless of the level of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that can be achieved in the future, a level of climate change is now expected due to the long life time of many of the gases that have already been emitted into the

atmosphere. Thus it is equally important that our local plan includes measures that adapt to the effects of climate change. Building resilience to future climate hazards like increasing incidences of hot summers and heavy rainfall events is a continual process and cannot be achieved overnight, as such adaptation considerations should be intrinsic to everything we do. Policies throughout the Local Plan will have an important role to play in supporting such measures, thus this topic is a theme that runs throughout many of the topic papers. Two of the key areas of adaptation for the Local Plan to consider are in relation to overheating and flooding.

2.2.13 In relation to overheating, the hazard of warmer, drier summers is exacerbated in a densely developed urban location like Oxford due to the phenomena of the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. The UHI is broadly characterised by the difference in average temperature within the urban area compared with the surrounding countryside. It is generated by expanses of artificial, impermeable materials which absorb incoming solar radiation and re-radiate it throughout the day and into the night, boosting the local temperature. The effect is further compounded by the presence of machinery and mechanical systems that radiate heat.

2.2.14 The presence of impermeable materials like concrete and tarmac, coupled with inappropriate or limited drainage systems, means that when rain falls, the water has reduced ability to soak away and thus can quickly overcome sewers and lead to surface flooding. The hazard of wetter winters, and increased incidences of heavy rainfall events increases the risk of flooding events when the ground becomes over saturated, and the risk of flooding is exacerbated when rain falls on top of already impermeable surfaces within many urban areas.

2.2.15 Adaptation measures are broad and wide ranging; they work to reduce the risks presented by the above hazards and improve society's ability to recover quickly when these events occur. In relation to heat wave events, buildings can:

- Incorporate shutters on windows to reduce solar gain, as well as other passive cooling features to help occupants stay cool, like openings to allow natural ventilation.
- Use materials that are reflective to reflect sunlight back instead of absorbing and reradiating it into the environment.
- Utilise green infrastructure to offer direct shade to buildings as well as cool by other means such as evapotranspiration.

2.2.16 When it comes to flooding, buildings can incorporate:

- Resistance measures that keep water out or away from key services during flood events (dry proofing),
- Resilience measures that help the structure dry out and be put back into use quickly (wet proofing),
- Evacuation plans, refuge areas and alert systems
- Sustainable drainage systems, particularly green infrastructure, that provide space to soak up excess water, or slow the flow of water so that sewers aren't inundated.

2.2.17 Crucially, many adaptation measures have multi-functional benefits and bring enhanced value to a development. For example, green infrastructure not only has climate resilience benefits, but can also improve mental health and wellbeing for nearby residents as well as providing space for biodiversity. It is also important to remember that such adaptations are much cheaper to install during the construction process, as opposed to at a later date as part of a retrofit.

2.2.18 Adaptation to climate change matters addressed through the Local Plan will also have relevance to addressing inequalities in the city. Climate hazards often fall disproportionately on the more vulnerable, such as those living in deprivation. In part this is because of the presence of higher incidences of long term health issues such as poor cardiovascular health and respiratory illness, which makes individuals particularly vulnerable to effects like heat waves. But there is also typically a reduced ability to purchase their own resilience building measures, (e.g. flood insurance, air conditioning), which means these individuals are more vulnerable to impacts and find it more challenging to recover quickly. A broader discussion on inequality is covered in the next section.

> **Q3 In your opinion have we raised the right issues about how climate change needs to be taken into account in Oxford?** *Yes/No (if no what have we missed?)*

2.3   What's important – Overcoming inequalities

2.3.1   There are some distinct inequalities across the communities that call Oxford home, as is the case with many urban areas around the UK. For example, according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)[7], there are areas of the city which fall within the 20% and 10% most deprived parts of the country including in parts of Blackbird Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, Barton and Northfield Brook wards of the city (Figure 1). Conversely, Oxford also hosts some of the least deprived areas in the country with 12 areas including Marston, Headington, Quarry and Risinghurst, Jericho and Wolvercote that are among the 10% least deprived areas in the country.

---

[7] DCLG (2019) Indices of Multiple Deprivation: http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html
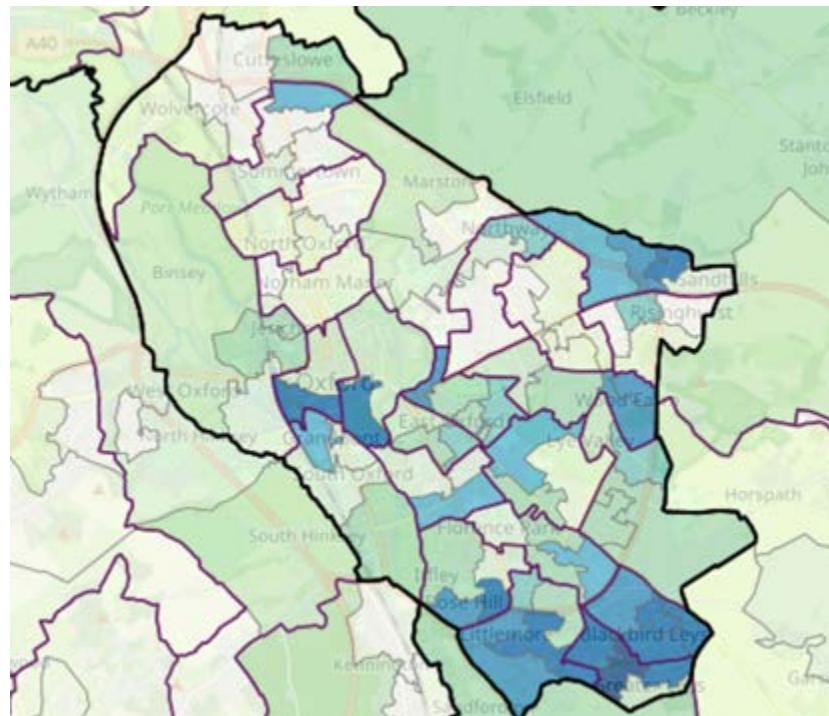
Figure 1 – Levels of deprivation in Oxford according to DCLG's Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019) – higher deprivation is marked by darker blue, lower deprivation in light green

2.3.2 Inequality in the city is a multifaceted issue that has relevance to a range of topics in the plan, particularly housing, employment and health, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Housing for everyone

2.3.3 National policy is clear that the planning system should plan for a good supply of homes that can meet the needs of a range of groups. The provision of housing will therefore be a key issue for the Local Plan. Taking direction from the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work, which will set out the identified need for the city, the Local Plan will need to plan for the location of that housing as well as the apportionment of various housing types and tenures to meet the diversity of needs across the community.

2.3.4 As of the 2011 census there were 55,400 households in Oxford. The census found that the proportion of individuals who owned their own home in Oxford was relatively low at 47%, compared to 63% nationally, whilst the percentage of households who rent their home in the private sector was higher than average at 28%, compared with 17% nationally. Indeed, between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of households who owned their home had decreased from 54% to 47%, whilst the percentage renting in the private rented sector increasing from 21% to 28%. Meanwhile, a fifth of households in Oxford, according to the census, were living in socially rented accommodation at 21% of households, compared with 18% nationally.

2.3.5   Continuing to be one of the most expensive cities to live in England, a particular issue in Oxford is that of affordable housing provision. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS)[8], in 2020 the median house price in Oxford was £400,000 which was 11.72 times median gross earnings (£34,124) in the city. For England as a whole, the median house price is 7.84 times median earnings. Evidence suggests that housing prices in Oxford are continuing to rise at a rate that outstrips the rise in average earnings for local residents.

2.3.6   The National Planning Policy Framework defines affordable housing as *housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)*. Whilst affordable housing encompasses a variety of products that cater to differing needs of affordability, including social and intermediate housing, the government has recently made clear that, from the 28th June 2021, local plans will need to reflect the requirement for provision of First Homes[9]. First Homes are a new form of affordable housing that differs from traditional forms of affordable housing as it is offered to first time buyers, as opposed to those on the local housing needs register. The updates to national policy state that First Homes should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations, which will have implications for the proportion of other types of affordable housing we can ask for on new developments, such as social housing.

2.3.7   Oxford's communities are varied, with differing needs for housing provision. Therefore, beyond just looking at affordable housing, the Local Plan needs to support the delivery of housing to meet the needs of various groups. For example, it will be important to consider the needs of older residents and the elderly, as well as housing that is accessible to those with disabilities including people in wheelchairs. For some people, shared accommodation including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are an important source of housing, and these needs also need to be planned for whilst also managing any potential negative impacts on the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood. We also need to address the needs of traveller communities and those who live on the waterways.

2.3.8   As a long established setting for two universities (the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University), our community is also comprised of a significant student population who have particular housing needs that need to be accommodated. It will be important to consider how provision of student accommodation can be supported in the city and balanced with the growth of the universities, whilst ensuring that needs of the wider community are not impeded.

2.3.9   Ultimately, the issue of housing provision has wider benefits for the sustainability of the city. There are large numbers of people forced to live elsewhere and commute into Oxford to work (before the pandemic it was estimated that around 46,000 people commute into the city to work (2011 Census). This has implications for congestion on

---

[8]https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoresiden cebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian
[9] Affordable Homes update Ministerial statement (24th May 2021): https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48

the roads, as well as impacts upon air quality and carbon emissions, but if we could meet their needs locally this could address many of these problems. Having access to the right kind of high-quality housing which meets people's needs also has benefits for health and wellbeing, particularly the disabled and the elderly whose needs may not be met by certain styles of housing (e.g. housing with many stairs or tight and narrow access).

2.3.10 These topics are addressed in greater detail in the accompanying topic papers on housing need and supply; housing affordability; and student housing.

Employment, education and training opportunities (inclusive economy)

2.3.11 Whilst an above average proportion of Oxford's residents between the ages of 16-64 have degree-level qualifications, or above, (62%), compared to the rest of Britain, (43.1%), 6.6% of residents do not have any qualifications, which is slightly above the average for Britain of 6.2%[10].

2.3.12 In relation to employment, 69.2% of residents between 16-64 years old were employed in 2020, 6.7% of these were self-employed. Residents in the city who are claiming unemployment benefits made up 4.8% of the population, which is lower than the average for Great Britain (which is 6.5%). Of benefit claimants in Oxford, the proportion of male claimants was higher (5.7%) than females (3.8%). As can be seen in Table 1, those aged between 25 and 49, had highest numbers claiming benefits (6.1%).

Table 1 – Unemployment benefit claimant count by age in Oxford (March 2021)

	Oxford (Level)	Oxford (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Aged 16+	5,080	4.8	5.4	6.5
Aged 16 To 17	5	0.2	0.2	0.4
Aged 18 To 24	900	2.8	7.8	9.1
Aged 18 To 21	490	2.5	7.6	9.0
Aged 25 To 49	3,030	6.1	5.8	7.1
Aged 50+	1,145	5.4	4.2	5.1

Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age
Note: % is number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age

2.3.13 The proportions of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market across the city are also not equally distributed as is illustrated in Figure 2. This includes people who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities. There are no areas in Oxford within the 10% most deprived areas in England for this indicator, but a number of areas, predominantly in the south of the city, fall within the 20% most deprived areas in England for employment deprivation.

---

[10] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157324/report.aspx
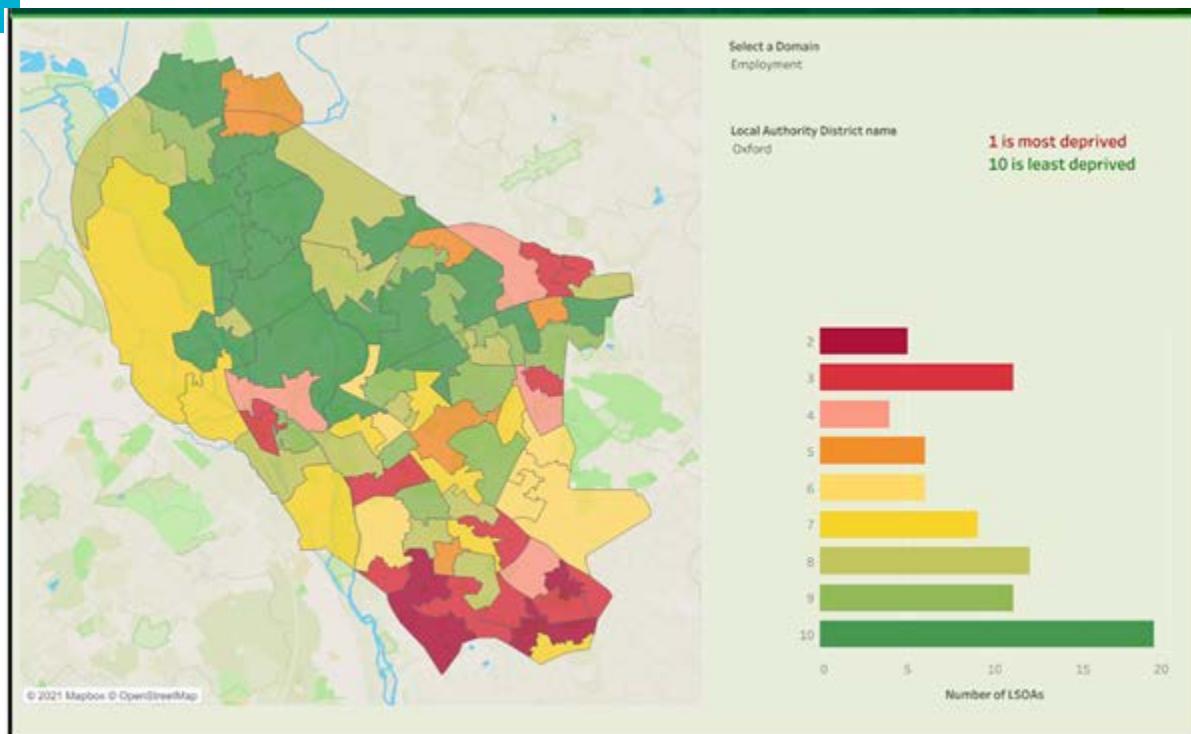
Figure 2: Employment deprivation ranking across Oxford, according to MHCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019)

2.3.14 These topics are addressed in greater detail in the accompanying topic paper on employment, economy and skills.

Health and Wellbeing

2.3.15 Good health includes physical, social and mental wellbeing going beyond simply the absence of illness and care of persons who have become ill. The built environment has many influences on health, from the provision of open spaces to engage in physical activity and promote social interactions, to the ability to adopt healthy behaviours like walking and cycling, many of these wider determinants of health are within the Local Plan's influence. As new policies are developed across a range of topics, it will be important for officers to consider all of the aspects that can impact on an individual's health so as to promote positive health and wellbeing outcomes and avoid negative outcome across the city.

2.3.16 Oxford has recorded a number of positive improvements in residents' health and wellbeing in recent years, such as high levels of physical activity and lower than average levels of obesity amongst residents, as well as numbers reporting general good health. But, there are also areas of concern, such as, rises in referrals for mental health problem, high levels of loneliness amongst certain age groups, as well as obesity amongst children, which whilst lower than average for the UK, is still an ongoing issue that has been linked with a range of health problems in later life if not addressed.

2.3.17 In addition, as shown in Figure 3, there are some pronounced health inequalities across Oxford, which are linked with the broader picture of inequality discussed earlier. In 2019, 7 of Oxford's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) fell into the 20 per cent most deprived, and 1 LSOA in the 10 per cent most deprived nationally for Health Deprivation and Disability.Carfax 08B has the greatest level of health deprivation in Oxford. Other deprived areas are in Northfield Brook, Rose Hill & Iffley, St Clement's, Churchill and Blackbird Leys. The majority of least deprived areas, are located within the north of the city.
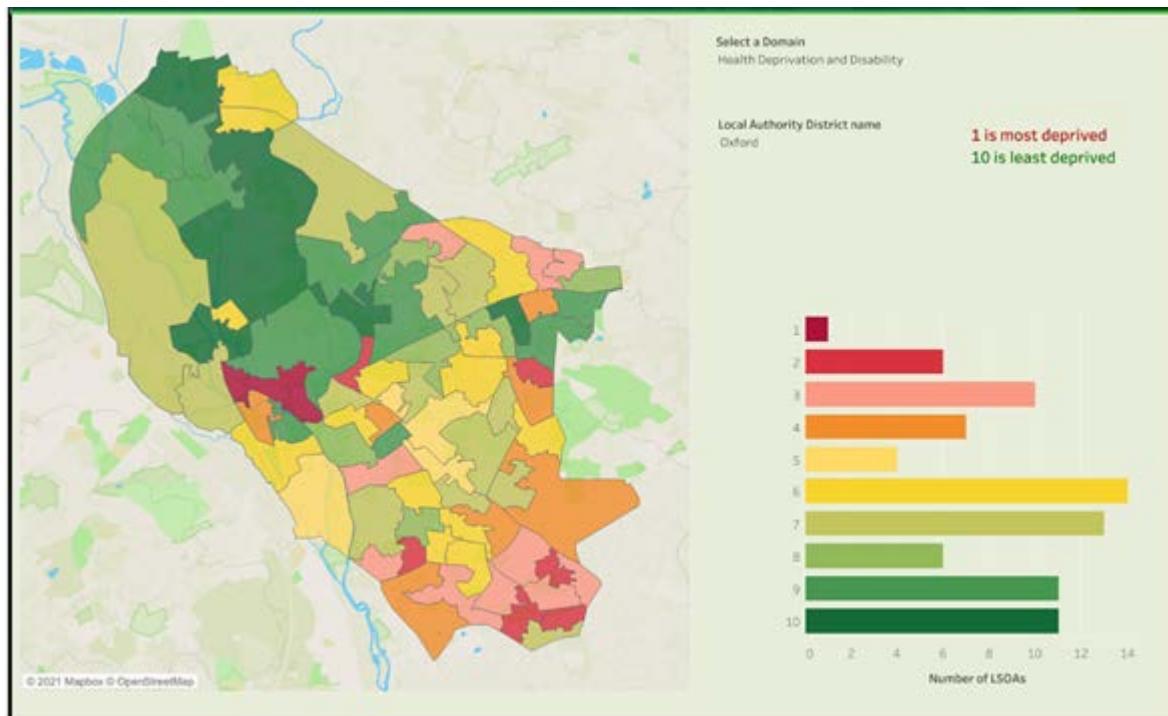
Figure 3: Health deprivation and disability ranking across Oxford, according to MHCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019)

2.3.18 Indeed, males living in the more affluent areas of the city are expected to live around 11 years longer than those in poorer areas. For females the gap in life expectancy is around 12 years. Both the highest and lowest life expectancies at birth for males and females across the county are within the Oxford city boundary[11].

2.3.19 Whilst working to ensure that negative impacts on health and wellbeing are avoided and positive impacts maximised, it will also be important for the new Local Plan to work towards reducing the health inequalities that exist in the city. This could take the form of targeted interventions in particular areas in need, as well as ensuring that the issues of health inequality are considered throughout the planning process.

2.3.20 This topic is addressed in greater depth in the accompanying Health and Wellbeing topic paper.

---

[11]https://public.tableau.com/views/JSNA_dashboard/Story1?embed=y:display_count=no&:showVizHome=no%20#4

Q4 In your opinion have we raised the right issues about overcoming inequalities in Oxford in this paper and/or the accompanying topic papers? Yes/No (if no, what have we missed?)

2.4 What's important – our neighbourhoods

2.4.1 It will be important for the Local Plan to put forward a well-thought out strategy for how we wish our communities to develop and grow over the coming years. There are various features that make up a sustainable and healthy city and a few of these are discussed in turn in this section.

Facilities nearby

2.4.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted to us the importance of having a variety of facilities in our local area to meet our daily needs, be that for food shopping, or engaging in physical exercise.

Healthy, social spaces

2.4.3 Having access to food stores, for example, is of course essential, but providing people with a range of options, such as those offering healthy food choices as well as locally sourced goods can further help to support healthy lifestyles and reduce carbon emissions. Access to health care facilities like doctors, dentists and pharmacies further helps to ensure that people's basic health needs are met without having to travel large distances.

2.4.4 A network of open spaces provides residents with an opportunity to meet each other and interact which can be essential for promoting social interaction and reducing loneliness. Spaces like parks offer opportunities for people to be active, to run and to play whilst playing pitches provide larger spaces for individuals and clubs to engage in team sports. In these spaces it is also important to incorporate facilities and equipment for children and younger people. Enabling people to stay fit and active not only has benefits for combatting issues like obesity and cardio-vascular problems, but is also essential for helping people to stay mentally healthy, reducing feelings of stress and anxiety, conditions that have been on the rise in Oxford in recent years as with many other places.

2.4.5 The topic of green spaces is discussed further later in this paper, but is also covered in greater depth in the accompanying green infrastructure and biodiversity topic paper. Community facilities is addressed in the accompanying community and cultural facilities topic paper.

2.4.6   Supporting local and independent businesses and start-ups is also important for establishing local identity and supporting the wider economy of the city. Encouraging a range of uses to set up alongside retailers, like food and drink establishments and entertainment venues is a positive way of supporting our high streets to stay lively throughout the day and into the evening.

2.4.7   Open spaces and greening also play a role in supporting the economy of the city, acting as venues for larger gatherings like at markets and entertainment events, as well as for promoting feelings of community. Whilst a related benefit is offering space for people to dwell and relax, in retail locations for example, where people feel comfortable staying longer they are more likely to visit nearby shops and cafés further supporting local businesses.

2.4.8   A challenge for the local plan will be how we guide the changing structure of our high streets and shopping areas in the face of changing shopping patterns and the recovery from the pandemic. Recent changes to the use classes system, a traditional means of controlling the proportions of land uses like retail, offices and takeaways, means that the planning system now has less control over what these spaces look like, thus it will be important to establish strong visions for the future of these areas and to utilise a variety of tools to help them develop sustainably into the future.

2.4.9   The topic of retail and the economy is discussed more in the accompanying Retail and Employment topic papers.

Movement and accessibility

2.4.10   The types of facilities we see in Oxford are not the only consideration for the plan. How people move around the city to access these various facilities is also an important matter to consider.

2.4.11   The city has an ongoing challenge to improve air quality and cut emissions from the transport sector, as well as reducing congestion and the need for land to be used for parking. Supporting people to shift away from reliance on private vehicles will be essential to achieving this goal. The Local Plan may look to continue the current local plan's approach to discouraging transport by unsustainable modes of transport such as the private car, while managing the transition to autonomous and electric vehicles, and encouraging the development of smart city technologies within Oxford.

2.4.12   It will however be vital to continue to support greater levels of walking and cycling across the city. The Local Plan can help to ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided to make space for pedestrians and cyclists, it can support greening of routes and the general improvement of the surrounding environment to make walking more pleasant and in this way can also help to support people to lead healthier and more active lives. We will also need to think about how particular groups utilise and move around these spaces, such as the disabled, the elderly, women and children.

2.4.13 There are a variety of emerging transport strategies that the Oxford Local Plan 2040 will need to work in tandem with to help shape and implement their proposals. The new Local Plan will also need to account for existing initiatives such as Connecting Oxford, the Workplace Parking Levy, and the Zero Emission Zone whilst also considering how best to accommodate the needs of new and emerging modes of transport such as: e-cargo bikes, sustainable freight transport, micro-mobility, and e-scooters.

2.4.14 This is a topic which is addressed in greater detail within the Transport and Connectivity topic paper.

High quality design

2.4.15 Our neighbourhoods are hugely influenced by the design quality of the buildings and streets that comprise them. Indeed, the importance of good urban design has been directly highlighted for many during the pandemic as we have been forced to spend more time at home and within our local areas. Good design is an important tool not only for making our surroundings pleasant to look at and to be in, but also for making spaces:

- that are accessible for everyone,
- that thrive and function as well as feel safe at all times of the day,
- that conserve and promote heritage and history
- that promote biodiversity and make room for wildlife
- that are fit for a zero carbon world whilst also being resilient to climate change

2.4.16 In a city like Oxford, with its long history of development and variety of different urban characters, the Local Plan can help to ensure good design that is based on a thorough understanding of the constraints and opportunities of the site and the surrounding character of the area. The challenge in developing the plan will be to provide more detailed design guidance than has been included in local plans previously, guidance which is more area-specific, and that takes a holistic view of the specific needs of an area.

2.4.17 In developing the guidance and policies relating to design, it will be important to involve local communities in identifying important characteristics of their areas and bring forward more area-specific design guidance. Understanding what contributes to the valued characteristics of an area leads to an understanding of how to reflect and enhance those characteristics, helping to create a stronger sense of place. The plan will also need to consider what might threaten characteristics that are important to creating local distinctiveness. Ultimately, a set of principles to guide design in the area could be developed and included in the character area summaries.

2.4.18 The topic of urban design is addressed in depth in the Urban Design and Heritage topic paper.

Heritage and conservation

2.4.19 The character of Oxford is also deeply connected to the city's long history of settlement which will need to be considered carefully within the Local Plan.

2.4.20 Within our boundaries there are buildings spanning every major period of British architectural history from the 11th century onwards. Oxford had 10 scheduled monuments and 15 Historic Parks and Gardens, as well as 18 conservation areas and around 1,500 listed buildings, with the proportion of grade I and II* as a total of all listed buildings being more than twice the national average.

2.4.21 Oxford also has a rich archaeological heritage, from prehistoric times to the modern day. The unique archaeological heritage of the city encompasses a wide variety of asset types. Notable assets include 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 the 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 particular note include the town defences, the distinctive remains associated with the medieval Jewish Community and the Royalist Civil War defences.

2.4.22 The topic of heritage and conservation is also addressed in greater depth in the accompanying Urban Design and Heritage topic paper.

> **Q5 In your opinion have we raised the right issues for our neighbourhoods in this paper and/or the accompanying topic papers?** *Yes/No (if no, what have we missed?)*

2.5   What's important – our natural environment

2.5.1 Oxford benefits from a diverse natural landscape which is an essential component of the character of the city. Ensuring it is appropriately addressed through the policies of the Local Plan will be vital and this is discussed more in the following sections.

Green infrastructure

2.5.2 A high-quality, well connected, network of green infrastructure provides a wide range of benefits for the health and wellbeing of Oxford's residents and is arguably just as important as more traditional forms of grey infrastructure like sewers and roads. Oxford's green infrastructure incorporates green spaces like parks, playing pitches, cemeteries and allotments, as well as trees and hedgerows, but also blue spaces like the rivers and the canal. These spaces are 'multi-functional', meaning that they play more than one role and therefore have more than one benefit including:

- Social interaction

- Outdoor recreation
- Climate resilience
- Food growing
- Supporting economic investment
- Providing a setting for heritage and conservation

2.5.3   These spaces are however under continual pressure, not only from new development, but also from climate change, recreational disturbance, and pollution from various sources. Therefore it is vital that the Local Plan continues to protect these spaces. The Local Plan can also go further than just protection, for example there will be opportunities to enhance existing open spaces so that they can accommodate increasing visitors and also to provide for ecological improvements. There may also be opportunities to provide for new green infrastructure, though due to the constrained nature of the city, this is likely to be in the form of smaller pockets of green, such as green roofs, and green corridors that can better link up existing spaces.

2.5.4   For an in depth analysis on this topic, including a breakdown of various typologies of green infrastructure, please refer to the accompanying green infrastructure and biodiversity topic paper.

Biodiversity

2.5.5   Linked with the topic of green infrastructure, the Local Plan will need to consider how biodiversity in the city can be protected and enhanced. Oxford contains the nationally designated Special Area of Conservation known as Oxford Meadows SAC, as well as a range of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are also a range of locally important habitats. These spaces are under similar pressures to the rest of the green infrastructure network as highlighted above, with air pollution being a particular concern for the SAC. Again, more in-depth analysis on the ecological network can be found in the accompanying green infrastructure and biodiversity topic paper.

2.5.6   The topic of biodiversity is one that has had increasing focus nationally, with the upcoming Environment Bill, which is currently being considered in parliament, proposing a range of measures to improve biodiversity and halt declines in nature. Amongst these measures is a proposal for a mandatory net gain (i.e. ensuring any development provides an increase in the existing biodiversity of a site) to be delivered on all new development, as well as the establishment of nature recovery networks to cover each county and provide a framework for delivering improvements in habitat.

2.5.7   Whilst the measures set out in the Environment Bill are likely to come forward and be instigated outside of the Local Plan's influence, the Council's planning policies will still have a role to play in promoting ecological recovery throughout the city. For example, policies could be developed that promote wildlife friendly construction practices and features such as bird and bat boxes, whilst policies will also be able to address protection of the environment from various types of pollution and disturbance. The plan could also take a role in supporting the delivery of the

Environment Bill measures by helping to identify sites for delivery of net gain when it cannot be delivered on site.

Flood resilience

2.5.8   The city of Oxford is located at the confluence of two rivers, the Thames and the Cherwell, and the risk from river flooding has the potential to impact development in Oxford now and in the future (Figure 4). The picture of flood risk is further complicated by other sources of flooding in Oxford which include groundwater, surface water and sewer flooding. As touched upon earlier, the ongoing impact of climate change, including projected wetter winters and increased incidences of intense rainfall events, is likely to exacerbate these risks in the future, with a variety of negative consequences for property, ecosystems, as well as human health. As such a key issue for the Local Plan to address will be how flood risk is balanced alongside the need for accommodating new development and protecting peoples' health and wellbeing.
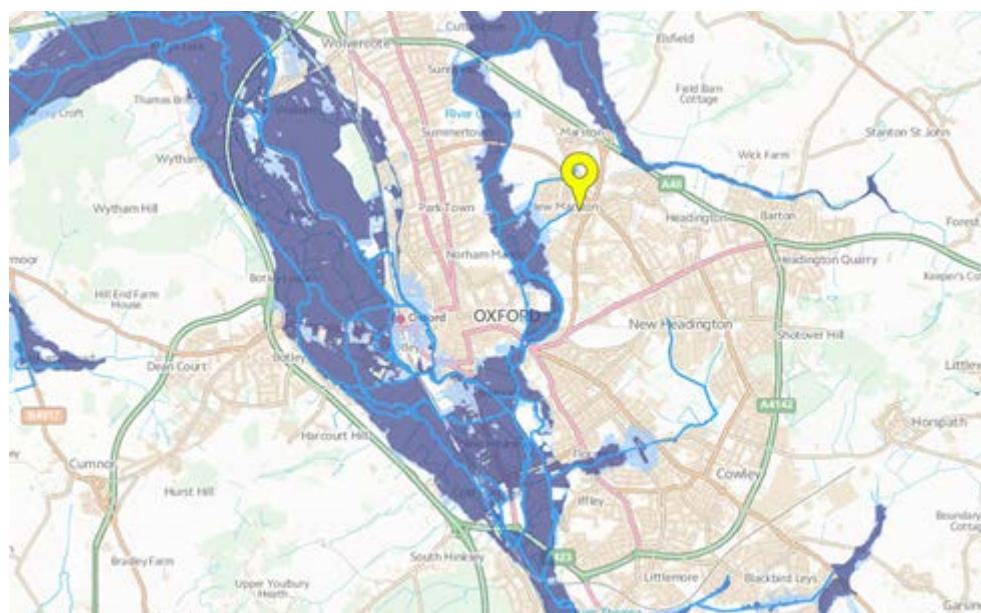
Figure 4: Environment Agency Flood map showing risk of river flooding in Oxford

2.5.9   There is a certain degree of overlap between areas of deprivation and areas of flood risk with areas of the city that suffer from both flooding and higher levels of deprivation including Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys and parts of the city centre. As noted earlier, risks of flooding are often compounded by socio-economic deprivation and addressing flood risk is likely to be beneficial in helping to address issues relating to inequality in the city.

2.5.10   The new Local Plan will need to include policies that set out how flood risk will be addressed when assessing new development. The requirements set out in national policy for how this issue should be addressed are detailed and comprehensive and this will give significant steer for how such policies will need to be formulated. It will be important to consider how natural interventions such as green infrastructure and

certain types of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can be utilised to reduce flood risk. Urban design and flood resistance/resilience measures will also be important approaches that the Local Plan can set out guidance on. Throughout the development of the policies, it will be crucial to engage with the County Council who act as Lead Local Flood Authority for the city, as well as the Environment Agency who have responsibility for managing risk along the rivers in particular.

2.5.11 A key piece of evidence underpinning this work will be a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which is a mapping exercise that identifies current and future extent of flood risk for an area and helps to sequentially allocate development in areas of lowest risk. An SFRA was recently undertaken to support the development of the currently adopted Local Plan, but it is likely that a new assessment will need to be undertaken in order to accommodate updates to the Environment Agency climate modelling projections that have been released in the intervening period. The SFRA will be an important tool in assessing flood risk on any allocations in the Local Plan, so that the Council is confident that any flood risk can be mitigated on any sites allocated for development.

2.5.12 A more detailed discussion on the topic of flooding can be found in the accompanying Flood Risk topic paper.

> **Q6 In your opinion have we raised the right issues about our natural environment in this paper and/or the accompanying topic papers? Yes/No (if no, what have we missed?)**

2.6 Other influencers

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework/Planning Practice Guidance/ Design Guide

2.6.1 National planning policy is provided within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[12]. The NPPF sets out the government's expectations for how planning policies ought to be applied across England. Supporting guidance on how the policies of the NPPF should be interpreted and applied is published within the online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)[13].

---

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance

2.6.2 Alongside the NPPF and PPG the government published a National Design Guide[14] in 2019 which forms part of the Planning Practice Guidance and is therefore a material consideration in planning decisions. The Design Guide sets out what government considers to be the ten characteristics of well-designed places and highlights what good design means in practice.

2.6.3 A key test in the development of a Local Plan is being able to demonstrate that the document is in line with national policy, as such we will need to ensure that the policies of the Local Plan are prepared as per the expectations set out in the national policy framework. Each of the accompanying topic papers sets out in greater detail the relevant national policy context, along with any other relevant policies, programmes or plans, for the issues they each address.

The changing policy landscape

2.6.4 The challenge with a long term project like developing the new Local Plan relates to the changing context against which it is being prepared. We are undertaking the development of the new Local Plan at a time of notable shift in the national policy landscape, with various changes and revisions to policy having been consulted upon over the last year and the results of which are still unknown.

2.6.5 For example, between 30th January and 27th March 2021, the government consulted on amendments to the NPPF, these changes included a range of revisions that are intended to implement policy changes in respect to flood risk, biodiversity, heritage, Article 4 directions and general sustainability. There were also a number of updates intended to strengthen design considerations in response to the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission report.

2.6.7 Accompanying the revisions to the NPPF that were consulted on in early 2021, the government also published a draft National Model Design Code (NMDC) with some accompanying guidance notes. The draft Code is intended to be used as a framework for local authorities to develop local design codes that might cover the entire district or be tailored to more specific areas/neighbourhoods or specific sites. Where local design codes are absent, the intention is that the NMDC would be a material consideration in planning decisions.

2.6.8 The government has not undertaken a full review of the NPPF at this time, having signalled the intention to implement a much wider and fundamental reform of the planning system over the next few years. Last year, between August 6th and October 29th 2020, the 'Planning for the Future' white paper was published[15], which included a broad set of proposals for how the planning system could be streamlined and modernised and began the consultation process on this larger reform. Amongst the proposals, is the implementation of a zoning-style framework for land use within Local Plans, with every area in the country to be designated within one of three

---

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide

[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future

categories: 'growth areas' – suitable for substantial development; 'renewal areas' – suitable for development; and 'protection areas' – which would benefit from more stringent controls on development to ensure sustainability. The proposals also include greater focus on design and use of design codes; digitising of the planning process; as well as changes to the system of developer contributions towards infrastructure.

2.6.9 The changes proposed within the white paper are likely to bring about significant shifts in the way that Local Plans are developed and the way in which the planning process works more generally. There is also a significant amount of uncertainty and a lack of detail around many of the proposals and how they will be applied which is likely to come forward at a later date. Whilst the results of this consultation are still to be announced at time of writing, it is likely that the reforms will take several years to be implemented, and government has been clear that it expects local authorities to continue with the process of plan-making in the meantime.

2.6.10 Alongside these broader changes to national planning policy that have been proposed, the Local Plan is being prepared in the context of policy updates in more specific areas that are likely to have implications for the scope of our policies. These policy changes are discussed in greater detail in the accompanying topic papers but are detailed below for reference:

- The 25 Year Environment Plan and Environment Bill (currently being considered in parliament).
- The Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard and interim uplifts to the Building Regulations.
- Revisions to Housing methodology calculations and wider housing policy (e.g. First Homes).

2.6.11 It should also be noted that the controls within the planning system have been subject of a steady erosion in their scope and power as a result of a number of revisions implemented to the General Permitted Development Orders and Changes to the use classes that designate certain types of land uses. In 2016 for example, government made a change to permitted development rights which allowed for the change of use from office to residential use permanent, after trialling the right temporarily. More recently, in September of 2020, changes were made to the use classes themselves, with the removal of various classes relating to retail, office and leisure (classes A, B1, D1) and these uses being reclassified within a new class E use. These changes will make it more challenging for the Local Plan to steer the development of retail and city centre areas limiting the ability of policies to influence many land uses.

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc

2.6.12 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc (the Arc) has been identified for it global significance as an economic area which spans between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge as illustrated in Figure 5.
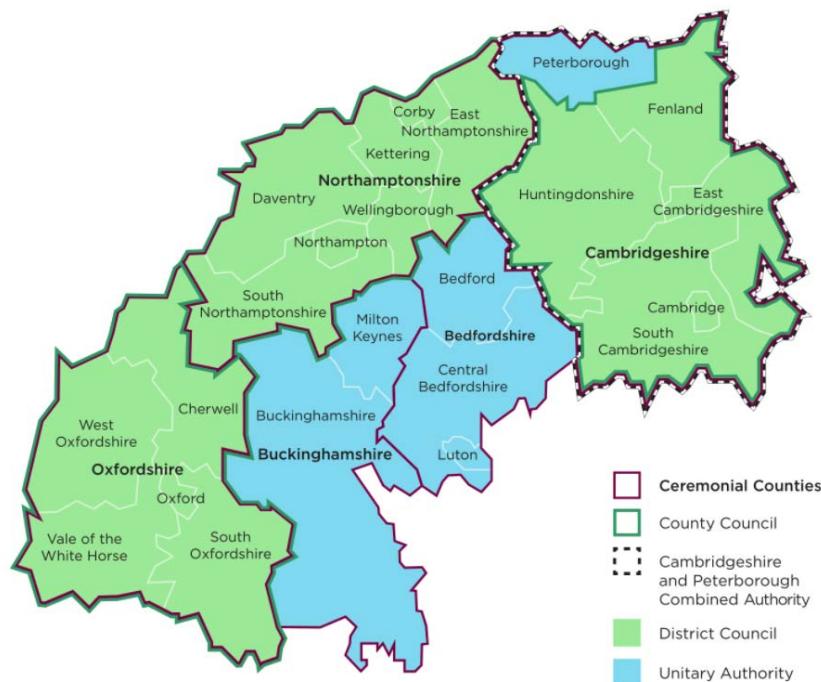
Figure 5 - The Oxford-Cambridge Arc (note Northamptonshire is now two unitary authorites) [16]

2.6.13 Supporting over two million jobs, and contributing over £110 billion to the economy every year, the Arc houses one of the fastest growing economies in England[17]. The government and its local partners, have an ambition for the Arc to *build a better economic, social and environmental future for the area. With high-quality, well-connected and sustainable communities making the Arc an even more beautiful place to live, work and visit.*

2.6.14 The city of Oxford, which houses many businesses involved in manufacturing, research and development, forms an essential component of the wider arc. As such, the Local Plan policies will play an important role in supporting the ambitions for the wider region.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050

2.6.15 One of the commitments made by the six Oxfordshire authorities as part of the £215m Housing and Growth Deal was the development of a strategic planning document to cover the county, which will be known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050[18].

2.6.16 This Oxfordshire Plan is being developed in tandem with the Oxford Local Plan but considers planning issues over a longer period (up to 2050). The document will set out policy covering a variety of topics that are not naturally restricted to any one local

---

[16] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/oxford-cambridge-arc
[17] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/oxford-cambridge-arc
[18] www.oxfordshireplan.org

authority's administrative boundary such as climate change, biodiversity, transport, and green belt. The Oxfordshire Plan will also look to identify housing need across the county and assign a broad spatial strategy for how that housing ought to be delivered.

2.6.17 It will be important for the Oxford Local Plan to have regard to the framework of policies being developed in the higher level Oxfordshire Plan and take direction from it where appropriate. The Oxfordshire Plan for example will set out the housing need that will need to be planned for within the city.

> **Q7 In your opinion have we raised the right issues about the other policy influencers we have highlighted in the paper? Yes/No (if no, what have we**

3.1 Priorities for the new Local Plan

3.1.1 The Local Plan will set out the planning strategy for the city of Oxford up to 2040. In order to deliver truly sustainable development, that is healthy and inclusive for everyone, there are a number of issues that will need to be addressed.

3.1.2 We have established a couple of major challenges that this iteration of the Local Plan will need to respond to. Neither is more important than the other and they can be considered to overarch many, if not all, of the topics our planning policies must address in various ways. The first challenge is that of supporting the recovery from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which has impacted the way many of us work and live and how we utilise the spaces and buildings around us. The second challenge is that of climate change and the need both to mitigate our impact on it, through cutting our emissions and using resources more efficiently, as well as the need to adapt to the changes in our climate in the coming decades in order to boost our resilience to its impacts.

3.1.3 Of course there are likely to be various other challenges that the Local Plan will need to respond to now, or that will arise in the future, which we are not able to foresee. Changes in technology, such as self-driving cars, artificial intelligence and automation will increasingly change our economy and how we utilise public spaces; an aging population and the establishment of future pandemics could present a variety of stresses on the health and social care system. It will be essential for the development of the local plan to take these threats into account wherever appropriate and to maintain a flexibility to adapt to such challenges moving forward.

3.1.4 Set against these overarching challenges, are a set of more specific but diverse issues which have been outlined throughout this paper and the accompanying topic papers. Thinking about the three fundamental pillars of sustainable development, the social; environmental and economic, we have tried to summarise these below:

Social

- Meeting people's daily needs within their local areas.
- Creating neighbourhoods which are easy to move around in a sustainable and active way.
- Ensuring high quality design.
- Responding positively to the city's heritage.
- Providing access to high-quality, affordable housing.
- Addressing inequalities in health and wellbeing amongst Oxford's communities.

Environmental

- Protecting and enhancing Oxford's network of green infrastructure.
- Protecting and making more space for biodiversity in the city.

- Avoiding flood risk wherever possible and ensuring development is resilient/resistant where this is not.
- Planning for a city that is fit for a zero-carbon future.
- Planning for a city that is resilient to the climate change, including overheating.
- Improving air, soil and water quality.

Economic

- Improving skills, qualifications and access to employment.
- Finding a balanced pattern of uses to bring activity throughout day and night.
- Supporting businesses to function during/recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Responding to changing retail habits and reshaping of the high street.

> **Q8 In your opinion have we correctly summarised the issues and priorities? Yes/No (if no, what have we missed?)**

3.1.5 Clearly there are a variety of issues for us to consider and balance as we work on the Local Plan going forwards. In the context of finite resources, space and limits on what the Local Plan can ask for, the challenge will be in choosing what issues should be prioritised moving towards 2040 over others. National policy is clear that our planning policies cannot put demands on new development that are so onerous that they would make developing a site unviable, equally many sites in the city are constrained by size, heritage and flood risk concerns which further limit what can be delivered.

3.1.6 Therefore, it may not be possible for the Local Plan to secure every aspiration or address every issue. We may wish to formulate policies that seek to maximise the amounts of housing and affordable housing that we can secure across the city; alternatively it may be that achieving zero carbon ambitions, or maximising employment provision are considered the highest priority. Open space in the city is limited and should ideally be protected, however there is also a need to provide social and leisure facilities for the community. Some residents may feel that space for electric vehicles is an important concern, whilst for others, the need to reduce reliance on cars and instead promote active travel like walking and cycling is important.

3.1.7 Sustainable development is about trying to balance all of these competing priorities and wherever possible the plan will be developed to do this, but undoubtedly there will be tough decisions to make about what should be the highest and lowest priority for Oxford going forwards.

> **Q9 It is important for us to understand what the community see as the priorities for the city up to 2040. What three issues do you consider to be priorities?**

3.2 Vision and objectives for the new Local Plan

3.2.1 From the analysis set out throughout this paper, and the potential priorities we have identified in the previous section, we have put forward a suggested vision and supporting objectives that will guide the development of the new Local Plan and welcome your help in refining these.
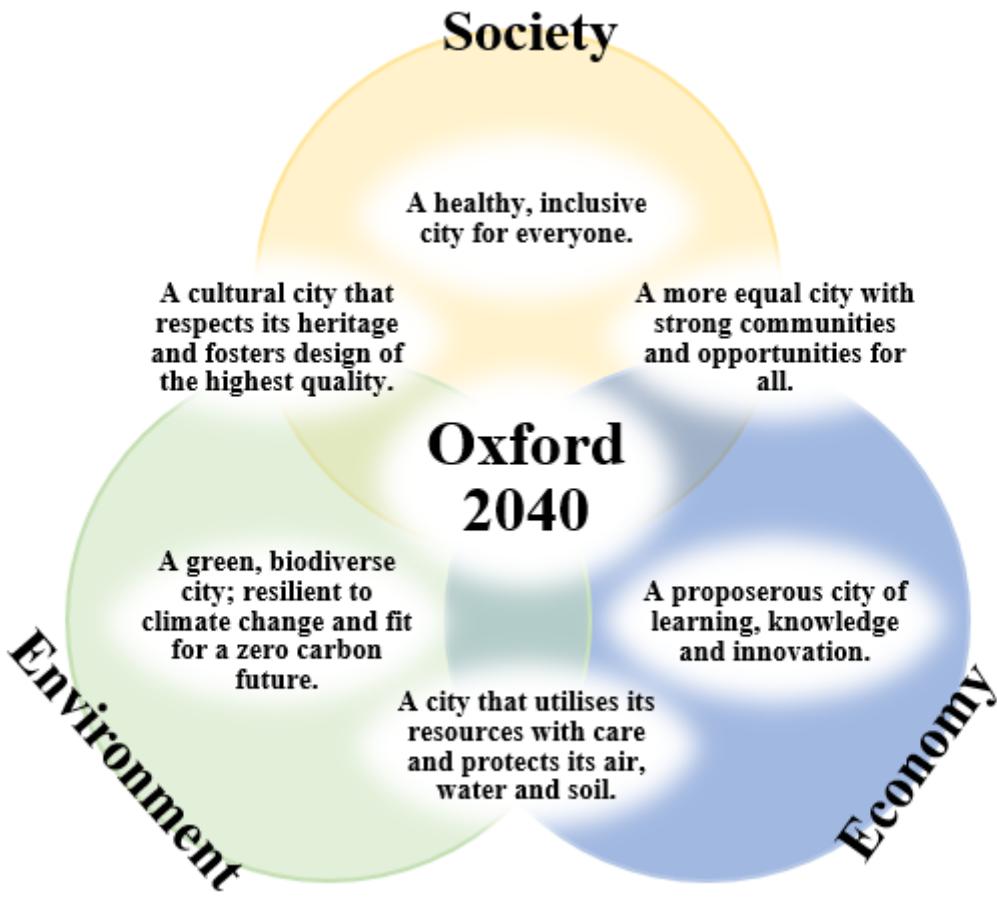
Vision

In 2040, 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, to jobs and to healthcare. We will be a city with a strong cultural identity, that respects our heritage, whilst maximising opportunities to look forwards, to innovate, learn and enable businesses to prosper. The environment will be central to everything we do, it will be more biodiverse, better connected; and we will utilise resources prudently whilst mitigating our impacts on the soil, water and air. The city will be carbon neutral, whilst our communities, buildings and infrastructure will be more resilient to the impacts of future climate change, to future pandemics and other emergencies.

3.2.2 Within the vision we have proposed for the Local Plan, we have drawn out six themes as illustrated in Figure 6. These include three themes based on the pillars of sustainability and three themes based on the intersections of those pillars.

1. In relation to the societal aspect of sustainability, we propose to aim to be 'a healthy inclusive city for everyone'.
2. In relation to the environment, we propose to be 'a green, biodiverse city; resilient to climate change and fit for a zero carbon future'.
3. In relation to the economy, we aim to be 'a prosperous city of learning, knowledge and innovation'.
4. Meeting both societal and economic aspirations, we want to aim to be 'a more equal city with strong communities and opportunities for all'.
5. Meeting both societal and environmental aspirations, we propose to aspire to be 'a cultural city that respects its heritage and fosters design of the highest quality'.
6. Meeting both economic and environmental aspirations, we would aim to be 'a city that utilises its resources with care and protects the air, water and soil.'

3.2.3 Taken together, the six themes represent what we consider to be a sustainable future for Oxford.

Figure 6: Visualisation of the six themes underlying the proposed vision for the Local Plan.

Q10 In your opinion have we suggested an appropriate vision and themes for the new Local Plan? *Yes/No (if no, what have we missed?)*

Objectives

3.2.4 The objectives for the plan set out in more detail how the plan will seek to achieve the vision for the city in 2040. We have developed a number of objectives that build off each of the six themes within the vision identified above.

A prosperous city of learning, knowledge and innovation

- To build on the city's strengths in knowledge, healthcare and innovation.
- To support the city's recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic and build resilience to future pandemics.
- To have thriving local centres that support a variety of uses and foster activity throughout the day and night.

A city that utilises its resources with care and protects the air, water and soil

- Ensuring that resources including land, soil, biodiversity, carbon and raw materials are used prudently and with consideration of replenishment and renewal.
- Continuing to de-couple carbon from economic growth and supporting investment in green jobs and manufacturing.
- Supporting modal shift, to more sustainable/active forms of transport.

A green, biodiverse city; resilient to climate change and fit for a zero carbon future

- Supporting strong, well-connected ecological networks and striving for net gains in biodiversity.
- Ensuring the city is ready for a zero carbon future and resilient and adapts to the impacts of climate change.
- A city that avoids flood risk, builds in resilience and resistance to its impacts.
- A city that is green with natural landscapes that are protected and enhanced.

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

- Valued and important heritage is protected and enhanced.
- Accessible open spaces for all with opportunities for sport, food growing, recreation, relaxation and socialising.
- Well-designed buildings and public spaces that feel safe, that are sustainable, and that are attractive to walk and cycle around.

A healthy inclusive city for everyone

- Valuing diversity whilst fostering greater inclusivity within our communities.
- Access to affordable, high-quality and healthy living accommodation for all.
- The built environment supports and enables people to be physically and mentally healthy.
- Air quality and its impacts upon public health is improved.

A more equal city with strong communities and opportunities for all

- Opportunities for education, learning and skills development.
- Our neighbourhoods have all the facilities we need to support our daily lives and are within fifteen/twenty minutes' walk from our doors.
- People are well-connected digitally and enabled to use new technologies to support their jobs, social lives and meet their everyday needs.

3.2.5 Going forwards, it will be important that the policies of the Local Plan are developed in a way that is guided by the above vision and objectives, to ensure that the city's future is as sustainable as it can be.

> **Q11 In your opinion have we selected the right objectives for the new Local Plan?**

> **Q12 It is important for us to understand which objectives the community feels we should focus on for the city up to 2040. What 3 objectives do you consider to be most important?**

4 NEXT STEPS

4.1 The responses and feedback to this consultation will be important in helping us to determine whether we have identified all the right issues that the Local Plan will need to address. It will also help us to understand what issues we ought to prioritise going forwards as the Local Plan is developed.

4.2 After the close of the consultation, we will review the responses and prepare a summary report which details the key feedback for everyone to read. Officers will then commence work on preparation of a set of preferred options as well as the body of supporting evidence that will be required to underpin the approaches set out for the Local Plan.

4.3 As detailed in our Local Development Scheme, the development of the Local Plan is expected to take three to four years. There will be additional engagement opportunities for you to feed into this process as we move towards submission in 2023 and eventual adoption of the new Local Plan in 2025.