CHAPTER SIX

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

OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2040

INTRODUCTION AND WIDER CONTEXT

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6.1 A key theme of the Local Plan 2040 vision, which addresses both the social and environmental pillars of sustainability, is for Oxford to respect its culture and heritage and foster design of the highest quality. This is underpinned by two key objectives:

- Well-designed, beautiful buildings and public spaces that feel safe, that are sustainable, and that are attractive to be in and pass through
- Ensure that the significance of valued and important heritage is conserved and that understanding of the value and importance is enhanced.

6.2 To respond to this theme successfully, it will be important that we drive the highest quality design in all new development, which means developments are both aesthetically pleasing and functional, in that they enable people to live healthy, happy lives; that they respond to climate change and make space for biodiversity. Oxford is a product of more than a thousand years of evolution, with layers of history both visible and buried resulting in many valuable heritage assets, together and individually contributing to a special character that defines and is particular to the place. Therefore, new development will need to come forward in a way that respects and responds to heritage and archaeology and takes opportunities to celebrate this history. Success will require a balance between meeting the needs for the future (such as providing new homes, greening our streets and meeting net zero carbon) whilst ensuring that change does not harm the important values of these heritage assets so that these can continue to be understood, valued and enjoyed for years to come.

6.3 This chapter sets out a range of options for policies falling under two sub-topics, which are:

- Urban design - which includes health impact assessments, designing good quality living environments and specialist housing needs, cycle and car parking
- Heritage and archaeology.

6.4 The government has set out its view as to what good design looks like as part of its National Design Guide (NDG), which highlights ten characteristics for high quality design and is further supported by the National Model Design Code. What is clear, is that high quality urban design is about more than just how a building, or a street looks aesthetically, it is also about ensuring it functions positively for the people who use those spaces. Design done well can help to address a variety of challenges facing our city, for example it can:

- ensure that issues of health and wellbeing in the local area are considered and that inequalities are reduced rather than exacerbated, such as through providing access to facilities and green space
- support people to live low carbon lifestyles through maximising walking/cycling opportunities, reducing and managing car parking, increasing cycle parking opportunities, whilst also building resilience to the harmful impacts of climate change by incorporating materials that reduce impacts of flooding or overheating
- contribute to biodiversity, by ensuring that developments include features that make space for nature.
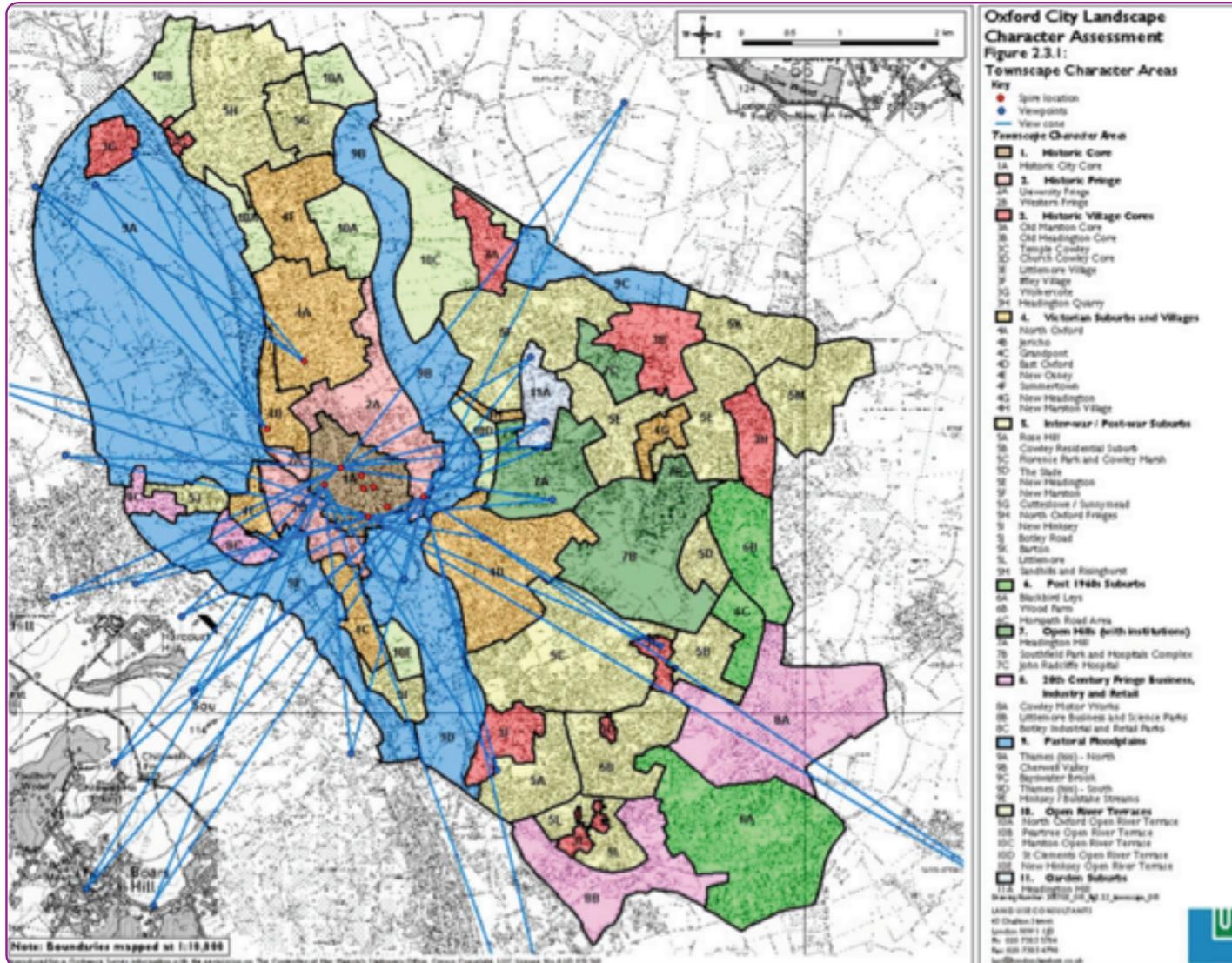
Figure 6-1: A character assessment of Oxford City Landscape, including townscape character areas and Oxford's view cones and view points
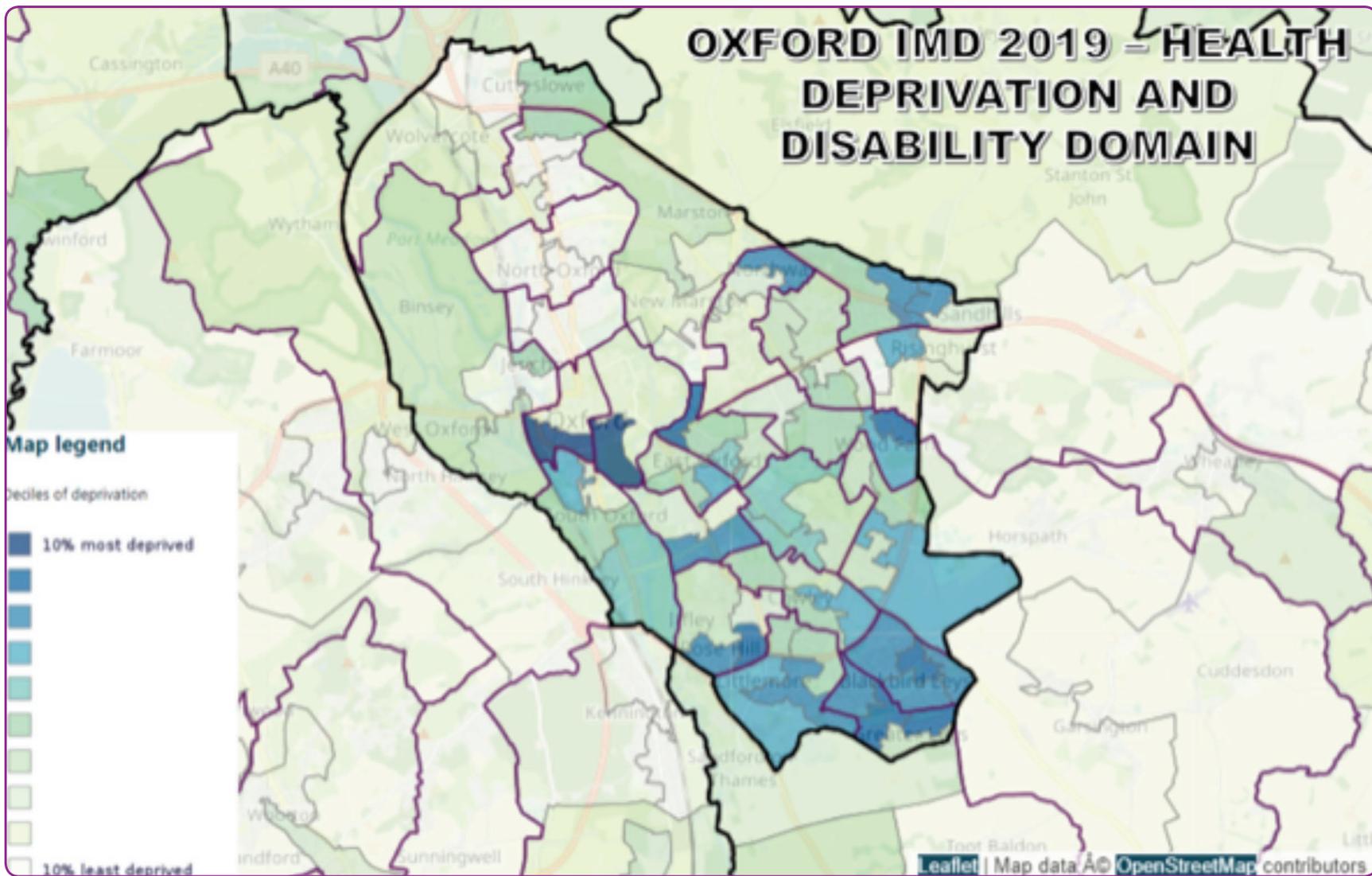
Figure 6-2: Index of health deprivation and disability domain, by Lower Super Output Area

6.5 To meet those broader objectives and to reduce conflicts with the existing environment and nearby uses, good design also needs to consider local context and fit in sympathetically with its surroundings. Oxford has a long history of settlement, and a complex pattern of design styles and townscapes has evolved across the city over centuries, which are highlighted in the accompanying landscape character assessment and summarised in the example map in Figure 6-1. This is a good starting point for more detailed assessments as part of local design guides and development briefs as well as for individual sites.

6.6 As well as the important urban design aspect of ensuring good access to facilities and services, which is a key part of the strategy underlying this plan, design of new developments should ensure the health of residents, helping address some of the health inequalities in the city. There is a distinct pattern of socio-economic inequalities across the city, with some of the least deprived and most deprived neighbourhoods nationally located within our boundaries. Linked with this pattern of deprivation is the presence of health inequalities, and whilst many of our residents are in notably good health compared with national average, nevertheless there are incidences of health inequalities across the city.

6.7 The following are a range of options for policies which address different aspects of design, and design at different scales.

HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

Principles of good design

6.8 High quality design needs to show a good response to its surroundings as well as considering how buildings and spaces interact and function. From the materials selected to build a structure, to the provision of green open space, layout of pedestrian routes and provision of shops/amenities, design of places needs to take account of and balance many considerations in order to be successful. A number of these considerations will be identified and discussed in other parts of the document.

6.9 The current Local Plan has utilised a design checklist which sets out key issues that we expect to be addressed as part of any planning application. This was intended to concisely bring together the key matters for an applicant to demonstrate they have factored into the design of their development, and we feel that this is a sensible approach to continue for the new Local Plan, although with the potential to frame the checklist more as a set of expectations than questions, and also to expand it to include a broader range of design considerations, such as impacts on health and sustainable design and construction.

6.10 Feeling safe in our local area is important to supporting positive mental health and the way buildings and the spaces in between are designed and laid out can have a role in reducing opportunities for crime and for improving safety from more significant threats such as terrorism. Simple factors such as improving visibility of public spaces like play parks, promoting activity on the street and reducing the amount of 'dead spaces' can all help to deter criminal activity. Harder interventions like use of street furniture can remove opportunities for unauthorised vehicles to move through pedestrian areas, whilst consideration of access and evacuation routes in busy buildings and more confined areas can support response activities during times of emergency. Good urban design will naturally create safer streets.

POLICY OPTION SET DH1: PRINCIPLES OF HIGH QUALITY DESIGN OF BUILDINGS

(a) Option for policy approach

Expand and strengthen the current checklist. This would be bolder, so instead of questions to consider it includes statements of what is expected, which must be set out in the Design and Access statement or other submission. It may also be expanded to include other elements of design e.g. healthy places, inclusive design, sustainable design and construction etc. (or these things would be dealt with separately, but they will need to be considered). It will align with the headings of the National Design Guide.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Can ensure broader range of developments benefit from good design, can help development schemes be more holistic in positive impacts.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Potential for overlap with other policy areas, which are already addressed in the plan and may result in unnecessary repetition; risk of extending outside the remit of planning.

May be too onerous to apply to apps at minor scale.

Time/resources to develop these topics, as well as questions on the status of these within development plan.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

(b) Option for policy approach

Continue with present approach of setting out a series of design questions for developers and assessors to consider – include a policy that requires high quality design and include a checklist to set out key principles of what this means in detail (including principles for materials, layout, potentially secure by design, etc.), requiring that the Design and Access statement or other submission alongside the planning application covers the relevant aspects of good design.

Exempt householder applications and changes of use without external alteration from needing to include answers to the relevant checklist questions in their submission.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Would help ensure that new development schemes are built to the highest standard of design to maintain and enhance Oxford's reputation as a world class city. Specific aspects of design addressed using checklist. Sets standards for high quality design for relevant schemes, reflects importance placed on creating distinct places in planning framework.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Types of development that checklist may apply to are limited e.g. householders and change of use not covered. Householder applications should still aspire to high design quality. Checklist can be generic, with overarching principles that may not address design quality issues affecting specific development types e.g. residential dwellings, hotels etc. The alternative is to expand the scope of checklists including becoming more prescriptive. Assessment of schemes may rely on some level of subjective judgement which might be point of contention with applicants and lead to drawn out negotiation and argument. May be onerous to apply and may require extensive officer time.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

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c **Option for policy approach**
Include householder applications and/
or changes of use applications in the
requirement to follow the checklist.

+ **Potential positive
consequences of the approach**
Even if there are no significant
external changes of use,
they may have an impact
on the character of an area.
Householder extensions also have
an impact. Smaller applications
are not necessarily simple and the
cumulative impact of poor-quality
design and a low expectation
for householder applications
can have a significant impact
on the overall quality, character
and particularly appearance of a
place.

– **Potential negative/neutral
consequences of the approach**
The impacts on design can be
assessed without a checklist for
these smaller applications. Many
of the urban design principles
will not be applicable to these
or householder extensions.
This approach could be quite
onerous without necessarily
adding significant value.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered
detrimental)

d **Option for policy approach**
Retain generic design policy but relax
requirements e.g. have requirements for
good quality design but do not rely on a
checklist.

+ **Potential positive
consequences of the approach**
Potentially more flexibility for
developers to bring forward
compliant schemes and more
quickly. Easy to compare
requirements to NPPF and
other authority baselines.
NPPF update has more specific
direction on delivering high
quality design.

– **Potential negative/neutral
consequences of the approach**
It might be difficult to ensure
proposals reflect Oxford
context.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered
detrimental)

e **Option for policy approach**
No specific policy, rely on NPPF
requirements or National Design Guide
as template.

+ **Potential positive
consequences of the approach**
NPPF update has more specific
direction on delivering high
quality design.

– **Potential negative/neutral
consequences of the approach**
It might be difficult to ensure
proposals reflect Oxford
context, risk of non-compliance
with NPPF by not having more
specific policies.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered
detrimental)

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AREA SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDANCE

6.11   A crucial element of good design is to ensure that it is set appropriately within the context of the wider area. There are many contextual factors that can influence the design of a development, from its proximity to protected views, to the presence of heritage assets or conservation areas as well as the general character and townscape features surrounding the site. Our preferred option is to develop specific policies or design guidance/ codes for areas of the city with sensitivities or where we expect there to be significant change – this will allow us to focus our guidance to the areas that would merit the greatest attention, whilst the overarching policy set out above (high quality design) would set out guidance for the city.

POLICY OPTION SET DH2: SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR AREAS

a **Option for policy approach**
Develop design guidance/codes specific to an area or type of development, for example for areas of the city that are particularly sensitive and/or where significant change is expected. There is scope for varying amounts of detail in the local plan, with Supplementary Planning Documents or Design Guides potentially used to add more detail.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Sets standards for high quality design for relevant schemes, reflects importance placed on creating distinct places in planning framework. Provides clarity on design expectations for allocated or strategic sites, supplements site allocation policies so design considerations are covered alongside housing numbers, employment floorspace etc.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
May be onerous to produce and may require extensive officer time. May be different expectations and ideals from different sectors of the community and landowners that may be difficult to resolve, although potential advantages of resolving them ahead of planning applications.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b **Option for policy approach**
No area or development type-specific design guides; rely on NPPF requirements or National Design Guide as template.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
NPPF update has specific direction on delivering high quality design and distinct places.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
It might be difficult to ensure proposals reflect Oxford context. Although there is generic 'placemaking principles' this approach would not provide supporting guidance or principles that add to the context of Oxford. It will be more difficult to ensure consistent standards and design quality and difficult to emphasise importance of placemaking without specific policy and particularly difficult to avoid unwanted homogeneity.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

HIGH BUILDINGS AND VIEWS

6.12   Oxford has an iconic skyline, which includes the 'dreaming spires', as well as several special views into the historic core which are detailed in the Oxford View Cones assessment. These features mean that the city is particularly sensitive to the impacts of taller buildings, and care needs to be taken over the design and placement of such development where it is proposed so that taller buildings do not negatively impact on views of the iconic skyline.

POLICY OPTION SET DH3: VIEW CONES AND HIGH BUILDINGS

a **Option for policy approach**
Continue to define the area within a 1,200 metre radius of Carfax tower as the Historic Core Area (shown on Figure 6-4 at the end of this document). This area contains all the buildings that comprise the historic skyline, so new developments that exceed 18.2m in height will intrude into the skyline. Require that any buildings above this height are limited and bulk, only thin, delicate and of the highest design quality, demonstrated through the use of stringent appraisals to inform and explain design choices.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This option gives a nuanced approach to assessing heights, which aims to avoid harmful uniform heights but also ensure positive impacts. It does not prevent unwanted intrusion into the skyline because there is a rigorous process to prevent it, but it also still allows fantastic additions to the skyline.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Uniform heights can still occur. An element of judgement is introduced without a set height limit (even though a rigorous policy and process should prevent harm).

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option (in combination with b and c)

b **Option for policy approach**
Continue to refer to the High Buildings TAN[11] as the key evidence base for deciding appropriate heights, designing higher buildings and appraising applications.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
The High Buildings TAN contains useful guidance specific to Oxford that helps positively shape design choices in relation to building heights. The guidance is already in place and has been used successfully to inform many applications and decisions.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
The guidance can't itself prevent designs that are harmful to character and not justified and this would need to be in conjunction with other policy requirements. It will be necessary to make it clear that local townscape considerations still apply too.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option (in combination with a and c)

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[11] https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5085/high_building_study_-_technical_advice_note

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c **Option for policy approach**
Continue to define view cones, which are the areas within a view from historic viewing places from where the 'dreaming spires' can be most clearly seen. Include a policy that requires design within the view cones to avoid harming the views of the spires.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This approach has been successful over a long period of time. Although views of the spires may have altered over time because of growth of vegetation, there are not buildings in the view cones that prevent the viewing, enjoyment and understanding of the spires.

These are long established as the key viewing points, and the protection, especially in combination with policies relating to the central area, has conserved the important views over time.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
The approach is limited to views from defined viewing points.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option (in combination with a and b)

d **Option for policy approach**
Include an absolute height limit in the city centre that does not interfere with the spires.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This would protect the views of the historic spires as they are.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
An absolute height limit can be set lower than it potentially needs to be in order to make sure everywhere is low enough not to interfere with the dreaming spires. Any innovation or change is stifled. This approach can lead to uniform heights, leaving unwanted horizontal line that harms the foreground of views and the setting of historic assets and prevent the spires and towers to be properly discerned, detracting from their significance.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

e **Option for policy approach**

Include in the policy details about what is expected in retaining the significance of views out from key points in the central conservation area, specifying some key (publicly accessible) viewing places (St Mary's Tower, Carfax Tower, St George's Tower and the Castle Mound). Note aspects of the views that are of particular significance in the setting of heritage assets, in particular the relationship with the landscape setting of the rivers and the surrounding hills that provide a green backdrop and should be preserved.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This would draw out this important aspect of the setting of heritage assets, giving a policy to use if a case needs to be made that a development would harm views out that are important to the significance of the setting of a heritage asset.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This will take additional resources that might not be available. A policy will not be able to cover such a wide range of potential settings and significance, and things could get overlooked. The significance of views out in the setting of heritage assets is already considered and there is not necessarily a great deal to add in policy.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

f **Option for policy approach**

Set out appropriate heights for different areas of the city.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This would provide a strong degree of certainty for all.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Appropriate heights can change along a street and depend on other features of the design so a blanket height limit that is appropriate even across a small area is not possible to identify and may be too high in some locations or limit height unnecessarily in others.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

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g **Option for policy approach**
Do not include a policy relating to view cones or high buildings.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This would avoid any implication that only view cones are sensitive to height.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
The view cones and high buildings area have worked together over a very long time period to ensure that the views of Oxford's spires have retained their significant character, and this would be threatened without a clear policy approach.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

PUBLIC ART

6.13 The spaces between buildings which we refer to as the public realm, is an important place for encouraging social interaction, promoting people to mix and meet each other in daily life, reducing isolation and loneliness; this has vital benefits for mental wellbeing. Equally, these spaces can also act as venues for public events and entertainment, as well as providing a positive setting for businesses to flourish. Public art can inject colour and character into an area, making public spaces more interesting and enjoyable to move through and spend time in.

POLICY OPTION SET DH4: PUBLIC ART

ⓐ Option for policy approach

Develop a distinct public art policy, with requirement for provision from qualifying proposals (for example public art that contributes to local distinctiveness should be provided on all schemes of 20 dwellings or more (gross) or over 2000m^2).

＋ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Further emphasise importance of public art as enhancement of public realm and make it easier for more examples to come through development. Encourages early planning of projects.

－ Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Would need coordination with wider City Council strategies related to arts and culture, may add further level of scrutiny that is beyond officer knowledge and experience. Sometimes there may be more pressing needs, or needs for enhancement may be in existing communities rather than new.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

ⓑ Option for policy approach

Incorporate expectations for public art within the design checklist, but do not have any specific requirement.

＋ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This would acknowledge the importance of public art in enhancing public realm and adding local distinctiveness.

－ Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

References to public art are minimal, they would need to be very general as public art can be so varied. This is the current approach, and it tends to result in no public art being provided.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

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C **Option for policy approach**
Make no reference in policy, or have no specific design policy, and rely on NPPF requirements.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
The NPPF and other national guidance is likely to cover all aspects of design and it may be difficult to justify having this specific requirement in Oxford in addition.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
It might be difficult to ensure proposals reflect Oxford context, no specific requirements in relation to public art in NPPF so it might be difficult to properly assess proposals.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

DESIGN OF BIN AND BIKE STORES AND EXTERNAL SERVICING FEATURES

6.14   Contributing to the functionality element of new development, high quality design needs to support people to live sustainably in their homes and the places they go to work. The design of new development can enable people to reduce their waste and recycle more through ensuring that there is ample space for bin storage. Equally, and crucial to supporting the shift to a net zero carbon city, is the need for supporting people to travel via low/zero carbon methods, a key element of this is providing space for secure cycle storage so that they can travel by bike around Oxford.

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POLICY OPTION SET DH5: BIN AND BIKE STORES AND EXTERNAL SERVICING FEATURES

(a) **Option for policy approach**

Requires that bike and bin stores and external servicing features should be considered from the start of the design process and set criteria to ensure they meet practical needs but do not detract from the overall design, that external servicing features are integrated into the design or positioned to minimise their impact and that high quality materials are used. Include compulsory requirements, setting out binding design codes depending on location, building type etc, and requiring fire-safe spaces with adequate electric supply for charging.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**

Applying a discrete policy ensures considered design of these areas and not just as an afterthought; it helps alignment with other objectives of plan e.g. encouraging active, sustainable travel; effective waste management etc. This can bring in a far greater level of clarity in terms of design requirements, ensuring high design quality, public amenity etc. There is less chance for this area to be overlooked or for poorer quality to be introduced by stealth or negotiation. There are many consistent key principles that can be written into policy, to raise the awareness of the need for good design of these areas from the outset, and to be consistent with increasing e-bike ownership, etc. (see bicycle parking standards options below).

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**

Adding further burden to developers in bringing forward schemes; may be too onerous to apply or enforce.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

(b) **Option for policy approach**

No specific policy, rely on NPPF.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**

NPPF update has specific direction on delivering high quality design.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**

It may be difficult to ensure proposals reflect Oxford context; difficult to ensure consistent standards and design quality if proposals are always assessed on case-by-case basis; difficult to require a minimum level of servicing without policy.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

BICYCLE AND MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING DESIGN STANDARDS

6.15 If Oxford is to achieve its ambitions to improve air quality, reduce congestion, enhance public realm and encourage healthy lifestyles, there is a need to prioritise road space and promote the sustainable modes of travel: walking, cycling and public transport. Setting the right level of parking standards can positively influence urban design outcomes, ensure the most efficient use of land and encourage residents to consider alternative options to using a private car. New developments need to consider firstly if private car parking needs to be provided or whether the development could be car free. Oxford's compact nature means that people can move around on foot, bike or bus and not be totally dependent upon owning a car. However, if residents and employees are being encouraged to switch modes away from the private car to walking, cycling and the use of public transport and car clubs these need to be realistic alternatives. For example, the rise of e-bike ownership means the need for secure bike parking to be provided in residential, employment areas and the city and district centres is an important consideration in the design of the public realm.

6.16 A potential unintended effect of low car or no car development could be that parking is displaced to surrounding streets which do not have parking restrictions. Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) prevent this happening. CPZs are implemented by Oxfordshire County Council and the programme for this roll out is discussed and agreed with officers and members at the City Council. Car free developments outside of CPZs would be problematic because of the displacement of parking.

6.17 The Preferred Options recognise the need for some on and off-street public parking in Oxford to meet the needs of those using the city and district centres. However, to achieve the level of modal shift needed across the city to combat congestion and poor air quality there needs to be a downward pressure upon public car parking provision city wide. Throughout the plan period, Oxfordshire County Council, as the highways authority, is proposing changes to the movement of vehicles around the city through several demand management measures including traffic filters, an enlarged zero emission zone and the introduction of a work place parking levy. As these changes take place there is an expectation that the levels of public parking, particularly on-street parking, may continue to be reduced or reorganised to support the efficient flow of vehicles, particularly buses and to reclaim road space for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians. These redesigns must give appropriate consideration to parking for disabled drivers which is both practical and well designed.

POLICY OPTION SET DH6: BICYCLE PARKING DESIGN STANDARDS

(a) Option for policy approach

Require high levels of secure bicycle parking (e.g. at least 1 space per bedroom, 1 space per 5 staff) either indoors or external for residential and non-residential schemes to achieve best design outcomes.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

The provision of a high level of well-designed cycle parking will help to encourage cycling across the city which brings positive benefits such as improved air quality, reduced congestion, enhanced public realm and healthy lifestyles. This could increase the number of people cycling to work, to the shops, for health appointments, to school etc. as they will be confident that their bike will be parked in a safe secure way which would reduce the risk of theft or vandalism. This is particularly important with the rise in e-bikes. Also well designed bike parking can enhance the public realm.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Providing well designed secure cycle facilities could add to build costs and take up space within the development which could be used to enhance the design in other ways and may result in the loss of public amenity areas.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

(b) Option for policy approach

Set some more specific requirements for the type of bike parking for residential developments and workplaces to make sure e-bikes, trailers, tricycles etc. can be accommodated. Require higher levels of well-designed and secure cycle parking and ensure that showers and lockers are provided to support staff.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

More specialist types of bike are increasingly common and open cycling to a wider range of people. They also have more complex storage and charging requirements which won't necessary be met if the requirement for them is not set out clearly. Although showers are currently required for offices over 500m^2 and most other non-residential uses over 2500m^2 this approach encourages more provision for cyclists.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This adds an extra requirement for space and potentially cost, which may compete with other requirements.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)

C **Option for policy approach**
Lower the standards for cycle parking residential and non-residential) from existing levels.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
There is no loss of amenity space or indoor living space. This approach would help to reduce build costs for the scheme.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
If insufficient or poorly designed bicycle parking is provided in new development it is likely that bicycles will be parked informally in inappropriate areas causing clutter and obstruction. It provides no encouragement for future residents to consider cycling and embracing a more active and healthier lifestyle – lower levels of cycle parking may make it more difficult for people to store bikes and as such bike ownership could drop as travelling by bike is not practical without secure storage. There are already concerns across the city about bicycle parking stress and concerns about security particularly from those with more expensive bikes which are more at risk from being stolen. If Oxford is to become a cycling city reducing the levels of parking provision would be a disincentive to people who might be considering how to travel around the city other than by private car.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

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POLICY OPTION SET DH7: MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING DESIGN STANDARD

(a) Option for policy approach

Seek car free residential development across the city, subject to criteria to ensure accessibility to public transport and local shops, and low car in locations not suitable for car free. Car free would mean no spaces allocated to a house, but parking would be available to meet disabled and operational needs, for car clubs and potentially for those who can demonstrate a need for a personal vehicle for work that needs to be parked near home (potentially in a designated area within the site) (work vans, health visitors for example). Consideration will be given in the policy to setting a threshold for different levels of car free, because the larger strategic sites (over 50 units) have more scope for successful carpooling and more space for essential vehicles.

The policy will set design guidance to ensure the parking provision makes the most efficient use of land, is landscaped, and allows for car free street design.

The approach to car free development would be assessed against whole plan viability as set out in Strategic Policy Option S4.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

A lower level of parking provision across the city means that less land is being used for parking cars, also the reduction of car ownership and car trips in the city can help reduce congestion and air and noise pollution. Fewer car movements will encourage people to walk and cycle as they will feel safer, and parents will feel more confident allowing their children to cycle or walk if there is less traffic on the roads.

Supports the use of car clubs across the city. Supports the most efficient use of land, opportunity to create well designed external spaces, reduces congestion as less people travel to these locations in private cars.

Low car developments can give proper and adequate consideration as to where the parking would be located to ensure good design is delivered.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Although sites are low car or car free it could result in parking being displaced to other streets which are not restricted if enforcement measures are not enforced and in the absence of a city wide roll out of controlled parking zones (CPZ). In some parts of the city outside of the centres there are insufficient realistic alternatives transport options other than using a private car.

Some occupations require employees to have a vehicle or take a vehicle home – many such jobs are low paid (e.g. mobile carers; maintenance trades; mini-cab drivers; etc). Many households also work outside of the city; away from the city or district centres; have children to take to school on the way to work; or work outside of the usual operating hours for bus services. Households that include persons in these occupations risk being excluded from housing that might best meet their needs, if no car schemes become predominant in new housing developments.

Having no car parking provision for larger family dwellings for sale may depress the market value of these homes, which may impact on the viability of schemes, and the ability to deliver more affordable housing, especially if the space freed up from the lack of parking does not enable enough development to compensate.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

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b **Option for policy approach**
Do not allow any additional parking on non-residential sites which are proposed for redevelopment. Seek a significant reduction where there is good accessibility to a range of facilities.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Supports the more efficient use of existing parking provision. A comprehensive travel plan should be submitted that incorporates sustainable travel options.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
The inadequate provision of parking at a site could lead to displaced provision to nearby streets creating parking stress elsewhere if there is no CPZ in operation across these areas.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option (in combination with a)

c **Option for policy approach**
Require all new development to be car free across the city.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Car free development would mean less land is used for car parking resulting in more amenity space in new developments, it would help reduce congestion and pollution in the city.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Car free developments could result in parking stress in other areas if not properly enforced.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

d **Option for policy approach**
Adopt low car but not car free parking standards. These could still vary by accessibility of the area of the city. These could be the same level of parking standards as for the rest of Oxfordshire, or potentially reduced from this but not car free, for example 1 car per 2 homes and additional parking for new non-residential developments.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Ensures that the design of car parking is properly considered and encourages private car ownership.
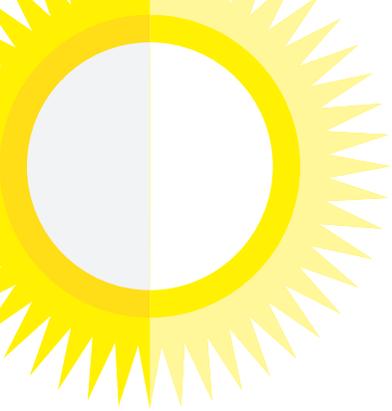
− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
More land would be used for parking and there would be more cars in the city adding to congestion, air and noise pollution.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

CREATING HEALTHY LIVING/WORKING ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE ADAPTABLE FOR THE FUTURE

Privacy, daylight and sunlight

6.18   There are many factors in the built environment that can affect our health and wellbeing, but it is particularly important to ensure that the places where we spend so much of our daily lives, such as our homes and workplaces, enable us to be healthy and happy. The recent Covid pandemic, with the need for social distancing and the shift to home working for some people, has highlighted the importance of having a healthy home setting for us all, and of particular importance to this internal environment is having ample daylight and privacy.

POLICY OPTION SET DH8: PRIVACY, DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

a **Option for policy approach**
Extend the policy to also include expectations for daylight, privacy and sunlight for new non-residential buildings (types to be specified but likely to include offices and similar workspaces, potentially healthcare facilities but may exclude manufacturing and warehouses, retail units), to ensure good working conditions and to ensure consideration of impacts on neighbouring buildings. This will also need to be considered alongside shading and overheating impacts.

> **+** **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
> These requirements for non-residential buildings may prevent buildings with a large mass, which would have the benefit of more appealing design. It is also likely to reduce energy use due to minimising the need for electric lighting (and potentially also improving natural ventilation). The working environment would also be healthy. Helps meet BRE sunlight/daylight guidance.
>
> **−** **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
> This may be restrictive to certain building needs or may affect viability due to reducing the potential for subdivision of a building, or for large machinery. Its application is unlikely to be possible universally so the policy must specify when it applies and when it does not.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b **Option for policy approach**
Include a policy with requirements to ensure adequate daylight, privacy and sunlight to new residential developments.

> **+** **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
> This would ensure new development provides adequate daylight and privacy and does not reduce privacy and daylight in existing development to an unacceptable level.
>
> **−** **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
> This may be too restrictive for certain buildings and/or may impact upon viability due to reducing the potential for subdivision. This needs to be considered alongside considerations of sustainable design and construction, such as avoiding overheating.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

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C **Option for policy approach**

Do not include a policy on privacy, daylight or sunlight for any type of development.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**

This would provide more flexibility for design to reflect the location and other factors.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**

This could result in poor quality design in new development that does not have sufficient daylight or privacy for its occupants and could reduce daylight or privacy to neighbouring development to an unacceptable level.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option (considered detrimental)
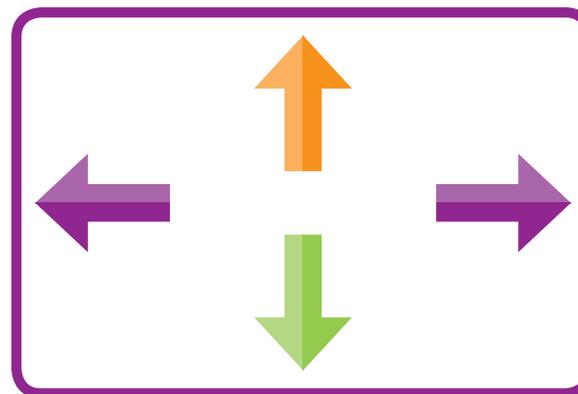
INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

6.19   New homes, whether they are infill plots or on larger sites, need to be of an adequate size and layout to provide high quality functional homes that meet the needs of a wide range of people. The need for this has been further reinforced by the pandemic. The pressure to build more homes can lead to the building of smaller homes if standards aren't set, which could result in housing being built that does not provide future occupants with appropriate living standards and undermines the national aim that "everyone should have access to a decent home". The government introduced a national described spaced standard in March 2015[12]. The City Council adopted these standards as reflected in the current Oxford Local Plan Policy H15. The standards apply to self-contained dwellings. Separate standards exist for HMOs, but these do not need to be introduced in a local plan policy in order to apply (unlike the nationally described space standards).

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[12] www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housingstandards-nationally-describedaspace-standard

POLICY OPTION SET DH9: INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

a Option for policy approach

Apply Nationally Described Space Standards. In flatted schemes, require communal areas to be designed to enable neighbours to meet and interact, for example some fixed seating, wider areas of corridor or lobby space.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Following the Nationally Described Space Standards should ensure that developments maximise the useable space within housing through functional layout and provide scope to modify layouts for future needs. Design of developments can be important in helping people avoid social isolation and loneliness. In flats, communal areas that allow neighbours to interact is likely to facilitate successful inter-generational living. Including these standards is important in Oxford because development pressure is so great and heights are constrained, so without requirements housing could be inadequately small.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Oxford is so constrained and by adopting these standards it could result in reducing the number of houses being delivered. It may become unnecessary to have this policy if the intended national development management policies cover this (which should not be repeated or contradicted in local plans).

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach

Do not include a policy on internal space standards (if the national standards are not adopted locally then they do not apply).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Does not restrict homes being delivered where space is so limited. If space requirements are written into national policy this will become the preferred option as having a local policy will be unnecessary.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Having no space standards for self-contained dwellings could result in the delivery of housing that is unacceptable in terms of internal space and doesn't offer occupiers the appropriate level of space.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

C **Option for policy approach**
Include a policy but do not follow the Nationally Described Space Standards.

➕ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Provides more flexibility for the delivery of new homes which is so urgent in Oxford.

➖ **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Government policy is very clear that either the nationally described standards are followed or there is no requirement included in plans, so it is very unlikely that this approach could be justified.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)
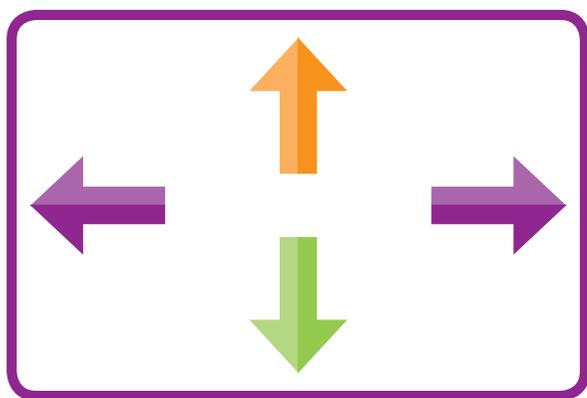
OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

6.20   The adequate provision of outdoor amenity space is important as it supports the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents, allows clothes drying outside (which uses less energy and prevents condensation issues), contributes to biodiversity, provides shade and limits urban heat-island effects and with good design of permeable surfaces can contribute towards flood risk management. Well-designed outdoor amenity spaces enhance the immediate and surrounding areas and provide much needed open spaces for residents, particularly those who do not have access to their own private garden. Designs must strive to deliver the highest quality of outdoor spaces to ensure people's health and wellbeing are prioritised. Important design considerations should ensure that public and private space is clearly delineated through landscape design and avoid signage. The orientation of the external spaces should seek to ensure there is daylight and sunlight. Communal areas should be designed with places to sit, play, have planting to provide shade and provide both hard surfaces that do not used non-permeable materials, and planted areas. The maintenance of these communal areas needs careful consideration which should be reflected throughout the landscape design.

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POLICY OPTION SET DH10: OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

a **Option for policy approach**
Include an outdoor amenity space requirement for all residential units, with size standards. This could allow flexibility between communal and private space and balconies would be included to ensure flats are deliverable. Include a requirement for outdoor areas where neighbours can meet or interact.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This would ensure that outdoor amenity space provided as part of new development would be well designed and provides more certainty about the level of provision. Requiring space for meetings and interactions may help to reduce loneliness and social isolation.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This could be too prescriptive, and the amount required may not be deliverable or viable. There is no requirement currently for communal outdoor amenity space for flats- it may be hard to know how to set this in a way that can be justified.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b **Option for policy approach**
Include a policy that sets out broad principles required for amenity space for housing but no size requirement.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This approach would be less prescriptive but encourage good design by setting out broad principles.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Potential for poor design and quality and not a large enough quantity of outdoor amenity space to serve needs.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

c **Option for policy approach**
Set a requirement for outdoor amenity space for larger non-residential developments.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This approach ensures biggest non – residential schemes have well designed outdoor amenity for users of the development and, if well landscaped, this enhances the attractiveness of the design and potential for benefits of green spaces such as biodiversity and enhancing wellbeing.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Private amenity space at workplaces should not be needed if there is adequate public open space in an area and in living places. This would not represent the most efficient use of land. Management plans would be needed to ensure it does not become neglected.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

d **Option for policy approach**
Do not set requirements for non-residential amenity space.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Less restrictive and flexible.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Could result in limited or no provision.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

e **Option for policy approach**
Do not set requirements for residential amenity space.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Less restrictive and flexible.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Gives no certainty about the provision of amenity space which contradicts all the evidence about how valuable it is for people to enjoy the outdoors and the priority for development to be designed to provide such spaces is key.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

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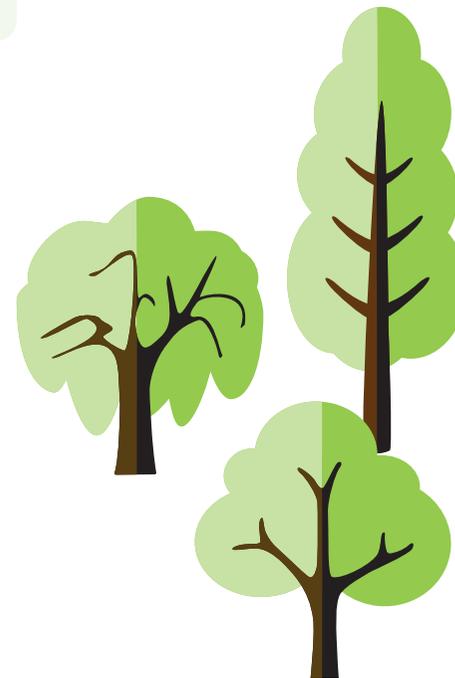
ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE HOMES

6.21   Housing provision across the city needs to ensure that it meets the needs of everyone whatever age and stage of life. The City Council wishes to ensure that these new homes are accessible to all including visitors and those with disabilities. As such, it is important to consider the demands and requirements people will have from their homes and how this may well change over time. Homes need to be built with the flexibility to be adapted to the changing needs of residents. These changes include adaptations in the size and compositions of households, helping successful intergenerational living, with adult children and older parents moving back into the family home and an ageing population. Ensuring all new homes are adaptable is also a more efficient use of resources as a home that is adaptable will have a longer functional life.

6.22   Providing opportunities for residents to maintain their independence is very important and can help to alleviate pressure on health and social care if older people can remain in their homes adapted for their needs. In addition, housing needs to be adapted to support those with chronic health conditions and specialist housing needs. Ensuring we build homes that can be adapted to meet people's longer-term needs is an important part of good design.

6.23   The government introduced an optional Building Regulation requirement in 'Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings' in March 2016. Local authorities can adopt a policy to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability through Requirement M4(2) Accessible and adaptable dwellings and/or M4(3) Wheelchair user dwellings.

POLICY OPTION SET DH11: ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE HOMES

a **Option for policy approach**

Seek to ensure that a % of affordable homes and market homes (dependent on needs, viability and practicality but currently 100% affordable and 15% market) are constructed to accessible and adaptable homes standards set out in Part M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations. For M4(3) for Social Rent these should be able to be adapted to the needs of the household who will be occupying them, ahead of their occupation.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This approach future proofs the housing stock.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
The standards can be too onerous and impact upon site viability.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option
(in combination with b)

b **Option for policy approach**

Introduce specific exceptions to the requirement for accessible and adaptable homes for practical reasons, for example provision of lifts is disproportionately expensive for flats of less than three or four storeys or for a small number of flats (fewer than 10) sharing one lift core, so upper floors would not need to conform.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Rather than lowering the percentage generally to ensure accessible/adaptable homes are achievable in all situations, this allows a generally high percentage, whilst avoiding situations where there are practical reasons that limit the amount of accessible and adaptable homes that can be provided.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This may encourage low-rise flats, or one bed houses, to circumvent the policy, which may often not be the most efficient use of land or the most suitable design for the area.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option
(in combination with a)

c **Option for policy approach**

No specific policy, rely on NPPF requirements or National Design Guide as template.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Rely on the NPPF to deliver the policy framework for delivering accessible and adaptable homes.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This could result in homes being built that are not sufficiently adaptable to the changing requirement of residents which is not an effective approach to meeting residents both current and future needs. Retrofitting houses to meet needs in the future is more costly and an inefficient use of resources.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

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HEALTHY DESIGN AND HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (HIAS)

6.24   The health and wellbeing of residents is an important priority for the City Council and the recent pandemic has highlighted the need to recognise the important link between the natural and built environment and long-term health and well-being and mental health outcomes. An environment which supports and encourages people to feel happy and healthy requires high quality urban design which should include easy access to public open spaces where people of all ages can meet up for a walk, chat, to play games and undertake physical activity. Good design should facilitate the use of active modes of travel, such as walking and cycling; it should also consider how impacts of current and future climate change could negatively impact health (e.g. more heat wave events) and build in adaptive measures that improve resilience to reduce these negative impacts.

6.25   The process of undertaking Health Impact Assessment (HIA) ensures that development promotes and contributes to a healthy living environment, by requiring that local context and particular issues are assessed and then addressed through the design process. The benefit of HIA is greatest when it is conducted at the earliest opportunity to inform the design process. The current local plan requires the undertaking of HIA for major development and we would propose to continue to require HIAs in this manner, although there are other alternatives for when we would require HIAs to be undertaken as we have set out in the options table below.

POLICY OPTION SET DH12: HEALTHY DESIGN/HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (HIAS)

a **Option for policy approach**
Require an HIA for all developments over a certain size- for example for major developments (as currently)[13]. This requirement could be integrated with others such as demonstrating resilient design and constructure.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
A checklist-based template is straightforward and would keep the process fairly streamlined. The intention of this approach is that healthy design is considered from the outset and therefore factored in.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This may be seen as an extra burden on developers, and on those assessing applications.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b **Option for policy approach**
Include a requirement for HIAs, not just based on a size threshold but other factors such as socioeconomic, health or environmental factors that could trigger the need for a more extensive HIA.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
More development is subject to an HIA, which ensures issues are properly considered and addressed at an early stage of the development.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This could result in creating a more onerous process with no clear reasons or benefits.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

c **Option for policy approach**
No specific policy, rely on NPPF.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Less burden on developer who will cover off the points in a HIA as part of the application process.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Not having policy makes it harder to have a consistent metric to assess schemes.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

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[13] (Major development as defined in the The Town & Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

6.26   Oxford's historic environment makes a significant contribution to the character and culture of the city. It is the setting for buildings spanning every major period of British architectural history from the 11th century onwards. There are 18 conservation areas within the city and around 1,500 listed buildings, with the proportion of them designated as Grade I and II*, as well as 10 scheduled monuments and 15 registered Historic Parks and Gardens. We also have a rich archaeological heritage extending from prehistoric times to the modern day which encompasses a wide variety of asset types.

6.27   This vast number and wide range of historic assets in Oxford reflect the city's rich history and special character. It is important to deliver new development in a way that respects and complements this rich history. National policy sets out strong protections for heritage assets as are detailed in the urban design and heritage background paper. Once historic features like listed buildings and scheduled monuments are lost, they cannot be replaced, and as such, the most special assets that contribute to Oxford's historic environment need to be protected from harm that may be caused by inappropriate development so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. The presence of historic features should be viewed as a strength. It can contribute to the distinctiveness of a

place, connect occupants with the history of the local area and establish a strong setting for development. Historic buildings need to be repaired and adapted to meet changing needs of occupants, just as with any other building, and it is important that this is carried out thoughtfully and in a manner that preserves the important features of the building or heritage asset that contribute to its significance, the reason why it is protected. The emphasis of the plan must be on the positive management of change, reflecting the city's capacity to move forward while acting as a responsible custodian of the city's irreplaceable heritage. This issue is particularly relevant in relation to the pressing need in the city to reduce carbon emissions in response to the threat of climate change and the consequent adaptation of historic buildings through application of retrofitting measures. In chapter 5 we have included a set of options which highlight our support for these types of applications, providing clarity on how best to approach this in the particular context of historic buildings.

6.28   The policy options below seek to set out a framework for how we will require applicants to prevent, assess and mitigate harmful impacts of development on heritage assets and archaeology.

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

6.29   A cornerstone of good design is about ensuring proposals are informed by an understanding of existing context and designed to respond to this positively. In Oxford, a key part of this context is defined by the presence of heritage assets, and many of these have been designated for their national and local importance. There are a variety of designated assets in the city, from conservation areas and historic parks/gardens, to listed buildings and scheduled monuments, and their protection is not only about the features of the assets themselves, but often also about their wider setting.
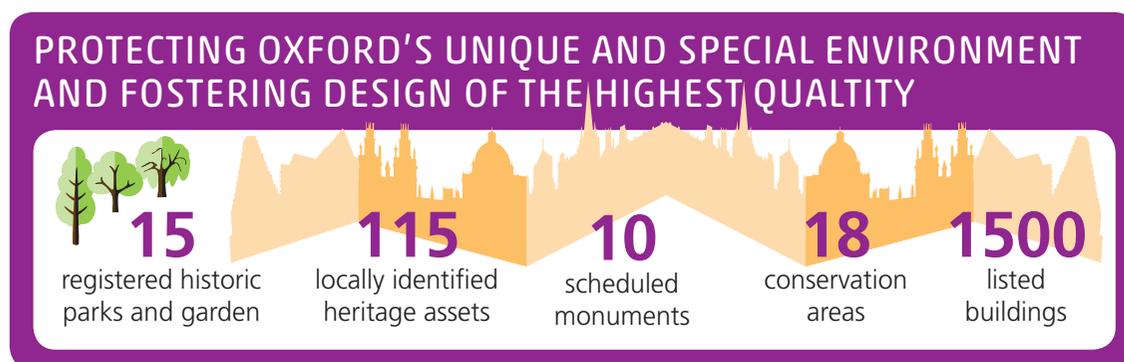

PROTECTING OXFORD'S UNIQUE AND SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT AND FOSTERING DESIGN OF THE HIGHEST QUALTITY

15 registered historic parks and garden

115 locally identified heritage assets

10 scheduled monuments

18 conservation areas

1500 listed buildings

Figure 6-3: Infographic of heritage and conservation in Oxford

POLICY OPTION SET DH13: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

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a Option for policy approach
Include a policy relating to designated assets that reflects the NPPF, that sets out how impacts on designated heritage assets will be assessed, when mitigation is required, and how harm should be balanced against benefits, including Oxford-specific detail in relation to what harm and benefits may be for different types of assets in Oxford/in different parts of Oxford.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This could set out Oxford-specific considerations, giving local detail to the direction of the NPPF and helping to ensure local context is considered in proposals and decision making. It gives more clarity for applicants.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
A list of potential harms and benefits in Oxford could never be definitive and will not precisely fit all situations. It is important it does not take over from case-by-case consideration based on specifics of the case.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach
Include a policy or set of policies for designated heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings, conservation areas) that reflects the NPPF but does not include Oxford-specific detail in relation to harm and benefits.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Ensures that new development schemes are built to the highest standard of design to maintain and enhance Oxford's reputation as a world class city. Specific aspects of design addressed using checklist.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Policy wording covers a lot so is long and can be unwieldy to read through and understand. This approach relies on overarching principles that may not address specific design issues. The policy would not have to include all designated assets, for example there is not scope for a policy that does much more than repeat national guidance in relation to scheduled monuments and important parks and gardens. Generally, this approach of largely repeating national guidance is unnecessary.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

(C) **Option for policy approach**
No specific policy, rely on NPPF requirements or National Design Guide as template.

> **(+)** **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
> NPPF update has specific direction on delivering high quality design, which it is not necessary to repeat.

> **(−)** **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
> It might be difficult to ensure proposals reflect Oxford context, risk of non-compliance with NPPF by not having more specific policies.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

6.30 There are several historic buildings and other assets which do not meet the requirements for protection of a national designation, but which are of importance to the city for their locally significant heritage values. Oxford City Council maintains a list of local heritage assets known as the Oxford Heritage Asset Register (OHAR). The OHAR provides the opportunity to identify those elements of Oxford's historic environment particularly valued by local communities. Locally important heritage assets can be added to the list when they are identified, if they meet the criteria. The current policy ensures that heritage assets of local importance will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. Buildings and structures on OHAR are not given any statutory protection from demolition.

POLICY OPTION SET DH14: LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

a **Option for policy approach**
Include a policy that requires development to consider heritage assets of local importance. The policy would also set out criteria for assessing whether an asset has locally important heritage interest.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This is very helpful in adding clarity and highlighting the importance of local assets and ensuring something of their significance is reflected in new proposals.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
There is a risk the list could be seen as definitive, and it is then considered that anything not on the list has no heritage value.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b **Option for policy approach**
No specific policy, rely on NPPF requirements or National Design Guide as template.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
NPPF update has specific direction on local heritage assets, so it is not necessary to repeat it and that would aid conciseness of the Plan.

– **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
It might be difficult to ensure proposals reflect Oxford context, or to argue that something is a heritage asset if it is not clear that they are considered important in Oxford and what the criteria for defining them is.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

ARCHAEOLOGY

6.31 Just as with its built environment, Oxford has a rich archaeological heritage that has been progressively built up from prehistoric times to the modern day. This archaeology has the potential to aid understanding of our heritage. New development presents opportunities to unearth and discover new archaeological remains which need to be fully realised, equally, it has the potential to harm or destroy these assets where their presence is not appropriately investigated, and impacts are not carefully mitigated.

6.32 The policy options are intended to address the presence of archaeology, our preferred approach is to continue to define the City Centre Archaeological Area and require a holistic management plan for the colleges which are areas of known archaeological significance whilst also flagging those important features could be found elsewhere in the city. Where features could be present, we would require appropriate assessments and information gathering that can define character, significance and extent of any deposits so that these are not missed or lost. We would also positively support proposals which are designed to enhance or to better reveal the significance of the asset.

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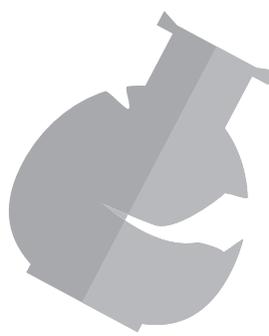
POLICY OPTION SET DH15: ARCHAEOLOGY

ⓐ Option for policy approach

Continue to define the City Centre Archaeological Area (shown in Figure 6-4) and require sufficient information to define the character, significance and extent of such deposits including a heritage assessment and full archaeological desk-based assessment if the initial assessment suggests this is relevant.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

There are known to be archaeological deposits of significance across the whole city centre area, so defining this area to flag this up front and ensure assessments are carried out from the start of the process would help to bring certainty.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

By defining an area there is a danger that areas outside of this will not be considered from the outset for their potential archaeological importance. To mitigate this a policy would also need to ensure it was made clear that there is potential for archaeological deposits across the city.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option
(in combination with b, c and d)

ⓑ Option for policy approach

Require a holistic management plan for key historic college owned and occupied sites in the City Centre Archaeological Area when development is proposed. These should take a holistic view of the whole college site and should consider features that should guide the location of new development within the site, including best location for basements in terms of impacts on archaeology (and cumulative impacts).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Colleges sites are almost certain to have archaeologic interest, as well as being long-term owners with extended interest in their significant sites, which they are custodians of. Where developing in an area with such significant archaeology it is important that development is considered holistically and located in the best way within a site.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This does require up front work from the colleges.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option
(in combination with a, c and d)

ⓒ Option for policy approach

Require that wherever archaeological deposits or features are suspected to be present that sufficient information is provided to define the character, significance and extent of such deposits including a heritage assessment and full archaeological desk-based assessment if the initial assessment suggests this is relevant. Where development would impact on archaeological features and deposits it will only be supported where the harm can be eliminated, or where there is clear and convincing justification that the benefits outweigh the harm.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This sets out from the start exactly what is expected which aids certainty for developers.

− Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This adds length and detail to the policy.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option
(in combination with a, b and d)

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d **Option for policy approach**
Where proposed development would impact on archaeological features and deposits, it will only be supported where the harm to such deposits and features can be eliminated or where, by agreement, mitigated to an appropriate level and the significance of the archaeological asset better revealed and understanding of that significance enhanced (by agreed measures).

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This follows the NPPF approach so adds clarity that this would be expected. If the other parts of the NPPF approach are to be in a policy tailored to Oxford then it would be confusing not to include this also.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This adds length and detail to the policy which may not be necessary as it is at least partly covered in the NPPF.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option
(in combination with a, b and c)

e **Option for policy approach**
Map more areas as archaeological areas where it is known there are likely to be deposits /note allocated sites where archaeological deposits or features are expected to be present and require heritage assessments with potential desk-based assessments if needed.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
There are other known areas of deposits, although none to the extent of the city centre. We could define these on the policies map to help flag the high likelihood of deposits in these areas, which would ensure they weren't overlooked and would add certainty for developers from the start of the process.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This risks suggesting that areas that aren't mapped are unlikely to have deposits. It might be safest to rely on initial investigations for individual sites as they come forward, which can be done in advance for allocated sites.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

f **Option for policy approach**
Do not include a policy about archaeology but rely on national policy instead.

+ **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This avoids any repetition with national policy and keeps the plan focused on things that are not already covered in national policy.

− **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Given the importance of the heritage of Oxford and its rich archaeological record it should be highlighted in the local plan. Having no specific policy would miss the opportunity to highlight this importance from the start or to tailor the policy approach to Oxford.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option
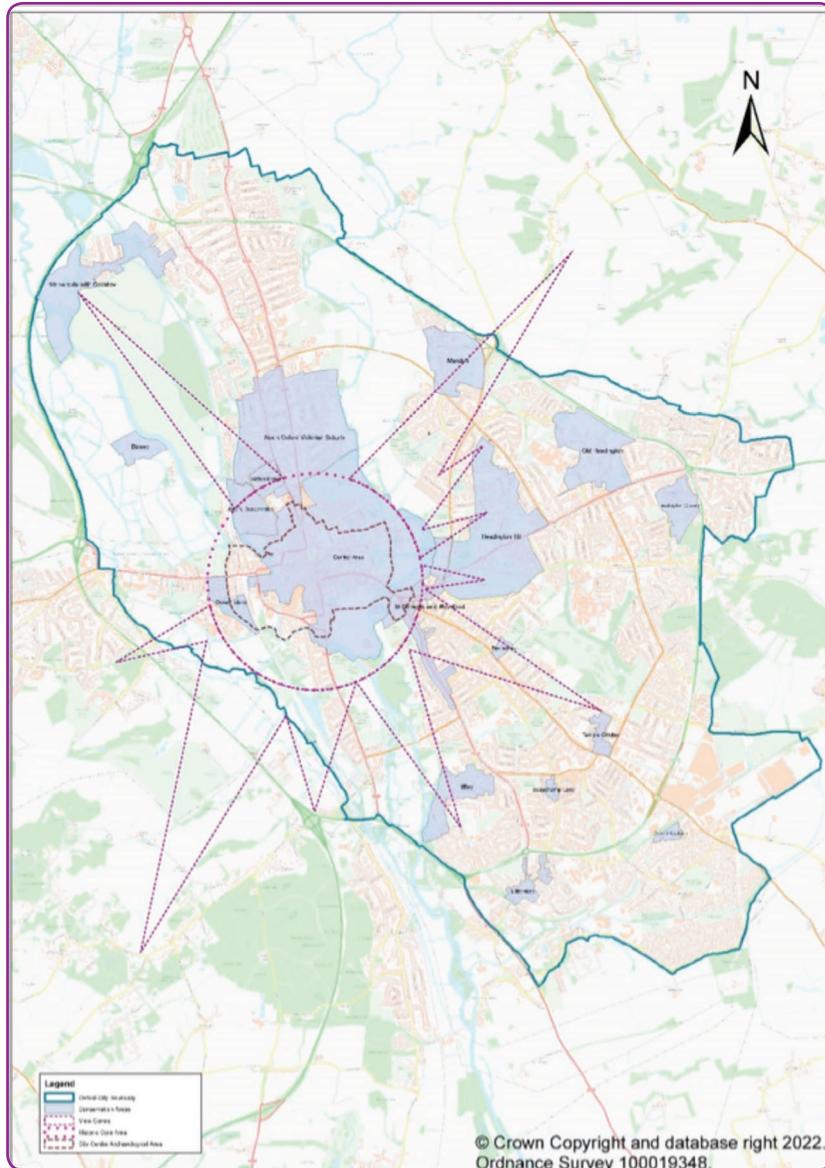(considered detrimental)

*Figure 6-4: Showing the View Cones, Historic Core Area,
Conservation Areas and the City Centre Archaeological Area*

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