

CHAPTER SEVEN

A MORE EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE CITY WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



INTRODUCTION AND WIDER CONTEXT

7.1 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. We expect that strong local communities with facilities, services and green spaces in their proximity will continue to be something people value highly. Developing the principle of concentrating development in district centres, we are now using the widely recognised term 15-minute city. The idea of the 15-minute city is one where we seek to ensure everything needed to live well can be accessed within 15 minutes by walking or cycling. Access to facilities for health, fitness and leisure, shopping and work helps to ensure that people's basic health needs are met without having to travel large distances. As was noted in the vision and strategy chapter, we have undertaken analysis of 15 minute walking distances from the district centres and have identified that whilst much of the city falls within 15 minutes' walk of a district centre, there are areas that fall outside of these areas. We have also undertaken the same analysis for local centres, and whilst these typically host a smaller range of facilities, they help to fill in some of these gaps in access to district centres making them important to protect in their own right. The 15 minute walking distances from these centres are set out in Figure 7-1, whilst the boundaries for the centres themselves, which we propose to protect within the options in this chapter are set out in Figure 7-2.

7.2 The city has an ongoing challenge to improve air quality and cut carbon emissions from the transport sector, as well as reducing the volume of traffic and the need for land to be used for parking. Supporting people to shift away from reliance on private vehicles will be essential to achieving this goal. Walking, or use of a mobility aid on the pavement, is done almost universally, and good access by walking is the number one priority. Cycling is also an active travel mode without air quality impacts, and it enables people to travel further, particularly with the increasing development and popularity of e-bikes and cargo e-bikes. Public transport is vital in Oxford, allowing people to access the city from outside and to move around the city to facilities easily; people would not generally expect to have facilities such as hospitals, theatres and cinemas in walking distance, but good bus access to them helps reduce the need to drive by car. Protecting facilities locally and at public transport hubs, so that people can access them quickly and easily without the need to drive, will help to achieve the objective of reducing car use and also promoting healthy lifestyles and strong communities.



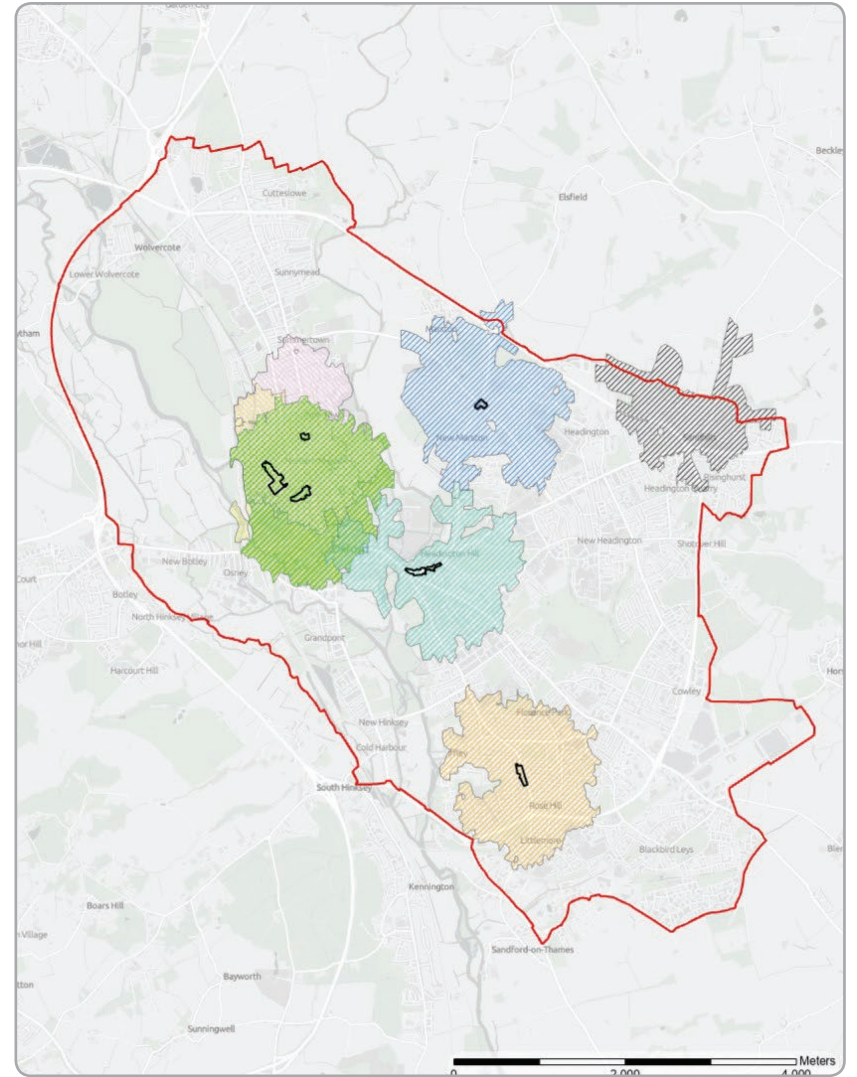


Figure 7-1: 15 minute walking distances from city and district centres (left) and Local Centres (right)

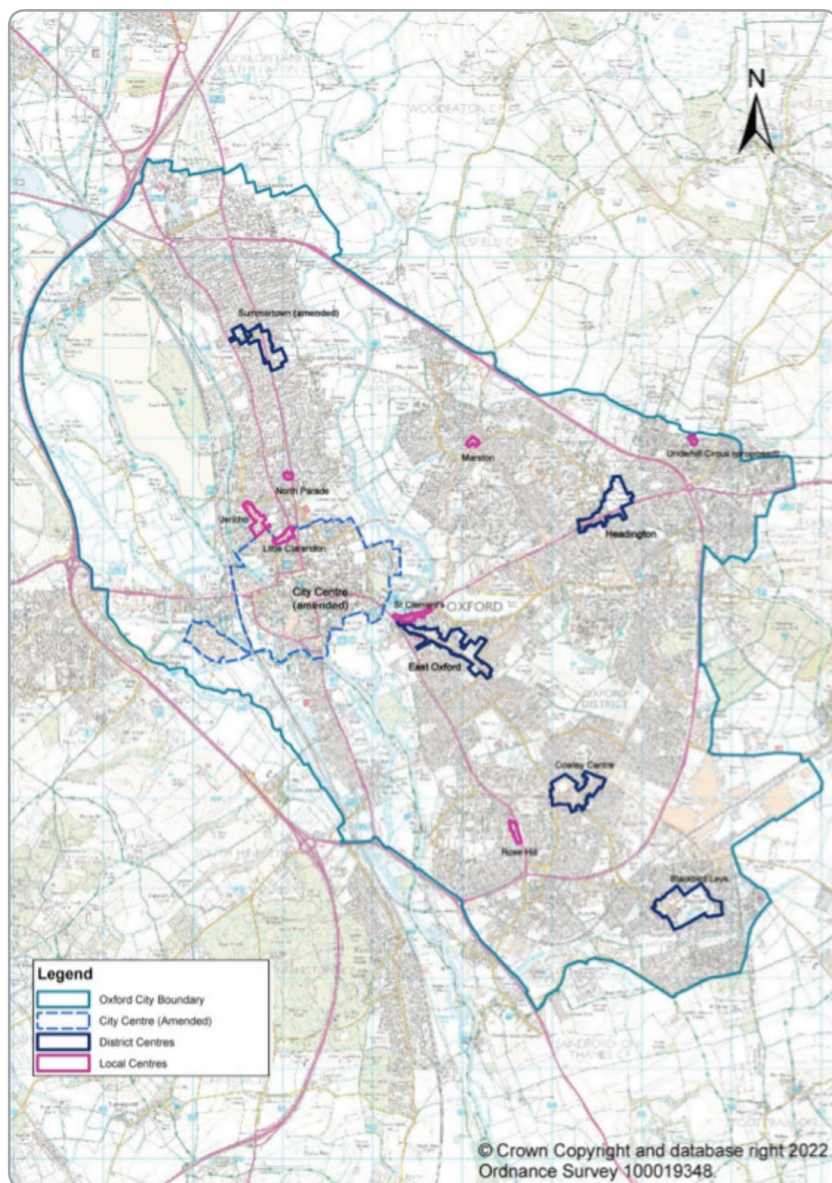


Figure 7-2: City, District and Local Centres

SUPPORTING THE DISTRICT CENTRES AND THE CITY CENTRE

Maintaining vibrant centres

- 7.3 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 national Use Class Order made by the Government, 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 we will establish strong visions for the future of these areas and to utilise a variety of tools to help them develop sustainably into the future. A wide variety of commercial, businesses and services uses are now in the Use Class E, which includes retail and also cafes, restaurants, offices, indoor sport and fitness and GPs. Change within these uses is not classed as development, so does not need planning permission.
- 7.4 Supporting local and independent businesses and start-ups is also important for establishing local identity and supporting the wider economy of the city. Encouraging and protecting a range of uses to set up alongside retailers, like food and drink establishments and cultural and entertainment venues, is a positive way of supporting our high streets to stay lively throughout the day and into the evening. Open spaces and greening also play a role in supporting the economy of the city, acting as venues for larger gatherings like markets and entertainment events, as well as for promoting feelings of community and wellbeing. An attractive public realm, that allows room for outdoor socialising and attracts people to linger, is important to the success of district centres.



POLICY OPTION SET C1: FOCUSING TOWN CENTRE USES IN OUR DISTRICT CENTRES

a Option for policy approach

Define the district centres as on the map above as areas that are highly accessible and include a broad range of facilities including shops, hospitality, community and leisure facilities. These include:


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

Identify the character of each area, strengths and weaknesses, and provide design guidance to ensure new developments enhance the character and attractiveness of these areas to encourage people to visit and linger and a sense of belonging.

Allow new Use Class E uses in the district centres, including:

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

Also allow:

- Community facilities (see options below), residential including student accommodation (where compliant with any policy on active frontages)
 - Visitor attractions
 - Hotels
 - Flexible work-spaces, co-working spaces and live-work units.
- 

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This supports the city centre and district centres and encourages them to be placed at the heart of their communities. This promotes sustainable travel, supporting the 15-minute cities concept by ensuring that facilities are focused in these locations that can be easily reached by sustainable modes and allowing various needs to be fulfilled in one trip, encouraging people to stay longer.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

The wide range of uses allowed in district centres could lead to competing demands or a particular use could become dominant, which may not be that which is most needed by the community (for example student accommodation or hotels). The policy options relating to active frontages, below, will be important in mitigating this.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b and c)



b Option for policy approach

Define local centres to include those on the map above, to ensure protection of facilities within 15 minutes' walk, which are: St Clement's, Walton Street and Little Clarendon Street, High Street east, Rose Hill, and Underhill Circus (not previously designated as a local centre).

Allow new Use Class E uses in local centres, including:

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

Encourage flexible work-spaces, co-working spaces and live-work units.

Do not allow student accommodation, hotels or visitor attractions (Sui Generis uses including cinemas, concert halls, dance halls).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Local centres are significantly smaller than the district centres, with less variety of uses, but they should be supported as they provide facilities locally in enough variety to serve a range of needs and they help ensure 15-minute access. These locations are less likely to be transport hubs and are more tightly woven into residential areas, so they are not as suitable for hotel uses, visitor attractions and student accommodation, so focus on allowing Use Class E is most appropriate.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
These local centres vary in character. Allowing new E Classes means that restaurants and gyms could be introduced into quieter areas and they may attract more people than can easily access the centres.

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





C Option for policy approach

Include a policy that sets out a sequential approach for locating new town centre uses based on: centres (city, district and local) first, then edge of centres and only out-of-centre locations where no alternative sites are available. Applicants would be required to demonstrate how they have applied the sequential approach if they are proposing town centre uses outside the centres, looking at edge of centre first.

Include criteria that will be used to assess applications for town centre uses outside of the existing centres, including accessibility by public transport, that negative impacts on the road network can be mitigated, that there is no harm to adjoining land uses.

Require an impact assessment for retail and leisure proposals outside of centres (currently required for those of 350m² or more) demonstrating that there will be no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the existing centres, and that there is good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.



+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Town centre uses attract a lot of people and they therefore need to be located in accessible locations (public transport hubs) and preferably in a cluster so a variety of needs can be met in one place, making travel simpler and more likely to be by sustainable modes. The uses also then help to support each other and maintain the strength of community centres, helping them thrive.

This approach helps to ensure town centre uses are concentrated in existing centres, where there are already good transport facilities (and other facilities such as public toilets, as well as parking for those who need to use it). It limits the potential for town centre uses to be located in locations that may draw people away from established centres, for example out-of-town retail generally served by car.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Use Class E covers a wide variety of facilities, and it includes healthcare such as GPs. This approach would mean new GP surgeries would be expected to be located in district centres and would need to work through a sequential test to show other options are not feasible, which may limit options for locating GPs. However, it is important that GPs are easily accessible, so this approach is justified.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a and b)





d Option for policy approach

Do not include a policy that sets a sequential approach requirement or criteria for town centre use proposals outside of centres.

- + Potential positive consequences of the approach**
The NPPF sets out this approach, so there may be no need to repeat it in local policy.
- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
The NPPF references accessibility and connectivity to centres as criteria for assessing proposals but there are no other locally specific criteria. The Local Plan gives the opportunity to define centres and expectations for them.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option (considered detrimental)



ACTIVE FRONTAGES



- 7.5 Previous local plans have defined retail frontages to protect the retail function of centres, and along these frontages a certain proportion of retail must be maintained, or changes of use will not be approved. However, changes to the Use Class Order have meant that there is no longer a 'retail' Use Class. Instead, Use Class E covers the broad range of 'commercial, business and services uses' and within that list there can be free change, for example from shop to office to clinic, without the need for planning permission. This reflects the fact that the nature of retail centres is changing as more shopping takes place on-line. In addition, Use Class E can also change to residential with only a prior approval application rather than full planning permission being required. However, the need for a range of services, for meeting places and for the social aspect of centres remains strong. Each centre in Oxford may have different strengths and needs, which can be acknowledged with individual sets of development principles for each centre. However, for all centres, retaining active frontages, whereby there is activity along a street length and venues for social interaction, will be key to their continued success.
- 7.6 Within the city centre and our district and local centres, shops make a significant contribution to the character of the local area, and the design of shopfronts can have a significant impact on the experience of walking through these spaces. As such, the design of shopfronts is an important concern and one that the Local Plan should try to guide and influence positively. This is particularly important where shopfronts are an important part of the character of a place or contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.

POLICY OPTION SET C2: ACTIVE FRONTAGES

- a** **Option for policy approach**
Designate frontages in the city centre and all district centres and require that a high proportion of this remains as Use Class E on the ground floor. The proportion to be set based on maintaining current thresholds, with some leeway for flexibility.

- +** **Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Having 'active' uses at the ground floor helps maintain the vibrancy of centres. Commercial, business and services are uses that attract a lot of people, so these are most beneficially located in the centres, where there are good transport connections, and where there is the benefit of people accessing a variety of facilities at the same time. There would still be a lot of flexibility with this approach to have other uses such as housing on the upper floors.
- **Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Permitted development rights that allow a change from Use Class E to housing could mean that the policy threshold is breached without any planning permissions being granted, and that would remove any flexibility for the remaining frontage, and limits the potential of the policy to maintain an active frontage. This will need a strong definition of an active frontage.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

b Option for policy approach

Set criteria for what is expected in a ground floor frontage to bring activity and vibrancy to centres in terms of design and uses. Set criteria for assessing the impacts of design, positioning, materials, colour, proportion and illumination on assets with heritage significance or visual or residential amenity. To continue to support this with further detail in a technical advice note.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This would be applicable whatever changes to the Use Class Order may occur. Criteria help to ensure that shop fronts contribute to the design and character of existing buildings and their surroundings. It provides a framework for avoiding visual pollution and clutter and thus would be a positive policy approach. It gives protection to Oxford's historic shopfronts, including further advice in a technical advice note, which means that a broader range of topics can be covered than in a policy, and this also avoids being too prescriptive in a policy.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This approach will still only be applicable if a planning application is required (i.e. a change of use to residential may be possible without full planning permission, and it would therefore not be necessary to show how there would remain an active frontage). This approach does not necessarily protect town centre uses in the centres, where they are most appropriate and where it is beneficial that they remain. Policy wording is broad, with overarching principles that may not address specific design quality issues.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)

c Option for policy approach

Designate frontages but do not require a proportion to remain as commercial, business and services uses - only set criteria.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach allows complete flexibility, in the spirit of the change to the Use Class Order.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Because the locations where many commercial uses can be located will be so limited, it is important to try to protect them where they are most suitable. Without this protection, there could be a weakening of district centres and the city centre as places where people can access a broad range of facilities at once, and easily, by walking, cycling and public transport.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option



d Option for policy approach
Do not designate active frontages.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Checking the proportion of active frontages, or assessing whether a proposal maintains an active frontage, does take some time, which would be avoided with this approach.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This approach does nothing to protect the vitality of local centres, so would not help to achieve the aim of a 15-minute city.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

ENSURING COMMUNITY ASSETS ARE AVAILABLE LOCALLY

7.7 The Use Class Order now includes the Use Class F2, which is designed to protect local community assets. These assets may be embedded within local communities and do not need to be directed to town centres. Local community assets include indoor and outdoor pools, outdoor sports, community halls and also small shops of under 280m² selling essential items and which are over 1km from another similar shop (e.g. corner shops). Facilities within this Use Class cannot be lost to a different Use Class without planning permission, so it is possible to protect them through planning policies. These local community assets help foster a sense of community and belonging, enhancing health and wellbeing. They may function as a meeting place, a place for leisure and fitness, a place for community and interest groups to meet and so on. Generally, Oxford is well provided for, with many community facilities available locally to people.

7.8 In order to achieve strong communities, equality, and 15-minute city principles, it is important that existing local community assets are protected, although there may be exceptions if re-provision can occur, potentially in a way that is more efficient, for example through shared facilities. In addition to the protection of existing facilities, a positive view should be taken of proposals for new facilities, in the right locations. They should be in an accessible location to the community they are going to serve. Community use agreements for new private facilities will also improve access to social and community infrastructure, particularly where there are identified gaps in current public access across the city.

POLICY OPTION SET C3: PROTECTION AND ALTERATION OF EXISTING LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSETS (INCLUDING SWIMMING POOLS AND OUTDOOR SPORTS)

a Option for policy approach

Protect local community assets with a policy that would resist their loss, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer a need, or there is overriding demand for an alternative community use on the site; or
- Suitable replacement provision can be provided on-site, or within a suitable alternative and accessible* location for its users
- Accessible location would be defined in terms of the impact on achieving a 15 minute city in the first instance.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach recognises the importance of local community assets and that these make a valued contribution to the health and wellbeing of local residents. The starting position is that these should be protected from loss.

The approach recognises that there may be times when existing facilities are no longer needed, or could be replaced with alternative provision that meets a greater need in the local area. It allows for flexibility in such incidences but would require appropriate evidence to be provided to underline this case.

Promoting 15 minute city concepts is a key aspiration for the Local Plan, defining accessibility in these terms will help to ensure that any re-provision does not force people to use less sustainable modes of transport to continue to use the facility (e.g. car).

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

It will be difficult to be specific about what evidence would be sufficient to be used to demonstrate that there is no longer a need, or overriding demand. It is likely to differ from case-to-case, but more guidance may be helpful in providing clarity in such situations.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

b Option for policy approach

Set out that permission will be granted for alteration and expansion of existing local community assets, although potentially preventing F2 shops from expanding so they become Use Class E and could be lost to housing or other commercial uses.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This would recognise the particular importance of community assets to local neighbourhoods and would provide added certainty that applications for development on these sites that would enable them to expand or to provide a better level of service.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

The constrained nature of many sites in the city means that, in reality, it may be difficult for many of these facilities to expand – thus the policy may have limited benefit.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)



- c Option for policy approach**
Do not have a policy protecting local community assets - rely on national policy, or future national development management policies

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
The NPPF does provide support for the provision of 'accessible services' that reflect current and future needs and support communities. It highlights the importance of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places which 'enable and support healthy lifestyles.' It is likely that new national development management policies could set out a framework for when loss of facilities is acceptable and may make a local policy redundant.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This option does not provide detailed guidance and advice on how this provision should be made. The Local Plan is the policy vehicle for ensuring that this requirement is planned for to meet the needs of both existing and future demand.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

POLICY OPTION SET C4: PROVISION OF NEW LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSETS

- a Option for policy approach**
Generally support the provision of new local community assets in the city. These should be in an accessible location by walking, cycling and public transport (defined in terms of 15 minutes walking in the first instance).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
These facilities can form an important part of the social fabric of an area, and can support positive health and wellbeing both physical and mental. In combination with option A of Protection and Alteration options above, which seeks to protect existing space, this option would support new facilities coming forward where these would make a positive contribution to the city.

Promoting 15-minute neighbourhood concepts is a key aspiration for the Local Plan, defining accessibility in these terms will help to ensure that any re-provision does not force people to use less sustainable modes of transport to continue to use the facility (e.g. car).

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Whilst this option would support provision, it would not define exactly what is needed and where. Community assets would not always automatically be approved, which would be because they were not suitable, but which may limit opportunities.

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

b Option for policy approach
Seek to secure community use agreements on all new community and leisure facilities, particularly those within schools and colleges, as well as existing facilities that come forward for redevelopment.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

There are a range of private sports facilities in the city which offer limited public use as well as those that are entirely restricted to members of those institutions, including schools and colleges. Where access is opened up to the wider community, this could help improve the range of access to facilities.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Management and operational requirements of certain private facilities, such as those belonging to schools and colleges may restrict wider access for safety/security reasons. It is likely that community use agreements would need to be explored on a case-by-case basis.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)

c Option for policy approach
Do not have a policy addressing provision of new local community assets; rely on national policy, or future national development management policies.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

The NPPF does provide support for the provision of ‘accessible services’ that reflect current and future needs and support communities. It highlights the importance of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This option does not provide detailed guidance and advice on how this provision should be made. The Local Plan is the policy vehicle for ensuring that this requirement is planned for to meet the needs of both existing and future demand.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

LEARNING AND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

7.9 The Use Class Order includes the use F1, which is learning and non-residential institutions and which includes schools, colleges, galleries, museums libraries and places of worship. These facilities are also important in enabling people to thrive, although there will often be a willingness to travel further than a 15-minute walk to access some of them. Local plan policies can help to protect these facilities. New facilities may also be proposed or required and this will generally be seen as very positive. However, these uses can attract many people and have potential to be significant generators of car traffic. Therefore, a policy approach will be needed that ensures these come forward in suitable locations that are accessible by walking and cycling (and public transport), that parking standards are in place, alongside travel plans, to limit car travel and that these uses do not cause a nuisance to neighbouring streets. Oxfordshire County Council is the lead authority for education and libraries, so close working with them to identify needs and manage and support facilities will be important.



POLICY OPTION SET C5: PROTECTION AND ALTERATION OF EXISTING LEARNING AND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS (INCLUDING SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP)

a Option for policy approach

Protect existing learning and non-residential institutions with a policy that would resist their loss, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer a need or foreseeable need, or there is overriding demand for an alternative community use on the site; or
- Suitable replacement provision can be provided on-site, or within a suitable alternative and accessible* location for its users; or
- It can be demonstrated that the use can no longer feasibly be provided in its location
- Accessible location would be defined in terms of 15 minutes walking in the first instance.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach recognises the importance of learning and other non-residential institutions. These make a valued contribution to the health and wellbeing of local residents and also are important in learning and skills development, potentially helping overcome inequalities. The starting position is that these should be protected from loss, but this approach is flexible, recognising that there may be times when existing facilities are no longer needed, or could be replaced with alternative provision that meets a greater need in the local area. It allows for flexibility in such incidences but would require appropriate evidence to be provided to underline this case.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

It will be difficult to be specific about what evidence would be sufficient to be used to demonstrate that there is no longer a need, or overriding demand, or it is no longer feasible to continue. It is likely to differ from case-to-case, but more guidance may be helpful in providing clarity in such situations.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

b Option for policy approach

Set out that permission will be granted for alteration and expansion of existing learning and non-residential institutions.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This would recognise the particular importance of learning and non-residential institutions to local neighbourhoods and would provide added certainty that applications for development on these sites that would enable them to expand or to provide a better level of service.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

The constrained nature of many sites in the city means that, in reality, it may be difficult for many of these facilities to expand – thus the policy may have limited benefit.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)



POLICY OPTION SET C6: PROVISION OF NEW LEARNING AND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

- c Option for policy approach**
Do not have a policy protecting learning and non-residential institutions- rely on national policy, or future national development management policies.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

The NPPF does provide support for the provision of ‘accessible services’ that reflect current and future needs and support communities. It highlights the importance of achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places. It is likely that new national development management policies could set out a framework for when loss of facilities is acceptable and may make a local policy redundant.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This option does not provide detailed guidance and advice on how this provision should be made. The Local Plan is the policy vehicle for ensuring that this requirement is planned for to meet the needs of both existing and future demand.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

- a Option for policy approach**
Include criteria for assessing the suitability of proposals for learning and non-residential institutions such as schools, with criteria for assessing the suitability of unallocated sites that may be proposed for these uses, which will include issues such as likely impacts on amenity and traffic and whether they can be mitigated, including access, accessibility, size of site and neighbouring uses.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Whilst these uses will always bring benefits to the community, there is potential for them to be sited in unsuitable locations, where traffic is generated, where there are problems with access or it causes disruption to local residents; this approach would prevent that happening.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This could prevent much needed uses coming forward if the site is assessed as not suitable.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

- b Option for policy approach**
Do not include any criteria against which learning and non-residential institution proposals will be judged.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

These uses bring benefits for the community, and this approach would not prevent them being brought forward, in any location.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This could lead to proposals in unsuitable locations, which generate traffic, have access issues, which are not close to other facilities for linked trips and which are not as easily accessible.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

7.10 Oxford has a rich provision of cultural and social activities and venues such as theatres, cinemas, and music venues. These venues attract visitors from within the city and tourists. These are the cultural lifeblood of the city for many people and they should be celebrated and protected. The tourism economy does also make an important contribution to Oxford's economy overall, helping to support jobs and the wide range of attractions that can be enjoyable to all. However, too many visitors in the wrong locations can create conflicts, ultimately deterring future visits as well as affecting quality of life for local residents, for example excessive traffic or unsociable noise and hours that affects residents. These uses are classed as 'Sui Generis', which means use cannot switch to or from them without planning permission and proposals can all be considered on their own merits. Therefore, a policy can set out criteria for the consideration, such as around the location.

POLICY OPTION SET C7: PROTECTING CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

a Option for policy approach
Include a criteria-based policy that protects existing venues and only allows their loss in exceptional circumstances if justified against a clear set of criteria that includes requirements for viability and marketing evidence, or replacement.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach would help guard against the loss of valued social, recreational and cultural facilities. It would help ensure that such facilities are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community. It is important that evening economy uses can flourish and co-exist with other uses especially where they are found near one another.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

It will be difficult to be specific about what evidence would be sufficient to be used to demonstrate that there is no longer a need, or overriding demand, or it is no longer feasible to continue. It is likely to differ from case-to-case, but more guidance may be helpful in providing clarity in such situations.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach
Do not include a policy that protects existing venues.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach leaves the market to respond flexibly to demands and market conditions.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This approach would not help guard against the loss of valued facilities and venues.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

POLICY OPTION SET C8: PROVISION OF NEW CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

a Option for policy approach

Provide a criteria-based policy to assess the suitability of proposals, which looks at accessibility, environmental and transport impacts to determine the acceptability of proposals for these uses. This may specifically encourage some Sui Generis uses that are considered will fill gaps in provision or be particularly beneficial.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Potential benefits include prevention of impacts such as congestion and providing economic opportunities from locating new uses in accessible and sustainable locations.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

The design of new facilities would need to be carefully considered otherwise there could be a potential for conflict with Oxford's historic assets, which has the potential to undermine the city's historic character. Allows for possibility of locating tourist assets away from existing transport hubs.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach

Allow new cultural, social and visitor attractions in the city and district centres only.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach would continue to encourage new facilities in the most sustainable and accessible locations. In these locations, they also have potential to attract people who will use the other existing facilities of these centres and help to support them. This gives further potential to enhance the vibrancy of the city and district centres.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Potentially increases pressure in these centres as so many uses would only be allowed there. That may also limit these facilities because of competition for a limited number of sites. Has the potential to reduce variety of uses in these locations.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

c Option for policy approach

Do not allow new cultural, social or visitor attractions.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This could limit the negative impacts of visitors and tourists on Oxford's transport system and communities.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This approach would have a potential negative impact to Oxford's tourism industry and economy. It may not limit visitors, but would just limit their experience. It would also limit opportunities for residents. It could contribute to a decline of the city centre and district centres, with fewer visitors. It would limit opportunities for new attractions that may contribute to the wider understanding and appreciation of Oxford's unique history or increase its accessibility to people and opportunities for enjoyment.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option
(considered detrimental)

- d Option for policy approach**
No Policy. Rely on other policies in the Local Plan and national policies where applicable.

- + Potential positive consequences of the approach**
Provides flexibility for the provision of these uses.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
Reliant on other policies to mitigate any potential negative impacts on transport, heritage, and wider environment.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

PUBS

- 7.11 Pubs are a unique facility. They are often found in the heart of communities, where there may be no other meeting places or facilities. Their special place within communities and the range of benefits they offer, means that they need specific protection and a generally strongly supportive approach.

POLICY OPTION SET C9: PUBS

- a Option for policy approach**
Include a policy to protect pubs, using a criteria-based approach. This would include evidence of diversification to establish a wider customer base and lack of viability (evidenced by marketing); lack of need for a pub and an assessment of the community value of the pub including design, character and heritage contribution to the character of the local area.

- + Potential positive consequences of the approach**
This includes a balanced approach to the protection of pubs, considering whether the owners have sought to diversify, whether there is a viability argument, whether there is other provision nearby to serve the community and the importance of the pub to the local community. Pubs can be important to the local community for a wide range of reasons. This approach acknowledges that. Pubs are different to other community facilities and a bespoke policy acknowledges that.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach**
This adds another policy layer. To demonstrate proper marketing has taken place will take some time and that could leave an empty building for some time.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option



- b Option for policy approach**
Include a policy to protect pubs relying on marketing evidence only.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This is a simpler approach which focuses on what is likely to be the key reason for pubs needing to close down.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This approach would still need marketing evidence so could still result in a closed down building for some time. It does not take account of the important aspects of pubs to a local area.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

- c Option for policy approach**
Do not include a policy to protect pubs but rely on a general protection of community facilities policy.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This acknowledges that pubs are a community facility and protects them for that reason.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This approach does not acknowledge that there may be genuine viability reasons that means pubs need to close.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS, TRAVEL PLANS AND SERVICING AND DELIVERY PLANS

- 7.12 The movement of goods and materials by road can have a significant impact on the quality of the environment and the health and wellbeing of residents, in terms of noise, congestion and air pollution. Limiting the need to travel, and promoting a development pattern that allows people to make linked trips and travel by walking, cycling and public transport are vital to achieving this. Key tools used to appraise and determine the transport impacts of a development proposal are transport assessments (TA) and travel plans (TP). A transport assessment is a comprehensive and systematic process to ensure that the transport impacts of the development are properly considered and where appropriate includes measures to help mitigate development impact. A travel plan is a package of measures tailored to the needs of an individual site and focused on reducing dependence on the private car.

Commercial deliveries will always need to be made to Oxford and this should be done in the most sustainable way. Specific Delivery and Servicing Management Plans (DSPs) are required to be submitted for proposals that will affect the city centre or district centre and also for sites in close proximity to residential areas. They should set out measures that will be introduced to minimise impacts, such as managing delivery times and vehicles.

POLICY OPTION SET C10: TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS, TRAVEL PLANS AND SERVICING AND DELIVERY PLANS

a Option for policy approach

Require transport assessments and travel plans to review transport impacts and show transport measures proposed to mitigate them, for all development that is likely to have significant transport implications.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This approach will encourage measures that reduce the need to travel and manage congestion. In addition, more sustainable modes of travel are promoted as part of these assessments. Transport Assessments should include, for example, targets associated with the proportion of journeys made to and from the development site by travel modes more sustainable than the private car, and measures such as bus passes.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

These requirements could be seen as an extra burden on developers and those assessing applications. TPs, to be effective, need monitoring, managing and where necessary enforcing. If the proposal is for employment activities, employers need to ensure that employees abide by the TP with appropriate sanctions for non-compliance.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

b Option for policy approach

Require transport assessments to also include servicing and delivery plans, where relevant.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Including service and delivery plans as part of the assessment process will also help reduce the impacts of freight and service vehicles by requiring measures to minimise these issues, such as managing delivery times. This is particularly important in busy and confined areas such as the city centre and also for sites in close proximity to residential areas.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

These requirements could be seen as an extra burden on developers and those assessing applications.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)





C Option for policy approach

Do not include a policy requiring transport assessments, travel plans or servicing and delivery plans.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Not requiring these reduces the burden on developers and assessors.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
The assessment and mitigation of transport impacts of development schemes are crucial to their success or failure. Requiring an assessment as part of a planning application is the only way to secure the required information on which to make a sound planning decision. Without a requirement to assess and manage traffic impacts there may be an increase in congestion and a lack of encouragement and provision for active travel.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)