


| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Oxford Core Strategy Examination Statement of Oxford City Council | | www.oxford.gov.uk  OXFORD CITY COUNCIL |
| C/M2/4 | Matter 2 – The Strategy Issue 4 – Spatial planning | |

i) Is the plan sufficiently spatial in its approach, or does it unduly concentrate upon land use development?

The structure and content of the Core Strategy is designed to be spatial in its approach. The structure of the plan is such that the vision and objectives flow through into the six themes. These themes are more broadly based than traditional land-use plans, which largely tended to group policies into topics such as housing, employment, the natural and built environment etc. For instance, Section 6 (Promoting social inclusion and improving quality of life) contains policies on a range of issues that affect quality of life, from urban design/townscape character to community safety, cultural and community facilities, and green spaces, leisure and sport. Likewise, Section 8 (Strengthening prosperity) takes a broad view of the city's economy, considering the role of the universities, hospitals and medical research alongside employment sites, retail and tourism.

As well as the thematic approach, many of the policies themselves are considered to be broader in scope than found within traditional land-use plans. Examples include Policy CS11 (Waste and recycling); Policy CS16 (Primary healthcare); Policy CS17 (Access to education); Policy CS20 (Community safety); and Policy CS21 (Cultural and community development).

It is recognised that spatial planning relies on working successfully with a range of delivery partners, using a variety of mechanisms outside the statutory planning process as well as land-use planning powers. The City Council has had an ongoing dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the production of the Core Strategy. The changes made to the plan at revised submission stage include reference to various key plans and strategies that have informed the Core Strategy (see Figure 4 of the Proposed Changes), and textual references to particular strategies have been added where relevant. The revamped implementation table at Section 9.1 fleshes out how the policies in the Core Strategy will be taken forward through partnership working.

It is therefore considered that the plan is consistent with the descriptions of spatial planning in PPS1 and PPS12.

ii) Should and could more be said about other land use programmes, such as in education, health and social services?

The City Council takes these issues seriously and has been in continuous dialogue with the County Council, the PCT, the universities and the NHS Trusts during the preparation of the Core Strategy. The plan does take on board other land use programmes, for instance in Policies CS16 (Primary healthcare) and Policy CS17 (Access to education). The problem for a long-term plan like the Core Strategy is that these other land-use programmes have much shorter time horizons. The health, education and social services sectors tend to be particularly affected by public service reforms and changes to the way in which Government spending is allocated, thereby making it more difficult for the relevant organisations to provide certain over their longer term spending plans.

The City Council is of the view that the Core Strategy has gone as far as it reasonably can on the basis of the evidence available. Where proposals are contained in a current programme, such as in relation to new health centres in Jericho and in the West End, these have been incorporated within the Core Strategy.

In relation to schools, the Core Strategy identifies the fact that enhancements to existing primary school capacity will need to be achieved in the context of the West End and Barton developments, and potentially at Summertown. None of these schemes are yet at the stage where precise locations have been identified. The County Council's current primary capital programme does include projects for the replacement of Rose Hill Primary School, and the replacement of buildings and facilities at Bayards Hill School in Barton and Wood Farm Primary School. The projects at Rose Hill and Wood Farm are mentioned in the Core Strategy under the key outputs relating to Policy CS3 (Regeneration areas). For consistency, a reference could be added to the Barton area-specific outputs to indicate that redevelopment is planned at Bayards Hill School. The proposal for the redevelopment of the Bayards Hill site is to include a children's centre that currently occupies part of an adjacent site. The intention is to create a facility that provides an integrated service for children and families from children's centre to foundation stage and onto key stages 1 and 2.

In relation to social services, the programme with the most significant land-use implications is that relating to Extra Care Housing. The supporting text to Policy CS24 (Mix of housing) acknowledges that housing must be appropriate to the needs of the community, providing a range of types, sizes and tenures including, amongst other things, housing for the elderly. Further consideration to the provision of Extra Care Housing will be given in the Site Allocations DPD, potentially including sites currently used as residential care homes.

iii) Should and could more be said about other, non-land use spatial programmes and initiatives?

The Council's vision is for Oxford to be a world-class city for everyone. It is recognised that there are many different initiatives that contribute to this, and the Core Strategy has referenced some of these. For instance, the supporting text to Policy CS3 (Regeneration areas) refers to the need to improve health and social inclusion; to raise education and skills levels; and to provide employment opportunities and training. The supporting text to Policy CS20 (Community safety) refers to the work of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership and Neighbourhood Action Groups, while the supporting text to Policy CS21 (Cultural and community development) refers to various cultural activities and the City Council's Culture Strategy.

While it would be possible to say more about certain other non- land use spatial initiatives, the Council considers that this would add little to the plan and would quickly date since many of these programmes tend to be short term projects. In the interests of preparing a relatively succinct and easy to read plan, the Core Strategy therefore concentrates on those issues where it can make most of a difference.