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| Oxford Core Strategy Examination Statement of Oxford City Council | |  |
| C/M10/2 | Matter 10 – Built and Natural Environments Issue 2 – The Built Environment | |

- i) **Does the Core Strategy give proper and appropriate recognition to the exceptional quality of much of the built environment including the historic environment and views?**

The exceptional quality of much of the built environment is recognised in the second of the key challenges listed on page 16 and 17. The unique and historic nature of much of Oxford’s built environment is fundamental to the approach adopted in Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy and the supporting text to that policy on pages 86-88. The Core Strategy also includes a commitment to prepare a Heritage Plan (page 88 – Implementation section).

With regard to views, reference to views of the historic centre are included in the third criterion of Policy CS19 and the view cones are identified on Figure 14 and on the Proposals map. The view cones policy – which seeks to identify and safeguard the main views of the historic centre - is a saved policy in the adopted Local Plan (CD7/6).

The view cones policy may be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Development Management DPD; a study into view cones is currently being produced and is due to be completed in March 2010 – the outcome of this study will have a bearing on any revision of the policy.

- ii) **Is the level of guidance given appropriate for this Core Strategy?**

The level of guidance is considered appropriate. In view of the need for concise and clear policy framework, the Core Strategy does not provide detailed descriptions of the built and landscape character of individual areas of Oxford. Policy CS19, however, seeks to combine established principles of good urban design with the strong emphasis on conservation that Oxford requires. It is considered to be a strong policy with clear guidance on the criteria that need to be considered on individual proposals.

There are a wide variety of ways of categorising the areas of Oxford in terms of their character and typical architectural and landscape features – for example, in terms of Oxford’s “urban villages”, in terms of the many Landscape/Townscape Character Areas identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (CD15/8) and in terms of

the main centres identified. Additionally, much of Oxford – including many areas outside of the City Centre boundary and outside of the boundaries of designated Conservation Areas – is of a high quality/value in terms of its architecture or townscape.

In view of these factors, it was decided that the most practical appropriate way of providing a clear policy framework was through a broad city-wide policy with linkages to the relevant supporting information, as opposed to a more descriptive, area-based approach. Applications for development in Oxford will need to be considered on a site-by-site basis with reference to the specific townscape and landscape considerations that apply in that area. The Landscape Character Assessment helps to draw out the features that create the special character of each area. The City Council is well resourced in terms of Conservation professionals who are able to provide advice on these matters.

Where improvements to the physical environment are considered necessary, the main area-specific outputs that will be sought are set out in the Regeneration areas section.

The Development Management DPD and the Site Allocations DPD will provide more detailed policies relating to regeneration, conservation and the design principles that will guide development on allocated sites.