

Quality of essential services and facilities

This topic addresses:

SA Objective:

(7) To provide accessible essential services and facilities

SEA Theme: Material assets

Introduction

There are a range of services and facilities that together offer residents (and employees and visitors to Oxford) the amenities that are required for a good quality of life. This paper looks at primary healthcare, education, community and selected other facilities. It compiles data on accessibility and quality. Oxford is a relatively small city and fairly compact. It is also self-sufficient in terms of essential services and facilities, both residents of Oxford and residents of the surrounding area can find a range of essential services and facilities within the city boundary. For residents these facilities are generally within a short journey by public transport or a relatively short walk.

Plans, Policies and Programmes

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF states that alongside the economic and environmental dimensions there is an important social dimension to sustainable development. The planning system should seek to support: *“strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;”* (paragraph 7)

The NPPF also states that: *“To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- *plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- *ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”* (paragraph 70)

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Strategy for 2014/15-2018/19 and Implementation Plan for 2014/15-2015/16

The CCG has set out five year vision for the Oxfordshire health and social care system. Several elements of this vision are relevant to the Local Plan:

- Delivering fully integrated care, close to home, for the frail elderly and people with multiple physical and/or mental health needs.

- A primary care service that is driving development and delivery of this integrated care, and is itself offering a broader range of services at a different scale.
- Routinely enabling people to live well at home and to avoid admission to hospital when this is in their best interests.
- Be continuing to provide preventative care and to tackle health inequalities for patients and carers in both its urban and rural communities.

The CCG is aiming to reduce the amount of time spent avoidably in hospital through the provision of better integrated care in the community. To achieve this they will increase investment in primary care and in community services and aim to *“deliver a substantial shift in activity and resources from acute services into community and primary care.”*

Oxford City Council’s Community Centres Strategy 2016-2020

The strategy classifies facilities in three tiers. The top tier are community hubs which are multi-functional community facilities, the next tier are smaller community centres, or community halls with the final tier being rooms for hire, either owned by the Council or other organisations.

The strategy identifies eight priority themes:

Improving Facilities:

1. Establish Rose Hill as a vibrant, inclusive community hub.
2. Draw up development plans for the Blackbird Leys and Barton Community Centres aimed at widening and improving the range of functions and activities which they offer, and securing effective community involvement in the management of these centres.
3. Work with the Reference Group to extend and improve the range of activities offered at the East Oxford Community Centre, and to consider the results of the feasibility study into its future physical shape and functions.
4. Develop a prioritised maintenance plan for all centres with a five year time horizon.

Sustainable management:

5. Review ways in which those centres that are currently managed by the City Council can be effectively managed in future on a long term and stable basis with strong community involvement.
6. Review the current lease arrangements for each centre and place on a long term stable basis.
7. Support Associations in developing management skills and expertise and in recruiting volunteers to run the centres’ activities.
8. Support Associations to recruit and retain trustees and manage their buildings.

Oxford City Council’s Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020

In 2009 the City Council entered into a partnership with Fusion Lifestyle to manage its leisure centres. The strategy notes that: *“From a low base, our sport development function and all five of our leisure centres have achieved QUEST (the UK’s quality scheme for sport and leisure) along with significant sport and leisure infrastructure improvements. Since the leisure contract commenced facilities have been greatly improved with around £14.4 million of investment...Participation in the city’s leisure centres has increased by over 53% and Oxford has had the third highest increase in adult participation nationally.”*

The strategy has three key objectives:

- Objective 1 - A world-class leisure offer
- Objective 2 – Our focus sports – more people, more active, more often
- Objective 3 – Partnership working

Royal Mail Strategy¹

This strategy recognises that Royal Mail will need to be flexible to meet changing customer demands. Initiatives relevant to the Local Plan include:

- Extending our Local Collect network to enquiry offices, providing over 11,700 collection points across the UK
- Investing in our enquiry offices to enhance customer experience
- Improving access to our products and services by providing later acceptance times and weekend processing in mail centres, increasing services in enquiry offices and extending opening hours

The current situation

Overall geographical coverage

A range of the services and facilities that provide for the needs of the city have been quantified and mapped and where possible qualitative data has been gathered. The assessments below are in the main, made on a postcode basis. There are 4 postcode sectors that cover the city: OX1 (the city centre), OX2 (North Oxford), OX3 (North East Oxford) and OX4 (South East Oxford).

Figure 6.8.1 below identifies the number of each facility in a postcode sector and a calculation to assess the number of people resident in that sector per facility. Note the calculation has not been carried out for secondary schools or leisure centres as both these facilities have much wider catchments.

Figure 6.8.1: Numbers of facilities per area and per head of population

Population	OX1		OX2		OX3		OX4	
	17,730		31,201		39,060		63,915	
Facility/service	Total	People per facility						
G.P. Practice	6	2,955	5	6,240	7	5,580	8	7,989
Dental Practice	5	3,546	2	15,601	10	3,906	9	7,102
Pharmacy	3	5,910	7	4,457	8	4,883	16	3,995
Primary School	2	8,865	7	4,457	9	4,340	14	4,565
Secondary School	0		2		1		2	
Community Centre	2	8,865	5	6,240	8	4,883	13	4,917
Leisure Centre	2		1		1		1	
Children's Centre	1	17,730	2	15,601	3	13,020	4	15,979
Pub	49	362	27	1,156	22	1,775	46	1,389
Post Office	2	8,865	5	6,240	5	7,812	6	10,653

G.P. practices

In total there are 27 NHS G.P. Practices in the city, but it is important to note that most (if not all) practices have more than one G.P. In terms of qualitative data, the NHS provides information from a patient satisfaction survey "Would you recommend this surgery?" (a measure of quality) and on whether practices are accepting new patients (a measure of access).

¹ <http://www.royalmailgroup.com/about-us/our-strategy>

In the postcode sector OX1 there are six practices, all of which are accepting new patients; in terms of patient satisfaction they scored 94%, 93%, 89%, 86%, 79% and 60%. In the postcode sector OX2 there are five practices, four of which are accepting new patients; in terms of patient satisfaction they scored 82%, 77%, 76% and 71% (no score available for the fifth surgery). In the postcode sector OX3 there are seven practices, all of which are accepting new patients; in terms of patient satisfaction they scored 91%, 85%, 82%, 79%, 79%, 76% and 71%. In the postcode sector OX4 there are eight practices, all of which are accepting new patients; in terms of patient satisfaction they scored 88%, 87%, 85%, 83%, 76%, 71%, 69% and 65%.

Dental practices

In total there are 26 NHS dental practices in the city, but as with G.P. practices, it is important to note that most (if not all) practices have more than one dentist. In terms of qualitative data, the NHS provides information on whether practices are accepting new patients of different types (a measure of access). There are three categories of patient in this regard: new fee paying adults, new charge exempt adults, and new children.

In the postcode sector OX1 there are five practices, only one is taking on new adults as patients (both fee paying and non-fee paying) and three are taking on new children. In the postcode sector OX2 there are two practices, only one is taking on new adults as patients (both fee paying and non-fee paying) and both are taking on new children. In the postcode sector OX3 there are ten practices, five are taking on new adults as patients (both fee paying and non-fee paying) and five are taking on new children. In the postcode sector OX4 there are nine practices, six are taking on new adults as patients (both fee paying and non-fee paying) and five are taking on new children.

Pharmacies

There is no qualitative data for pharmacies, however in postcode sector OX1 there are three pharmacies; in OX2 there are seven; in OX3 there are eight; and in OX4 there are sixteen.

Primary schools

Firstly, it is important to note in Figure 6.8.1 above that the calculation is made on the basis of total population, not of children of primary school age alone. In terms of qualitative data, information can be gathered in terms of Ofsted rating (a measure of quality, taken from the Ofsted website) and in terms of admissions (a measure of accessibility, taken from the County Council website).

In the postcode sector OX1 there are two primary schools, both have Ofsted ratings of "Good" (the second best of four standards). Both of the schools were undersubscribed (all those who expressed a first place preference for a place at these schools in the 2016 intake were accepted).

In the postcode sector OX2 there are seven primary schools, five have Ofsted ratings of "Good", one is ranked as "requires improvement" (the third best of four standards) and there is no rating available for the seventh. Five of these schools were undersubscribed (all those who expressed a first place preference for a place at these schools in the 2016 intake were accepted) and the other two accepted 67% and 83% of first place preference applications.

In the postcode sector OX3 there are nine primary schools, seven have Ofsted ratings of "Good", one is "outstanding" (the highest standard) and there is no rating available for the ninth. Five of the schools were undersubscribed (all those who expressed a first place preference for a place at these schools in the 2016 intake were accepted) and the other four schools accepted 93%, 76%, 62% and 52% of first place preference applications.

In the postcode sector OX4 there are fourteen primary schools, five have Ofsted ratings of “Good”, four are rated as “requires improvement”, three are rated as “inadequate” (the lowest of four standards) and there is no rating available for the other two. Six of the schools were undersubscribed (all those who expressed a first place preference for a place at these schools in the 2016 intake were accepted) and the other schools accepted 93%, 91%, 88%, 85%, 84%, 82%, 78% and 70% of first place preference applications.

Secondary schools

The same data is available for secondary schools although these operate on a much wider catchment area than the other types of facilities and so are not analysed on a postcode sector basis.

In the city there are four secondary schools although there is an additional school just outside the boundary that serves a large number of pupils resident in the city and so it is also included in this analysis, making five secondary schools in all. Of these schools two have an Ofsted rating of “good”, one of “requires improvement” and there is no Ofsted rating available for the other two.

Community centres

In terms of qualitative data the City Council has recently commissioned consultants to carry out an assessment of community centres in order to inform the city’s Community Centre Strategy. That assessment was not so much an assessment of quality of service but an assessment of centre’s impact in areas of strategic importance. The higher the score out of 8 the more strategically important the centre was assessed to be. *“The criteria used to determine the overall ranking of each centre are based exclusively on the location of the centres and the extent to which they serve a catchment of strategic importance (i.e. without any other coverage and / or areas of high relative deprivation). These are “Exclusivity of catchment” and “Coverage of deprived areas.” The scores are combined to create an overall score used to rank the centres.”*

In the postcode sector OX1 there are two community centres, one owned by the city council and one not; they scored 4 and 5 out of 8 in the assessment. In the postcode sector OX2 there are five community centres, four owned by the city council and one not; they scored 1, 2, 2, 2 and 6 out of 8 in the assessment. In the postcode sector OX3 there are eight community centres, five owned by the city council and three not; they scored 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4 and 7 out of 8 in the assessment. In the postcode sector OX4 there are thirteen community centres, ten are owned by the city council and three are not; they scored 1, 1, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6 and 7 out of 8 in the assessment.

In addition the community associations that run four of the centres have achieved the “visible” accreditation which is a quality system and standard for the charity and community sector.

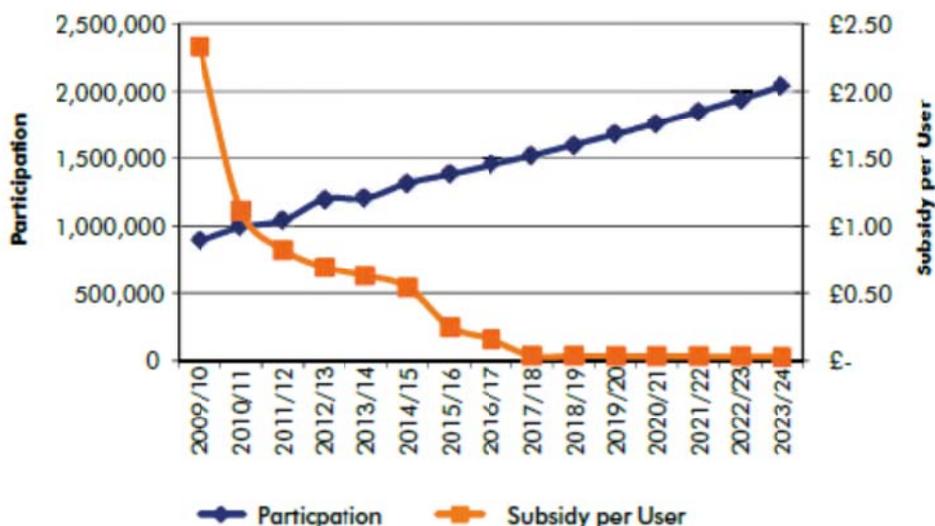
Leisure centres

As with secondary schools discussed above, leisure centres operate on a much wider catchment area than the other facilities and so are not analysed on a postcode sector basis. There are five facilities in the city run by the City Council’s partner Fusion. Three are leisure centres providing a range of sporting and leisure opportunities including swimming, one is an outdoor heated swimming facility and the other an indoor ice rink. All five of these facilities have achieved the Quest Quality Scheme for the management of leisure facilities which sets industry standards and good practice.

Figure 6.8.2 below illustrates the recent and projected trend of increasing participation at these leisure centres and the associated reduction in subsidy per user.²

² Oxford City Council’s Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020

Figure 6.8.2: Participation rates and user subsidy at Council owned Leisure Centres



Children’s centres

As with schools, children’s centres are subject to inspection by Ofsted and so the Ofsted rating is a measure of quality. In the postcode sector OX1 there is one children’s centre with an Ofsted rating of “Good” (the second best of four standards). In the postcode sector OX2 there are two children’s centres, both with an Ofsted rating of “Good”. In the postcode sector OX3 there are three children’s centres, two with an Ofsted rating of “Good” and the third with “satisfactory” (this was the third best ranking of four, this rating has now been renamed “requires improvement”). In the postcode sector OX4 there are four children’s centres, two with an Ofsted rating of “Good” and two with “satisfactory”/ “requires improvement”.

Public houses

Qualitative data on public houses is difficult to secure, there are various ratings websites where users can rate their experience but these do not give full coverage and can be misleading where there is not a sufficient pool of reviews. Instead it seems appropriate to assess access in terms of a calculation of the number of people per pub.

Figure 6.8.3 Calculation of people per public house (based on total population)

OX1		OX2		OX3		OX4	
Population:17,730		Population: 31,201		Population:39,060		Population: 63,915	
Total no. of pubs	People per pub	Total no. of pubs	People per pub	Total no. of pubs	People per pub	Total no. of pubs	People per pub
49	362	27	1,156	22	1,775	46	1,389

Across the city, according to the business rates register, there are 147 pubs. Using the total population in the 2011 census of 152,000 residents, there are 1,034 people per pub. If under 19’s are discounted (the closest data threshold to the legal drinking age) there are 115,000 people in the city which would equate to 782 people per pub.

Post offices

There is no qualitative data on post offices; however in postcode sector OX1 there are two post offices, in OX2 there are five, in OX3 there are also five and in OX4 there are six.

Likely trends without a new Local Plan

Health services: there is nationally some pressure on G.P. services, the trend appears to be that G.P. practices combine or co-locate into larger groupings to serve wider areas. This trend is supported by the move towards locating some of the out-patient services more traditionally located at local hospitals at G.P. practices as outlined in the CCG strategy.

Schools: the number of pupils nationally and in Oxford has been growing in recent years putting extra pressure on school places. The County Council has had a programme of expanding schools and a new school will come online as part of the Barton Park development in September 2019. With changes in central government policy encouraging academies and free schools (with autonomy from County Council control) all new schools will be academies or free schools and more existing schools are likely to become academies.

Community centres: The City Council's strategy is to invest in improvements particularly to those top tier (more strategic importance) centres and to work to find sustainable management solutions in order to increase the offer of services available and encourage greater use.

Leisure Centres: the City Council with its partner Fusion has been investing in improvements to the city's leisure centres, the trend will continue to be investment and improvement in existing facilities rather than new additional facilities. Figure 6.8.2 projects past trends on usage forward to 2023/24.

Children's Centres: there has been a well-publicised debate about the future of children's centres in Oxfordshire as the County Council looks for alternative ways to resource its facilities. At a County Council meeting in May 2016, the Cabinet agreed to: (a) develop three outreach centres (Barton, Rose Hill and Blackbird Leys) and a shared locality base (East Oxford Early Intervention Hub/Children's Centre in Cowley). Several of these centres are likely to also offer child care on site.

Pubs: the campaign group CAMRA claim that nationally 27 pubs are closing every week. It is claimed that pressures from the smoking ban and the cost of alcohol in supermarkets are part of the reason for this pattern; it is likely that these two factors will continue and so is possible that this downward trend will also. Across the country, over 600 pubs have been nominated as Assets of Community Value which triggers a moratorium on any sale, with the idea that local people bid to buy the pub. In Oxford 5 pubs have been listed as such (with more applications being processed), it is likely that this will continue in the future as campaign groups promote the process.

Post offices: in recent years the Post Office has started to move away from providing services in their own premises and towards co-locating services within shops or other premises for example. Recent campaigns indicate that the public still highly values local post office services and so this co-location may become more common.

Sustainability / Plan issues

- Availability of services and facilities play a key role in the quality of life for residents and others, the plan will need to ensure that existing and new residents can enjoy good access to quality facilities
- Because of increased population and related journeys, it will become even more important to ensure that such facilities are easy to access for all by walking, cycling and public transport
- Trend for expanded ranges of services provided locally (for example in healthcare), and pressures on public spending will mean that opportunities should be sought for co-location of facilities