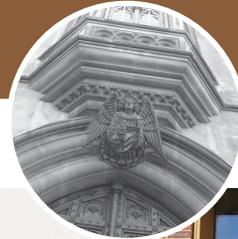


CHAPTER THREE
A PROSPEROUS CITY WITH A
GLOBALLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN
LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE AND
INNOVATION



INTRODUCTION AND WIDER CONTEXT

- 3.1 Oxford's economy is shaped by the presence of its two successful universities. The city is a major centre for teaching hospitals and is home to several acute and specialist medical research organisations. The presence of these organisations together in Oxford brings a number of benefits to the city's economy. Oxford is an attractive location for a range of companies and is in a position to foster home-grown spin-out businesses because of the existing research capabilities, the ready supply of graduates and the clustering effect of organisations with close ties in a number of related areas being closely located with one another. Work that's happening in Oxford is helping to find solutions to global problems such as the Covid pandemic and climate change. Oxford's economy makes a vital contribution to the regional and national economy and is important in contributing to economic recovery.
- 3.2 The pandemic had an immediate impact on the way in which we work, with many office-based workers able to maintain productivity by working from home. However, this approach was not necessarily suitable for all sectors, including those working in life sciences, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism or other sectors where workers physically needed to go to a place of work. These sectors all need space to work, and it is important that that we look at a number of approaches as to how best to manage delivery of employment space in the city.
- 3.3 In spite of the increase in working from home, the office market has remained strong in Oxford; however traditional office professional service business occupiers are reducing their overall footprint requirements as companies adopt flexible working practices. Demand is led by research and development and lab spaces. This rapid take-up of research and development in Oxford, with a shift from offices towards spin out research and development and life science companies, has meant that office space is being refurbished to research and development and wet lab spaces.
- 3.4 Oxford is the most sustainable location for employment in the county and it is easier to build a sustainable transport system to take people to jobs here than if employment is scattered to less sustainable locations. This effect is increased with greater hybrid working as more occasional visits to workplaces are less able to be supported by public transport and a concentration of employment with other attractions helps overcome this issue.
- 3.5 The demand for employment space in Oxford remains very high. Oxford's key strengths are in research and development and there are benefits locally, regionally and nationally of encouraging this.



POLICY OPTION SET E1: EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

a Option for policy approach

Attempt to meet employment needs, but prioritise other uses, in particular housing, rather than employment, even if employment needs cannot be met in full within the city. This would mean making the best use of the city and district centres and existing prime employment sites, primarily through the delivery of continued employment uses at these locations. It could also mean allowing an element of housing to come forward on employment sites.

See following options - Policy Option Set E2: Making Best Use of Existing Employment Sites; Policy Option Set E3: Allowing housing on existing employment sites; Policy Option Set E4: Location of new employment uses.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Whilst it is not possible to truly 'balance' housing and jobs, because it is not realistic to assume the majority of people will live their lives confined by Oxford's boundaries, there are benefits to an overall approach focusing on allocating new sites for housing and focussing on an approach of intensification and modernisation at existing employment sites (as opposed to allocating new employment sites through the Local Plan) in the city at the current time. This would help reduce problems created by significant in-commuting. Also, employers have reported significant difficulties attracting and retaining staff because of a lack of housing and its expense. To help current employers maintain their success may require a focus on new site allocations for housing and potentially allowing elements of existing employment sites to be converted to housing.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This approach would mean some employment need would need to be met outside the city, and a strategy for meeting those needs across Oxfordshire would ideally need to be agreed through joint working. If that does not happen, there will not be a strategic approach to meeting those needs.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach

Allow growth of employment-generating uses throughout the city, including on sites not already in that use and outside of the city and district centres, to try to meet all forecast need within the city.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Oxford's economy makes an important contribution locally, regionally and nationally, and this approach acknowledges that strength and focuses on it.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Currently, the demand for these uses seems to be particularly high and without being managed it is likely that schemes would come up across the city, at the expense of other uses, in particular housing. This would further worsen issues with in-commuting and unaffordability of housing, which does in turn affect employers.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option



C Option for policy approach

Focus on Oxford providing a broad employment base, trying to protect a wide range of employment-generating uses including those that do not make efficient use of land. This would include protection of warehouse sites and small light-industrial sites, for example, as well as key sites such as the MINI Plant Oxford and Science Area.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This would allow a wide variety of entry points into the labour market, helping overcome issues with people being or feeling excluded from the Oxford labour market.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

It is likely that many of the lower-value employment uses would not be able to afford to be in Oxford. Many may be better located on other parts of the trunk-road system and this approach would not prevent uses that generate a lot of traffic and HGV traffic coming near to where significant numbers of people live in close proximity.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

MAKING BEST USE OF EMPLOYMENT SITES

- 3.6 Traditionally, Oxford has needed to protect its employment sites to prevent losses to higher value uses, which in the past have often been residential in nature. More recently, higher value uses in the city are related to research and development and the importance of delivery of these uses has been prioritised nationally through incentives and linkages to increases in productivity. The preferred economic strategy encourages Oxford to build on its key strengths in life sciences, research and development, while aiming to meet the city's overall employment needs in a way that enables a diverse economy.
- 3.7 One of the guiding principles from the City Council's recently adopted Economic Strategy 2022-32 sets out the importance of increasing the local economic value of knowledge and innovation through retaining a greater proportion of spin-out companies that start up in the city. There is a need to focus on creating appropriate spaces to allow the effective start-up and expansion of these firms. Ultimately a proportion of these firms may locate elsewhere but by providing suitable spaces for these firms to grow and prosper, Oxford maintains its role as an engine for the wider economy to thrive.
- 3.8 Changes to the Use Classes Order mean that what were previously Use Class B1, (offices, research and development and light industrial uses) now form part of Use Class E. Use Class E – Commercial, Business and Services now covers a much broader range of what can be described as 'town centre uses' including shops, banks, restaurants and clinics. Planning permission is not required to change between any Use Class E use unless an alteration is made to the building. It is worth noting that Use Classes B2 and B8 were not impacted by these changes. This increases the flexibility of uses that can be provided on allocated employment sites where that employment is now in Use Class E. Protection of employment sites (in Use Class E that are important for the local economy) is weakened by these changes. It also means that in developing any policy directing where new employment uses can go, consideration needs to be given to the alternative uses that these can change into, and the suitability of the sites for those uses.
- 3.9 Some well-performing employment sites that support the city's local economy (which often include a mix of Use Class E and B2 employment uses) may come under pressure for redevelopment to higher value employment uses. Given the permissive changes within Use Class E of the Use Classes Order, there is likely to be limited protection that can be afforded to these sites through the planning system. However, there is an opportunity to provide protection for locally important employment sites outside of Use Class E (i.e. those in Use Class B2).

- 3.10 There are also employment sites which may be poorly located or not performing well. If another legally compatible use is sought on such a site there is a limited amount that the planning system can do to prevent that use coming forward, however the City Council would support the loss of these poorly performing employment sites to other priority uses (e.g. housing).
- 3.11 There are a number of areas of the city where business and innovation sectors are clustered. These sites play an important role individually, and collectively they contribute to economic growth nationally, regionally and to the local economy. They include the Oxford Science Park, Business Park, Old Road Campus, the Hospital sites, Oxford Science Area and Keble Road, and the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, and Oxford North which is now being built out and the forthcoming West End Innovation District.
- 3.12 Manufacturing plays an important role in the economy too. Oxford sits at the centre of a £6bn automotive cluster, dubbed 'Motorsport Valley' and MINI Plant Oxford is a major industrial employer in the city. MINI Plant Oxford accounts for nearly half of all industrial space city-wide⁴. Retail and 'third sector' jobs in the Oxford also make an important contribution to the economy.
- 3.13 Economic diversity can provide a more stable path to equitable growth and development. In this way, providing support for Oxford's economic assets needs to enable both appropriately located high value economic uses which benefit the national and even the global economy, and to protect those uses which are vital to Oxford's local economy.
- 3.14 The changes to the Use Classes Order mean that, even on sites protected for employment-generating uses, offices may change freely to any other commercial use.

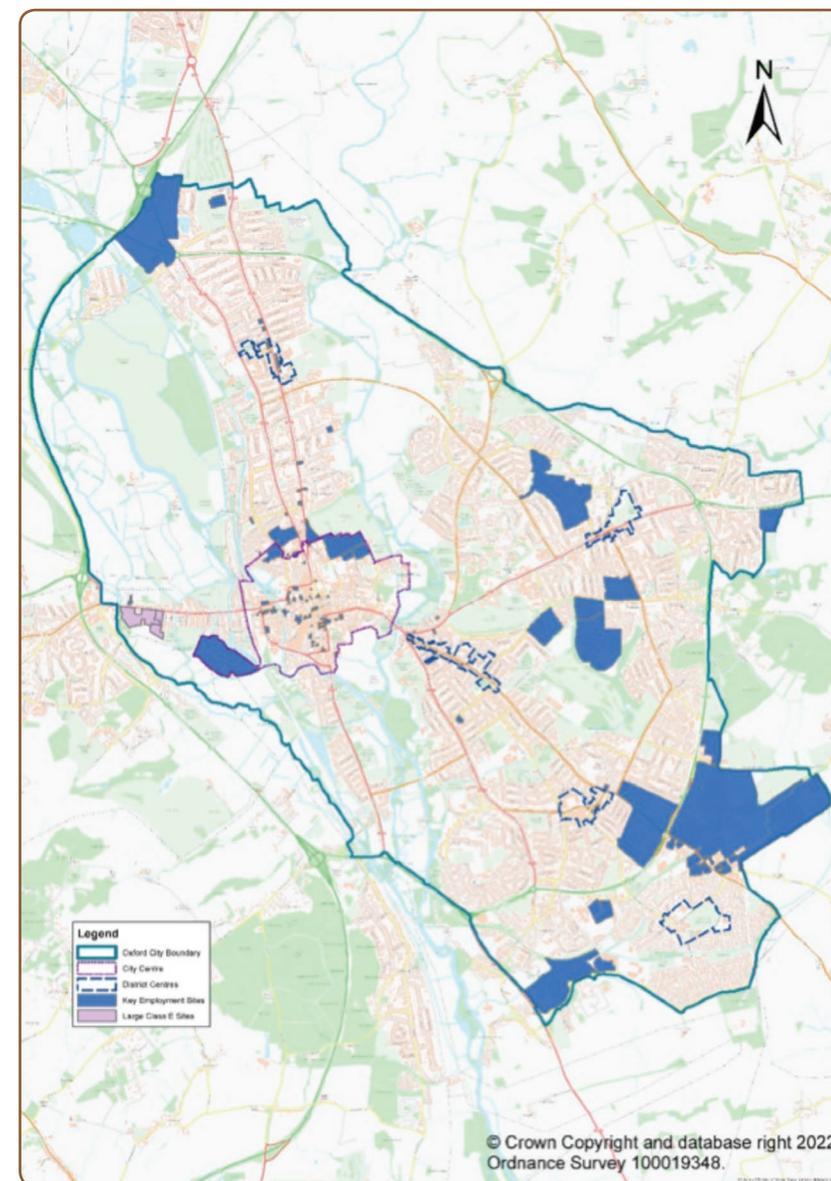


Figure 3-1: Local Plan 2036 Protected Employment sites

⁴ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20238/oxfords_economy/945/oxfords_business_sectors/5s

POLICY OPTION SET E2: MAKING BEST USE OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES

a Option for policy approach

Seek to meet employment needs on Category 1 and 2 sites, which are named in the plan (and may be Use Class E or B2), by intensification, modernisation and regeneration of these sites.

Where Category 3 sites become available for redevelopment, their complete loss to housing should be considered acceptable providing account is taken of certain specified objectives.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Focus on support for employment sites that align with Oxford's key strengths and protection for those which assist the local economy.

Has the potential to deliver sustainable transport solutions as intensification opportunities at existing sites are in known locations.

Allows some sites to be redeveloped for housing.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Widening of scope of Use Classes Order (Class E) to allow changes of uses without planning permission has the potential to diversify employment sites which means that such controls will be less effective.

Class E of the Use Classes Order also has the potential to deliver a range of town centre uses on Cat 3 employment sites without the need for planning permission.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach

Do not support the loss of any employment uses (Use Class E or B2) on any categorised employment site, including Category 3 sites, and encourage intensification, modernisation and regeneration of these existing employment sites.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Likely to further support economic objectives for the plan and could encourage a range of employment opportunities.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Increasing the scope of protection to include category 3 employment sites could result in employment opportunities coming forward outside of sustainable locations.

As above in relation to permitted development opportunities afforded by changes to the Use Classes Order (Class E).

Would protect employment sites at all costs against other uses, loss of potential sites for other uses.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

OXFORD
LOCAL
PLAN 2040



c **Option for policy approach**
Do not categorise sites. Instead, provide protection by Use Class, focusing on providing protection for locally important (Use Class B2 (manufacturing)) employment sites to ensure a broad economy. Do not try to prevent loss of Use Class E (office and light industrial, also including retail) (except in district centres for frontage policy C2), acknowledging that Use Class E is very broad and can change to residential use with prior approval anyway.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This would help keep a broad employment base by attempting to keep manufacturing sites in that use. This acknowledges that Use Class E sites can potentially be lost to residential through the prior approval process, and that not all are in what would be considered the most sustainable locations for those uses.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Not all sites in B2 use will be in suitable locations or making the most efficient use of land. Some may benefit from a change of use or addition of other uses. This approach does nothing to support the presence in Oxford of significant research and development sites where work is carried out looking for solutions to global problems such as the climate emergency and pandemics.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

d **Option for policy approach**
Rely solely on national policy and other policies within the plan.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Would allow flexibility to respond to market conditions.

This option would likely benefit higher value uses such as R&D.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This option would not actively protect employment sites and would let the market decide on the most appropriate employment opportunities in the city. This would lead to uncertainty and an inability to plan for meeting the employment needs of the city.

Important sites that contribute to Oxford's local economy could be lost to other uses.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

POLICY OPTION SET E3: ALLOWING HOUSING ON EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES

a Option for policy approach

Allow an element of housing delivery on existing employment sites (if other policy requirements, for example around flood risk, are met).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Locating housing close to jobs can bring benefits for local services and facilities and can mean that more of Oxford's housing need can be met within its boundary. This may help to meet Oxford's housing need and provides flexibility if circumstances and values change over time, even if owners and developers are not interested in introducing housing to their sites currently.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

It will be important to ensure that any new housing allowed on existing employment sites is done so while ensuring that the potential number of jobs exported out of the city is not increased.

Even if the policy approach is taken forward, it may not initially deliver results due to higher land values currently commanded by certain employment uses.

Oxford's economy is locally, regionally and nationally important and this approach could damage its functioning and contributions. Important employment sites include, for example, the Old Road Campus where important research takes place, and the hospitals which are important for health care treatment research, and these should be supported, not lost. Likely to result in a loss of locally specific employment opportunities to higher value uses, including high-value employment and other commercial uses. Narrowing the spread of employment opportunities in the city.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach

Maintain employment sites for employment or commercial uses. Do not further diversify uses to include housing as well.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Oxford is unable to meet all its employment needs and as such it is important to ensure that existing employment sites are protected for those uses and not diversified for other uses.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Important employment sites are unlikely to be lost to housing development as they are not always appropriate locations for housing development for example MINI Plant Oxford sites. However, some sites are suitable such as the hospital sites which already have housing for their own staff. By allowing housing on sites like this it enables key employers to recruit and retain staff which is so challenging when housing affordability is such a huge challenge to staff particularly those on lower pay grades who cannot afford to live in the city.

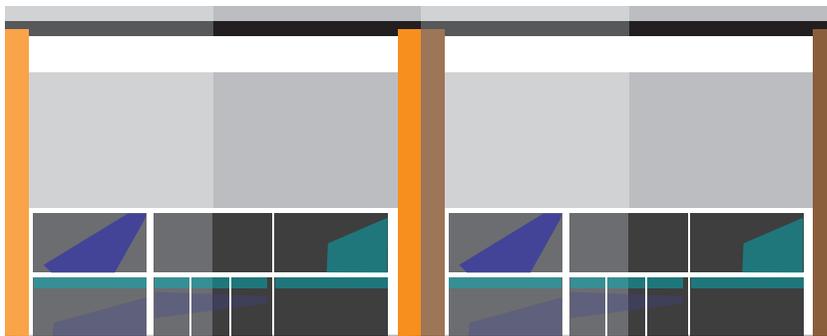
Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT USES

3.15 The location of new employment uses at existing employment sites, through intensification and modernisation opportunities, is an important way of ensuring that Oxford city attempts to meet employment needs without using additional land in the city which could be used for other priority uses (including housing). There are a number of benefits to intensifying and modernising existing sites, which include infrastructure improvements (e.g. sustainable transport solutions), efficient use of land, and clustering benefits of locating new employment uses close to one another.

3.16 Certain employment uses (offices, light industrial) now fall within Use Class E of the Use Classes Order and as such do not need planning permission to change to and from uses within the same Use Class. The city and district centres are sustainable locations for town centre uses (as defined in national policy) which includes Use Class E office uses. New employment uses could also occur where there is an existing lawful employment use without the need for planning permission. However, outside of the sustainable locations of the city and district centres, and outside of sites already in lawful use, it is possible to prevent loss of other uses, which are also important, particularly housing, to employment uses.



POLICY OPTION SET E4: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT USES

a Option for policy approach

Support new employment uses through intensification and modernisation of existing sites, including hospitals and universities, other Category 1 and 2 employment sites (E.g. supporting office and R&D in Oxford's West End and recognising innovation clusters such as the Business Park, Science Park Oxford North and Old Road Campus), together with the city and district centres (subject to the role and function of each respective centre).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Would retain geographic focus of employment uses in existing centres and employment locations.

This may provide capacity for much of the employment space needed without requiring additional land which could be used for other purposes.

Intensification and modernisation of existing Category 1 and 2 sites could bring connectivity and infrastructure benefits. By considering the city's employment areas spatially, it provides opportunity for linkages between sites which can bring integrated infrastructure benefits, e.g. sustainable movement opportunities.

The creation of a spatial dimension to Oxford's economic assets is likely to assist with integrated infrastructure delivery (e.g. improved movement opportunities for between sites) as well as helping Oxford build on its economic strengths. Benefits to the city's economy due to maintaining good links between hospitals, teaching and research.

Seeks to intensify and redevelop existing sites which is likely to result in more efficient use of land.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

This approach encourages continuation of employment uses in their existing locations, which may not be the most ideal locations (for example the Science Park is not as easily accessible as a district centre location).

Focusing strongly on a few specific locations risks localised issues around transport impacts and neighbourliness or may not address existing issues.

The changes in Use Classes Order (to include certain employment uses within a wider bracket of town centre uses), means this approach may have limited value other than encouraging or supporting new employment or intensification opportunities in employment locations.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

b Option for policy approach
Do not allow any new employment-generating uses outside of existing sites (i.e. do not allow loss of existing housing sites outside of city and district centres to employment-generating uses).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This would likely lead to more employment sites coming forward for alternative uses, which could be beneficial for meeting those needs but detrimental in terms of meeting the economic needs of the city and providing a broad range of jobs and opportunities.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Restricting the number of employment sites would likely tilt the market further in favour of high value employment uses and lower value (but still valued) employment uses may miss out without specific policy provision (see affordable workspaces option below).

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

c Option for policy approach
As well as intensification on existing sites and in the city centre and district centres, allow new employment uses in a very few locations specified as suitable, which would be only adjacent to existing sites, potentially requiring this expansion to be part of mixed-use schemes only.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This approach would help to strengthen clusters and allow Oxford to build on its strengths. Allowing extensions to existing employment sites may be an appropriate use of land if their location supports a good mix of uses, but opportunities must be taken to meet housing needs also. This would be in limited locations if it could be shown as necessary to meet needs.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Actively supporting the creation of additional centres or extensions to existing sites could have potential negative impacts on the delivery of other uses including housing and much-needed affordable housing in the city.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

d Option for policy approach

Rely solely on national policy and other policies within the plan (e.g. hierarchy of centres) to determine proposals for new employment floorspace in the city.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

The market is likely to favour higher value uses such as R&D which are an important sector.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

The plan would be silent on considerations for proposals outside of existing sites. This would not provide any policy guidance on where new employment uses should be considered. Offices would be covered by any requirement for town centre uses to be in the city and district centres, but other employment uses would not have any guidance.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option (considered detrimental)

WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE (B8 USES)

- 3.17 These uses do not generally make intensive use of land and given the various competing demands on land in Oxford and the need to make efficient use of it, they are not always the most appropriate use within the city. For this reason, the current policy approach sets out that new B8 uses are only considered appropriate where the B8 use is essential to supporting the operational requirements of a Category 1 site, whereas the loss of B8 on any employment site is supported providing the B8 use is not essential to the support of a Category 1 employment site.
- 3.18 One key aim of the Local Plan 2040 is to support Oxford's transition to a zero-carbon future. The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership has produced a roadmap and action plan highlighting a number of important actions to help deliver a successful transition to Zero Carbon living by 2040 including to pilot "a number of freight consolidation centres around the edge of Oxford". It is important that the Local Plan 2040 policy approach does not prevent this from taking place as it most likely that these sites suitable for B8 uses could be considered as a suitable location for such centres.



POLICY OPTION SET E5: WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE USES

- a Option for policy approach**
New B8 uses on sites not already in the lawful use only allowed where use is essential to the operation of a Category 1 site.

Loss of B8 uses generally supported unless B8 use is essential for the support of a Category 1 site.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Prioritise land for more efficient and intensive employment generating uses.

Exception would enable the continued or enhanced operation of Category 1 sites where appropriate.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Without option b, this approach regarding location would not fully support ZCOP Action Plan ambitions.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with b)

- b Option for policy approach**
Introduce a specific exemption to option a to enable a pilot of a freight consolidation centre around the edge of Oxford.

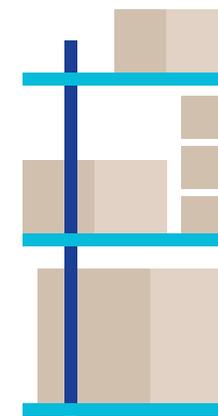
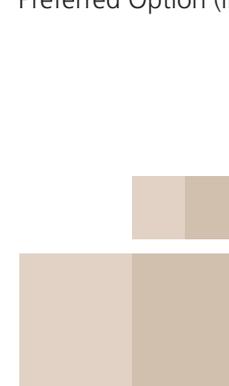
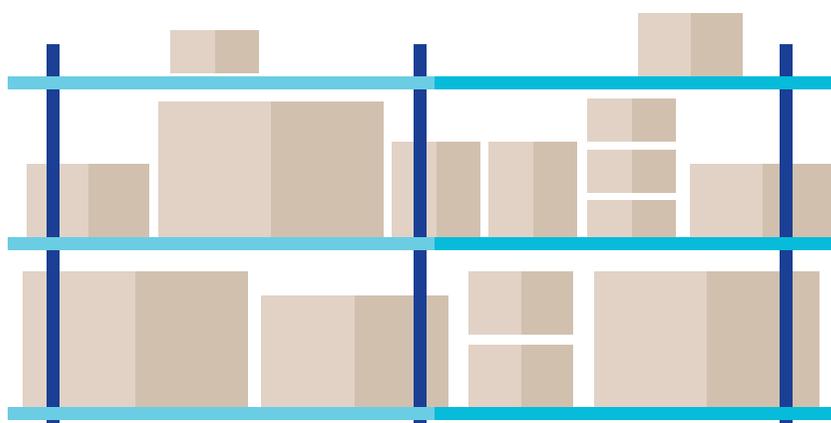
+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
This would enable LGV/ HGV freight to be moved to electric delivery vehicles, e-bikes and cargo-bikes. at the edge of the city, rather than petrol and diesel LGVs and HGVs moving into residential areas and the city centre for deliveries.

This would help to deliver City Council and partners' zero carbon partnership aims to decarbonise last mile deliveries in the city.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Any relaxation would need to be carefully managed to ensure it does not open up the potential for significant new storage facilities that do not make efficient use of land and that may not be well located in terms of the road network and avoiding congestion.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option (in combination with a)



c Option for policy approach
Further restrict creation of new B8 uses so they are generally not supported at all.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Further restriction of this inefficient land use could provide more land for priority uses.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Restricting B8 uses further in the city may result in potential difficulties for category 1 sites that rely on some B8 for their continued operation.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

d Option for policy approach
Allow B8 uses on other categories of employment sites in the city.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Could increase B8 uses on a range of sites in the city, providing services and a broader variety of jobs.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This approach would reduce the priority given to other uses that support the local, regional and national economy. It could bring B8, which often generates transport by HGV and LGV, into unsuitable areas. It allows this use which does not make best use of limited land.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

e Option for policy approach
Rely solely on national policy and other policies within the plan.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Could see an increase of B8 uses on a range of sites in the city, providing services and jobs.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Would neither actively restrict nor promote B8 uses in the city and would allow market forces to dictate the demand for B8 uses.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)





INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

3.19 One of the City Council's four priorities is to enable an inclusive economy⁵. There are many different factors that help support an "inclusive economy". The Local Plan can support this ambition by helping to deliver different types of employment space to support a more diverse economy, such as making provision for affordable workspaces, and encouraging investment in new skills and apprenticeships (e.g. through community employment plans).

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PLANS

3.20 Employment and Skills Plans/Community Employment Plans (ESPs/CEPs) have an important role to play in securing opportunities that arise from new development. In the operational phase of development, agreements to secure a proportion of the longer-term workforce or supply chain locally or commitments to community education and outreach can ensure ongoing benefits. In the construction phase they can provide opportunities for local people to be employed in the building industry (e.g. through apprenticeships/ training/ making links to local schools and colleges) or secure commitment from the developer to procuring material and labour locally. Another option is to commit to paying employees the Oxford Living Wage and only using contractors who pay this higher level than the National Living Wage.

⁵ Oxford City Council, Our Strategy 2020-24
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20328/our_strategy_2020-24

POLICY OPTION SET E6: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLANS

- a Option for policy approach**
Introduce a policy requiring applicants to submit an Employment and Skills Plan alongside major development proposals, which also looks at the potential for engagement with training and education.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Would introduce a partnership mechanism for securing community benefits from major development projects.

Would help deliver the aims of the Economic Strategy and implement part of the linked Action Plan.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This could be seen as an unnecessary or onerous requirement of developers.

Related options, conclusion
Preferred Option

- b Option for policy approach**
Encourage applicants to submit an Employment and Skills Plan alongside all major development proposals but do not make this a policy requirement.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
A voluntary approach would be flexible but applicants could still be encouraged to embark on ESP's to provide opportunities for local people as they saw fit.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
The voluntary approach is limited in scope and potential contribution that could be made. Measures set out in TAN are only presented as advice and guidance, no obligation to implement and no mechanism to monitor or enforce.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option

- c Option for policy approach**
Do not encourage or require applicants to submit an Employment and Skills Plan.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Increased flexibility for applicants.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
Removing encouragement from supporting text of plan may actively discourage applicants to submit Employment and Skills Plans.

Related options, conclusion
Alternative Option (considered detrimental)



AFFORDABLE WORKSPACES

- 3.21 The recently published Oxford Economic Strategy 2022-32 highlights the importance of affordable workspaces that support creative activity, social enterprise and co-operative businesses and local start-up as one of its guiding principles for an inclusive city. This would provide a more diverse employment base and give opportunities for these sectors to develop and grow. To foster this success and ensure it is widespread and lasting, affordable workspaces could be provided at rents maintained below the market rent. This would help a broader range of businesses locate in the city who may otherwise be forced out or unable to operate.
- 3.22 The Economic Strategy (June 2022) emphasises the importance of Oxford building on its economic strengths in key sectors such as research and development and life sciences. The close links between the universities, hospitals and businesses play an important role in bringing forward developments in life sciences and research and development, for example. It is important that Oxford focuses on its economic strengths but also important to maintain some diversity in the economy as this can not only enable positive economic growth and development but also, according to the World Trade Organisation⁶, can provide a more stable path for equitable growth and development.
- 3.23 While retaining a greater proportion of higher value spin-out and start-ups helps Oxford to build on its strengths, the City Council's Economic Strategy also highlights the importance of providing more affordable workspaces for small businesses to support creative activity, social enterprise, co-operative businesses and local start-ups in the city. Providing affordable workspaces for these types of businesses is likely to help diversify the city's economy which can help to bring more equitable growth and prosperity to the city. The affordable workspace secured should be provided on-site and be designed to meet a local need for office, light industrial or research and development workspace. There may be different routes to how it is made available. It will be important to have some management of which businesses take up the space, to ensure it does meet the identified needs and objectives, an option may be for the City Council to manage an approved list of affordable workspace providers who will lease and manage it.

⁶ https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/aid4trade19_chap5_e.pdf

POLICY OPTION SET E7: AFFORDABLE WORKSPACES

- a Option for policy approach**
Introduce a policy requirement for affordable workspaces to be delivered as a percentage of all large commercial development in Use Class E (threshold to be set, but this will be large schemes, likely above the minimum size of major applications).

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Likely to be the approach which would secure the most affordable workspace and help facilitate an inclusive and diverse economy.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
A new policy approach would need rigorous testing and may be considered onerous. This approach will need a clear mechanism and viability evidence will be needed to inform any policy requirements.

Related options, conclusion
Option

- b Option for policy approach**
Introduce text in the local plan encouraging employers to deliver affordable workspace in the city.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Maintains a flexible approach for developers.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
No policy requirement would likely deliver affordable workspaces only where there is a strong commitment or desire from landowners/ developers.

Related options, conclusion
Option

- c Option for policy approach**
Do not incorporate the concept of affordable workspace in the Local Plan.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach
Leaves the market to determine what type of employment space is provided.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach
This could be a missed opportunity to address the issue of unaffordable workspaces in the city and therefore to help secure an inclusive economy.

Related options, conclusion
Option





TOURISM

- 3.24 Tourism plays an important role in Oxford's economy. According to Experience Oxfordshire, in 2019, tourism generated around £988m for the city's economy from 7.8m visitors to the city, of which just over 84% were day visitors. Before the pandemic, Oxford had a strong tourism sector with 14% of all the jobs in the city being tourism-related in 2019, when there were around 7.8 million visitors to the city. The tourism sector (and hospitality) was impacted by the pandemic; however, we have not yet had a full year of "being open" and neither have some of the countries from where visitors originate. It is expected, over the lifetime of the plan, that the tourism sector will recover and return to pre-pandemic levels. It will be important to support the recovery of sectors such as these which are important to the vitality and function of a city such as Oxford.
- 3.25 Oxford has many short-stay visitors, often visiting for a day or only a few hours, which has fewer benefits for the local economy. Tourists and visitors help support facilities and attractions such as theatres, cinemas and the ice rink. Visitors can also help support local restaurants, cafes, etc. which is beneficial to residents who can enjoy a greater range of facilities. Tourists who stay longer are likely to bring more to the local economy, but to enable that requires more provision of tourist accommodation. New hotels must not harm amenity of local residents or generate car traffic. Many tourists travel by coach and managing the impacts of coaches in a compact city is challenging.

SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION (HOTELS AND GUEST-HOUSES)

POLICY OPTION SET E8: SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION (HOTELS AND GUEST-HOUSES) (NEW ACCOMMODATION)

a Option for policy approach

Allow new sites for holiday and other short-stay accommodation in the city and district centres, on allocated sites and on Oxford's main arterial roads only.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Approach would continue to encourage new short-stay accommodation in sustainable and accessible locations.

Likely to benefit Oxford's economy through supporting a higher percentage of Oxford's visitors to stay overnight.

Potential to enhance the vibrancy of the city and district centres by allowing tourist accommodation to be located here.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Potential for increases in traffic along arterial roads and potential risk that this use could become dominant in locations supported by the policy.

Related options, conclusion

Option

b Option for policy approach

Allow new short-stay accommodation in the city and district centres, and on allocated sites only.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Approach would continue to encourage new short-stay accommodation in sustainable and accessible locations and provide control over which sites outside of these areas were appropriate to deliver short-stay accommodation.

Potential to enhance the vibrancy of the city and district centres by allowing tourist accommodation to be located here.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

May increase pressure for town centre uses in city and district centres and reduce variety of uses in these locations.

Would reduce the number of locations where tourist accommodation is deemed appropriate, and it may not be possible to meet needs.

Related options, conclusion

Option



- c Option for policy approach**
Support new short-stay accommodation anywhere in Oxford.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Would increase the amount of potential locations where short-stay accommodation is deemed appropriate. This is likely to encourage overnight stays in Oxford which is likely to have positive benefits for Oxford's economy.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Allowing short-stay accommodation across Oxford could result in sites being developed that are poorly located in terms of potential traffic impacts or could have negative impacts on residential amenity, for example.

Could result in more accommodation being provided where other priority uses would have been appropriate.

Related options, conclusion
Option (considered detrimental)

- d Option for policy approach**
Seek to resist new short-stay accommodation anywhere in the city.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This option would likely enable more sites to be developed to enable delivery of other priorities for Oxford (e.g. housing and employment).

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Likely to encourage more tourists to only opt to visit Oxford for the day rather than encouraging more overnight stays and increasing visitors to Oxford. Potential harm to Oxford's economy and likely to hamper Oxford's long-term tourism objectives.

Related options, conclusion
Option (considered detrimental)

- e Option for policy approach**
Do not include a policy on new short-stay accommodation in the city.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Reliant on other policies to bring about positive impacts for development of new tourist attractions.

- 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
Option (considered detrimental)

SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION (HOTELS AND GUEST-HOUSES) (EXISTING ACCOMMODATION)

POLICY OPTION SET E9: SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION (HOTELS AND GUEST-HOUSES) (EXISTING ACCOMMODATION)

a Option for policy approach

Do not include a policy protecting existing short-stay accommodation in the city and instead rely on other policies in the plan and national planning policies.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

This option would mean that Oxford is reliant solely on market forces to protect its existing stock of short stay accommodation. Whilst providing flexibility for developers, it would not necessarily help the city to achieve its wider tourism aims and objectives.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Could provide uncertainty for existing short-stay accommodation owners and occupiers and may not effectively promote Oxford's tourism objective of encouraging overnight visitation.

Related options, conclusion

Preferred Option

b Option for policy approach

Continue to seek to allow expansion of existing short-stay accommodation providing certain criteria are met.

Continue to seek to protect existing accommodation and allow loss only if specified criteria are met including either viability evidence or if the location is not one where new short stay accommodation would be allowed.

+ Potential positive consequences of the approach

Likely to provide support for Oxford's tourism economy by protecting existing facilities and allowing their expansion.

It is important to seek to prevent the loss of existing visitor accommodation to other uses because tourism is an important contributor to Oxford's day and evening economy.

- Potential negative/neutral consequences of the approach

Inclusion of criteria which must be met before a loss will be permitted (such as viability, marketing etc.) would ensure that existing sites that function poorly are not prevented from being redeveloped.

Related options, conclusion

Alternative Option

