



## West End & Osney Mead Area SPD

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

### Combined Screening & Scoping Report

Regulation 9 (1) (Screening) & Regulation 12(5) (Scoping)

Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regs 2004

**19 March 2021**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report has been produced to determine the need for, and consult on the scope and level of detail to be included for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations for the proposed West End & Osney Mead Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.2 The West End & Osney Mead Area SPD will be prepared by the City Council. The purpose of the SPD is to show developers what should be on the sites, including indications of the type and quantity and of different land uses, quality of infrastructure expected how land uses will be distributed across the area. The SPD will be supported by a technical evidence base which will inform its contents.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is twofold. Firstly to undertake a screening assessment that meets the requirements of the legislation, (the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI No. 1633)). The Regulations do not require an assessment of the planning merits of the proposals at this stage, instead the requirement is to ascertain whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. This process is completely distinct from the planning process and governed by an entirely different set of Environmental Regulations.
- 1.4 The purpose of this document is also to consult the consultation bodies on the level of detail of the information that must be included in the report (also known as scoping). The receipt of this report marks the start of the statutory consultation period in accordance with Regulation 12.
- 1.5 The policy framework for the West End & Osney Mead Area SPD is found in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 (OLP 2036) and broader national planning policy.
- 1.6 The SPD will be subject to public consultation in accordance with the relevant regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

## 2. Requirement for SEA

- 2.1 Previously all statutory land-use plans, including SPDs, required a Sustainability Appraisal which incorporated the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment. This was a requirement under UK Government legislation. However, the 2008 Planning Act<sup>1</sup> and 2012 Regulations<sup>2</sup> removed the UK legislative requirement for the sustainability appraisal of SPDs. Despite no longer requiring sustainability appraisal, SPDs may still require SEA.
- 2.2 The requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is set out in the regulations<sup>3</sup>. There is also practical guidance on applying European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>4</sup>. These documents have been used as the basis for this screening report. Regulation 5 sets out three types of plans that require SEA:
- The plan is for town and country planning and sets the development framework for future consent of projects listed in annexes I or II of the EIA Directive<sup>5</sup> (There is an exemption for a plan dealing with the use of a small area at a local level OR a minor modification of a plan<sup>6</sup>);
  - The plan requires a Habitat Regulations Assessment
  - The plan sets the future development consent framework that is not in the above two categories but has been determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 2.3 The proposed SPD will be for town and country planning and will set detailed design guidance through a development framework for the area. Alongside the strategic Local Plan 2016-2036, the SPD will inform the future consent of a project(s) within annex II of the EIA Directive. The relevant section of the EIA Directive is Annex II (10b) Urban development projects<sup>7</sup>.

## 3. Screening

- 3.1 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) practical guidance provides a checklist approach based on the SEA Regulations to help determine whether SEA is required. While no longer forming a formal part of national policies or guidance, this guide provides a useful basis on which to assess the need for SEA as set out in **Table 1** below. **Figure 1** overleaf<sup>8</sup> (taken from government guidance) illustrates the process that has been followed.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Act 2008 – Paragraph 180(5d)

<sup>2</sup> Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (no. 1633)

<sup>4</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

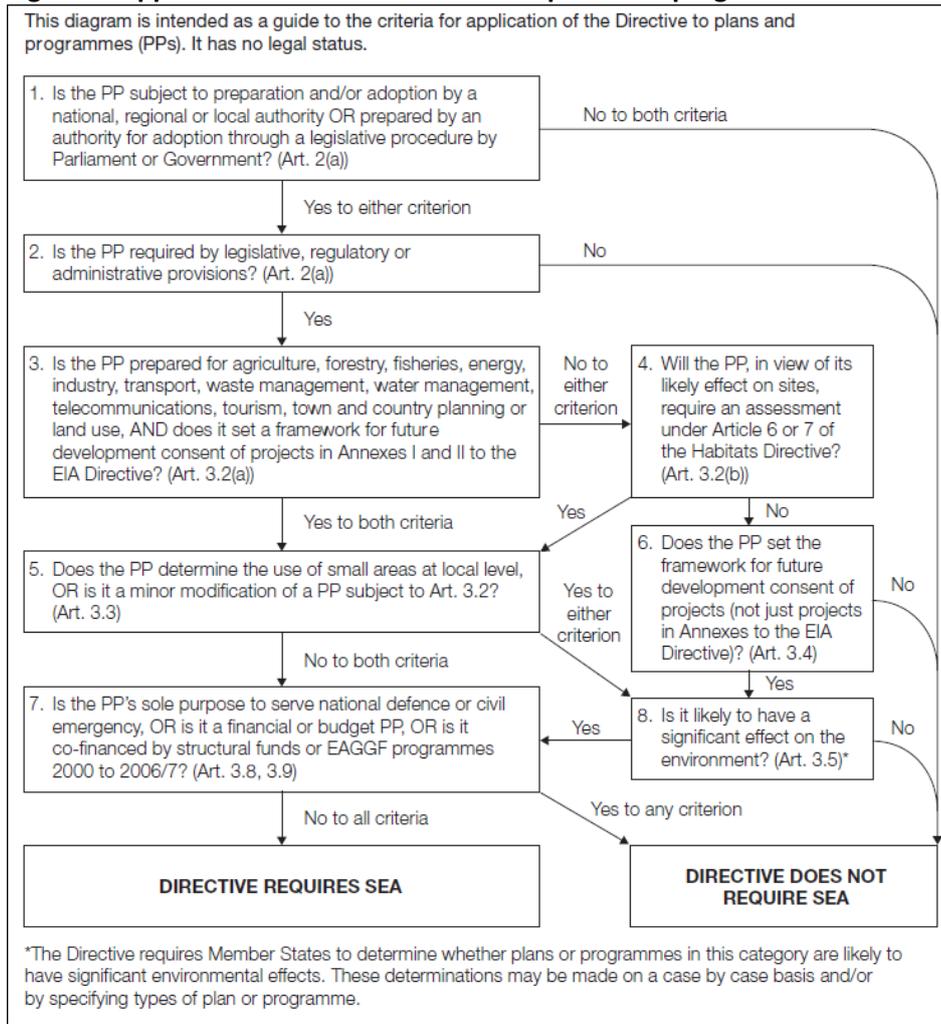
<sup>5</sup> Regulation 5(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (no. 1633)

<sup>6</sup> Regulation 5(6) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (no. 1633)

<sup>7</sup> Schedule II of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

<sup>8</sup> Taken from: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005), ODPM – page 13

**Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**



3.2 **Table 1** below sets out the 8 questions identified in the diagram above and provides an answer with regard to the proposed Oxford West End and Osney Mead SPD.

**Table 1 – Application of the proposed SPD: Is an SEA required?**

| Establishing the need for SEA |  | Answer | Reasons   | Next step             |
|-------------------------------|--|--------|---|-----------------------|
| 1                             | Is the SPD subject to preparation and/ or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Article 2(a)) | Yes    | The SPD is to be prepared and adopted by Oxford City Council  | Proceed to question 2 |
| 2                             | Is the SPD required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))  | No     |   | Proceed to question 3 |
| 3                             | Is the SPD prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town   | Yes    | The SPD will be for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for the development consent of projects | Proceed to question 4 |

| Establishing the need for SEA |  | Answer | Reasons  | Next step             |
|-------------------------------|--|--------|--|-----------------------|
|                               | and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a))  |        | listed in Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive <sup>9</sup>   |                       |
| 4                             | Will the SPD, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))  | No     | An HRA was carried out in support of the Oxford Local Plan 2036. This HRA concluded that the policies in the Local Plan 2036 would not cause any likely significant effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. As the SPD will not introduce new requirements beyond those existing in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, no further HRA is anticipated. | Proceed to question 5 |
| 5                             | Does the SPD determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a plan subject to Article 3.2? (Article 3.3)  | No     | The SPD determines the use of a relatively small area (68.5ha) but given its footprint, location, and scope of development aspirations it is likely that this is of more than local significance.  | Proceed to question 8 |
| 6                             | Does the SPD set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)   | Yes    | The SPD sets the framework for future development consent of projects, in accordance with the strategic framework set by the Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036.  | N/A                   |
| 7                             | Is the SPD's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget plan, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Article 3.8, 3.9) | N/A    | N/A  | N/A                   |
| 8                             | Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Article 3.5)   |        | See Table 2 below for the detailed reasoning   |                       |

<sup>9</sup> The EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) as amended in 1997, 2003 and 2009

3.3 **Table 2** sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment taken from Schedule 1 of the Regulations<sup>10</sup> and applies them to the proposed West End & Osney Mead SPD.

**Table 2** – Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment

| Criteria  |  | Oxford City Council's Assessment   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>1 Characteristics of the plan or programme</b> |  |  |
| 1a  | The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources | <p>The West End &amp; Osney Mead Area SPD will set the framework for the West End and Osney Mead Area of Change identified in the OLP 2036. As such the SPD must reflect and be based on all relevant policies in the Plan.</p> <p>There is a substantial body of work that has already been carried out to support the West End. This includes West End Heritage Assessment, High Buildings Study and a Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting.</p> <p>The objective of the SPD is to co-ordinate the forthcoming development projects within the West End through the creation of a spatial framework and associated documents including and design code. Through the creation of a public realm and movement strategy the SPD will also ensuring a high quality of infrastructure delivery which maximises benefits and value to all.</p>  |
| 1b  | The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy   | <p>The National Planning Policy Framework provides the following glossary definition of Supplementary Planning Documents:</p> <p><i>Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.</i></p> <p>The objective of the SPD is to create a spatial framework containing guidance on design, transport and movement, and public realm to guide current and forthcoming masterplans for individual development sites within the West End and Osney Mead, as well as informing other public sector projects such as enhancements to the public realm and open spaces.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the West End SPD will add unnecessarily to the financial burdens of development. Instead it is intended to help applicants make successful application(s) in accordance with Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and the Oxford Local Plan 2036.</p> <p>The SPD will set the parameters for forthcoming development in the site area, a design code, structures for movement and access,</p> |

<sup>10</sup> Criteria taken from Schedule 1 of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

| Criteria |  | Oxford City Council's Assessment   |
|----------|--|--|
|          |  | however it will have less material weight than the Local Plan and only expands on existing Local Plan policies without introducing new ones.   |
| 1c       | The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. | <p>The SPD will help with the delivery of Local Plan policies and help meet with the City Council's broader objectives, which are developed to deliver and support sustainable development. It will help to coordinate cohesive development within the site area and ensure that there is coherence between the proposed spatial framework and ongoing development and masterplanning work already taking place in the area.</p> <p>The SPD is intended to promote sustainable development by ensuring that development fulfils the economic, social and environmental dimensions as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The following are all considered to be important elements for consideration by the SPD in delivering sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkable communities</li> <li>• Green Spaces and biodiversity</li> <li>• Rail travel – attractive sustainable mode of travel.</li> <li>• Encouraging a modal shift.</li> <li>• Supports the growth of Oxford and the redevelopment of the West End in a sustainable manner.</li> </ul>  |
| 1d       | Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme   | <p>The following Environmental problems are associated with the area covered by the SPD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flood Risk</li> <li>- Cultural Heritage (historic and protected views, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas and sites of archaeological interest)</li> <li>- Potential for land contamination</li> <li>- Air Quality</li> </ul> <p>Each will be dealt with in turn.</p> <p><u>Flood Risk:</u> The City Council prepared a Level 1 (city-wide) and Level 2 (looking at individual allocations in higher risk flood zones) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan 2016-2036. This also included the level of detail required for site specific FRAs. Some of the overall area covered by the West End and Osney Mead SPD currently lies within Flood Zone 3.</p> <p>The City Council has carried out a sequential test of sites within its administrative area. The results of which show that a number of allocated sites may need to be located in Flood Zone 3 for more vulnerable uses such as housing. This is due to the high pressure for housing in Oxford and the need to balance this against the</p> |

| Criteria | Oxford City Council's Assessment  |
|----------|---|
|          | <p>various constraints affecting the city. These matters were considered in depth through the preparation and examination of the Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036. The level 2 SFRA assessed the likelihood of the exception test being passed for these site allocations.</p> <p>It is worth noting that flood risk of site allocations within the West End and Osney Mead area were looked at as part of this process and a number of these site allocations were identified within the West End area as part of the Local Plan process.</p> <p>Given the level of flood risk and the size of the land parcels, site specific flood risk assessments would be required at application stage for each individual site.</p> <p>Appendix 1 shows the flood map for the West End area produced to support the Local Plan 2036.</p> <p><u>Cultural Heritage:</u> There are a number of features of the historic environment which are of interest within the area covered by the SPD. These include a significant section of the Central Conservation Area, several listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.</p> <p>While it is envisaged that some potential impacts on specific features as a result of the development process would be picked up at the planning application stage, it is expected that the spatial framework within the SPD would need to give the historic environment due consideration. Archaeology is also a factor that would need consideration in the planning of any urban space within the city's archaeological area. The SPD area falls within this area.</p> <p>The role of the SPD is to co-ordinate a number of developments that will be coming forward, and add value in design terms. Input from the council's own heritage team will be important in the development of the spatial framework supporting the SPD.</p> <p><u>Potential for land contamination:</u> As the site area is extensive and comprises of a range of former and ongoing uses, including commercial, industrial, storage and transport uses, there is the potential for land contamination in different areas. A mitigation strategy should be considered as part of any masterplanning and site investigations should form part of any future planning application process.</p> <p><u>Air Quality:</u> The whole of the city centre is considered an Air Quality Management Area. One of the main contributors to poor air quality within Oxford is transport emissions. Air quality emissions can also be impact by the built environment. The spatial framework will investigate movement and transport within the</p> |

| Criteria  |   | Oxford City Council's Assessment  |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | West End with an aspiration to reduce the dominance of vehicular travel. The public realm strategy will also guide the development of open spaces and streets that assist with the alleviation of air quality issues.   |
| 1e  | The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection). | There are unlikely to be significant impacts.   |
| <b>2 Characteristics of the effects of the area likely to be affected</b> |   |   |
| 2a  | The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects   | <p>The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations breaks down the environment into a series of constituent parts. These are as follows: biodiversity; population; human health; fauna; flora; soil; water; air; climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; and the inter-relationship between these issues.</p> <p>As part of the work developing the Local Plan, a sustainability appraisal was undertaken for the overall plan as well as for site allocations that comprise the West End area, namely Oxford Station &amp; Becket Street Car Park, Student Castle Osney Lane, Worcester Street car park, Oxpens and the Island site.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal for the Oxford Local Plan 2036 also addressed the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects of the plan.</p> <p>It is considered that the SPD will not add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan, but supplement them in order to co-ordinate forthcoming developments to ensure good design, provide high quality infrastructure, as well as ensure cohesion between the proposed spatial framework and ongoing development and masterplanning in the area.</p> |
| 2b  | The cumulative nature of the effects  | Due to the extensive site area, the ambitions of the proposed spatial framework and the anticipated scope of forthcoming development, there is the potential for cumulative effects resulting from the production of the SPD. The effects could arise from the intensification of existing uses, changes of use, development of additional floorspace, increase in the population of workers and residents, amongst others.   |
| 2c  | The trans-boundary nature of the effects  | There will be no trans-boundary effects in the sense of between countries. Trans-boundary effects with neighbouring authorities   |

| Criteria |   | Oxford City Council's Assessment   |
|----------|---|--|
|          |   | are unlikely to result in significant environmental effects beyond those identified in the SA of the Local Plan.   |
| 2d       | The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)  | None identified.   |
| 2e       | The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)  | <p>The total site area is 68.5 ha. The area includes multiple development sites. As such it would be categorised as an “urban development project” in Schedule 10 of the EIA Regulations.</p> <p>The geographical area that would be affected forms a significant portion of the city footprint and would likely to result in an increase in the local population with potential change to its demographic profile. As such the environmental, social and economic impacts are likely to be significant in the local area and would be felt across the city as a whole.</p>  |
| 2f       | <p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; or</li> <li>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</li> <li>iii) Intensive land-use</li> </ul> | <p>The SPD will supplement existing policies in the Local Plan 2036. It is envisaged that the SPD will firm up the types and quantum of development that will come forward in the West End and Osney Mead area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Special characteristics in this context refers to environmental limits of pollution that can be tolerated by particular protected sites. Oxford City contains a Special Area of Conservation, the impact of development on which was assessed through the Local Plan 2036 Habitat Regulations Assessment. This concluded that there the policies in the Local Plan would not cause a likely significant effect on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. Cultural heritage is discussed above at paragraph 1.4.</li> <li>ii) The whole of the city is an air quality management area so air quality standards and limit values will need to be looked at carefully to ensure that the SPD improves the existing situation rather than making it worse.</li> <li>iii) Developments in the West End are likely to intensify the land-use but currently there are under-developed areas of land which do not represent the best use of land for this city-centre location.</li> </ul> |
| 2g       | The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.  | None identified.   |

3.4 In order to work out whether or not an SEA would be required on the West End and Osney Mead SPD, it was necessary to first consider the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) undertaken to support the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The Local Plan 2036 SA is an appropriate starting point for the current assessment because the Oxford Local Plan 2036 forms the primary policy context for the West End and Osney Mead SPD, and the policies within it were appraised as part of their formulation. Some policies in the Local Plan 2036 are of direct relevance, including site allocation policies that apply to various locations within the West End & Osney Mead site area. As part of the production of the Local Plan 2036, site assessments were undertaken to support the SA. Given Oxford’s constrained nature and high housing need, the assessment forms were designed to establish whether development was suitable on each site using a range of appropriate sustainability criteria. Following on from establishing whether or not sites should be allocated for development, sites were then attributed uses in line with the plan’s strategy to focus on housing growth and allow an appropriate mix of uses on sites with good accessibility such as these city centre sites (which are the focus of this SPD).

3.5 Table 3 draws from the Local Plan 2036 and its evidence base including the Sustainability Appraisal.

**Table 3 – Review of the Sustainability Appraisal of the OLP 2036**

| <b>SEA Directive Topics.<br/>(The environment is defined by Schedule 2 paragraph 6 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)</b> | <b>Summary of findings as part of the OLP 2036 evidence base review.</b>   |
|--|--|
| Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna   | <p>The site area is a mixture of brownfield and greenfield areas of variable size and quality. The most significant feature in the vicinity, although outside the study area, is the Oxford Meadows SAC, as well as key waterways through the site area.</p> <p>The Oxford Meadows SAC was the subject of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Oxford Local Plan 2036. This HRA found that the policies in the Plan were not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. As this SPD falls within the remit of the plan, it is not expected to require further HRA assessment as part of the production of the SPD.</p>  |
| Population   | <p>The Local Plan 2036 allocates mixed use sites at the West End and Osney Mead capable of accommodating at least 981 new dwellings within the boundary of the SPD. Site allocations policies in the Local Plan provide for at least 734 new homes in the West End (Policy SP1) and a further 247 at Osney Mead (Policy SP2). There is a wider ambition within the West End that is greater than simply providing homes and jobs to regenerate this under-used part of the city. There is an ambition to create a Global Innovation District. This is likely to focus on a distinct mix of uses and is likely to bring residents, workers and visitors to the site area through innovative and creative use of the urban environment and public realm.</p> |
| Human Health   | <p>Policies are included that can bring about positive health outcomes, including the provision of a known quantum of affordable housing; promotion/protection of amenity infrastructure; a requirement for wellbeing and health impact assessments for larger development</p>   |

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
|                  | <p>schemes. There are clear linkages between human health and good environmental quality including clean air and minimising flood risk. The site assessments show that there is a GP surgery within 800m of the SPD boundary.</p>   |
| Soil             | <p>Protective policies are included in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, including policies to provide additional protection /remedial measures for water and soil quality from the negative impacts of contaminated land; and to mitigate the displaced risk of flooding arising from development on green/open spaces that seal the soil. Although the SPD includes a number of brownfield areas and former industrial uses which could indicate a need for remedial measures, these are often best dealt with at the planning application stage through site specific assessments.</p>   |
| Water            | <p>Extensive portions of the area fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are a number of policies in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 that seek to protect green/blue infrastructure, which have the capacity to mitigate the impact of flooding, although the policies themselves generally seek to maintain the status quo.</p> <p>Oxford is in an area of serious water stress. The Oxford Local Plan 2036 aims to minimise additional water use per person through policies requiring improved water efficiency in new development, but the growth in population could potentially counterbalance this. Other policies in the plan aim to safeguard water quality, including the promotion of SUDs to reduce run-off from increased development etc.</p>  |
| Air              | <p>The whole of the Oxford city administrative area is an Air Quality Management Area. A key aim of the latest Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP 2021-2025) is to bring NO2 emissions down to a level that is below current legal compliance as soon as possible. Ensuring good air quality is an important aspect for ensuring the health and well-being of people living, visiting and working in the area.</p>   |
| Climatic factors | <p>A key Oxford City Council objective is the achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2040 and the Local Plan includes policies that are expected to contribute to a significant reduction of carbon emissions by 2030. Previous work undertaken in the West End investigated the potential for community-scale energy solutions to meet local energy requirements across the area. The Local Plan is supportive of district heating schemes in appropriate locations as local heat networks provide opportunities to have a direct impact on reducing carbon emissions.</p>  |
| Material Assets  | <p>Material Assets in the context of SEA usually refers to structures. In the context of the West End and Osney Mead, this could be seen as the built environment (i.e., buildings and public realm). A key aspiration for the West End and Osney Mead area is the creation of a Global Innovation District. This is likely to have an impact on the public realm which is likely to be delivered in an innovative manner to facilitate the transformation of the built environment. The level of detail that would be required for the implementation of such a scheme would almost certainly have an impact on material assets. The site assessments from the Oxford Local Plan show that the railway station is within the SPD boundary and there is a school within 800m of the West End and Osney Mead area.</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage | The Oxford Local Plan 2036 policies on heritage will form the context for the SPD. These policies include limiting the heights of buildings in certain parts of the city (e.g. parts of the SPD area); and providing a clear rationale for creating good urban design. Given the amount of and significance of the historic assets located within the SPD area, careful consideration will need to be given to certain elements of the SPD (e.g. spatial framework/ design code) to ensure that aspirations for the SPD to become a global innovation district are carefully aligned with the distinct local character and context and also ensure that below ground heritage is also respected.   |
| Landscape  | The site area is a mixture of brownfield and greenfield areas of variable size and quality. The city's policy on view cones will need to be given consideration although there is existing policy protection in the Local Plan to ensure that any high buildings are sensitively located away from important views. The site area includes areas of historic character and heritage value (both built and natural environment). Opportunities should be taken to provide public open spaces as this improves the urban landscape.  |
| Inter-relationships between the above issues                           | Where relevant the inter-relationships between each of the factors has been discussed in the relevant box above. There are clear linkages between air quality and human health; and human health and flood risk, for instance. These inter-relationships have been captured to a large extent in the Local Plan 2036 Sustainability Appraisal. Where any inter-relationships are likely to cause significant effects, these will be addressed in the SEA Report accompanying the SPD. Transport is another example of the inter-relationship between SEA environmental issues. The West End is well connected with respect to vehicular access although the availability of public transport options to and from the site area is highly variable, however public transport options to Osney Mead itself are currently poor. Impacts of development on the broader strategic road network are likely to be modest. |

## 4. Scoping

- 4.1 The SPD incorporates no additional policy requirements on top of the policies contained in the OLP 2036. A significant amount of background information has been produced in support of the OLP, which includes background papers on a range of topics that would be relevant for the proposed site development, a city wide HRA and a sustainability appraisal for the OLP policies and site allocations. The relevant bodies of work will be examined as part of the SEA. Any relevant findings arising from studies carried out by the appointed consultant for developing the spatial framework and Osney Mead masterplan will also be included in the final SEA Report.
- 4.2 The review of the previous work undertaken as part of the OLP 2036 (Table 3) has identified the following SEA topics that the SPD may have a significant impact upon: Water; Air quality; Climatic Factors; Cultural Heritage; and Inter-Relationships (movement and access). An examination into the likely probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects is looked at in **Table 4**.

**Table 4** – Topics screened into the SEA Assessment

| SEA Topic  | Probability, Duration, Frequency & Reversibility of the effects  |
|--|--|
| Water  | <p>Flood Risk is a key element of planning and the West End and Osney Mead area include areas of Flood Zone 3 where development is sought to be located.</p> <p>Early conversations with the Environment Agency have highlighted the potential to undertake a limited update of the SFRA for the West End and Osney Mead SPD area to reflect the Environment Agency’s most recent flood maps.</p> <p>A significant amount of background information has been produced in support of the OLP which can further inform the development of the spatial framework. This includes a SuDS Design and Evaluation Guide and other evidence including a Water Cycle Study and SFRA (see above). This topic is therefore screened into the assessment.</p>   |
| Air Quality  | <p>The whole of Oxford City is an Air Quality Management Area which has implications for all development schemes, especially those at the scale proposed.</p>  |
| Climatic Factors   | <p>The prospect of a community energy scheme has been raised previously particularly in the 2008 AAP. That has not been implemented and there is no specific mention in the terms of reference for emerging SPD. This does not preclude a similar scheme forming part of the overall strategy for the site area or specifically in the masterplan for Osney Mead. There is no information about the probability duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of either including or not including the energy centre for the community energy scheme on this site. As such this topic is screened into the assessment.</p>  |
| Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage | <p>A key element of the proposed spatial framework is the creation of a design code with the aim of facilitating high quality, cohesive and context appropriate design. It would aim to give direction for forthcoming development to ensure that there are positive impacts on the historic environment in particular townscape character, landscape and below-ground heritage. The emerging code, along with input from Oxford City Council’s Heritage Team will feed into the SEA Report. Locally significant views (i.e., view cones) are considered to be a part of this topic.</p>   |
| Inter-relationships (Movement and Access)                              | <p>There are ongoing issues regarding the non-vehicular movement within the site area, the usability of sustainable and active travel modes, the uncertain status of coach parking in the Oxpens site, and connectivity to the city as a whole.</p> <p>The site area is a sustainable location and as such there is a proposed increase in the number of residential dwellings as well as other economic and institutional uses in connection with the proposed innovation district. A key element of the spatial framework would be the clarification of an appropriate street structure and hierarchy to facilitate movement into and within the site area. The prospect of new and improved public transport links would also be explored.</p> <p>As movement would form a central element of the spatial framework and there is minimal up to date evidence to inform the study, transport impacts will be screened into the assessment.</p> |

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposed SPD will supplement existing adopted OLP 2036 policies as set out in Appendix 1. The SPD will form part of the framework for the development for the West End and Osney Mead site areas. It will sit underneath the OLP 2036 and will become a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 5.2 The SPD must reflect and be based on the OLP 2036 policies. Any significant changes or additions to the policies in the OLP must be the subject of a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment as they would constitute a material departure from the development plan. This ensures that the SPD will comply with the SEA Regulations.
- 5.3 This SEA Combined Screening and Scoping assessment suggests that the following SEA topics are “scoped in” at this stage: Water; Air quality; Climatic Factors; Cultural Heritage; and Inter-Relationships (movement and access) see Table 4. It is considered that the rest of the SEA topics were considered sufficiently through the Sustainability Appraisal (which includes SEA) of the OLP 2036.
- 5.4 The West End & Osney Mead SPD is likely to add an additional level of detail to that of the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The SEA Guidance<sup>11</sup> states that:

*“An SEA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. The Directive requires consideration of the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme, and of reasonable alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.”*

As such the assessment should be proportional to the level of the plan that is being assessed.

- 5.5 Any assessment undertaken under the SEA Regulations<sup>12</sup> does not rule out the need for further assessment, should it be necessary, under the EIA Regulations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> ODPM, (2005), A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

<sup>12</sup> Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

<sup>13</sup> Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 SI No. 1824

## Appendix 1 – Local plan policies directly relevant to the West End & Osney Mead Area SPD

### Policy AOC1: West End and Osney Mead

*Planning permission will be granted for new development within the area of change where it would take opportunities to deliver the following, where relevant:*

- *Create high-density urban living that makes efficient use of land*
- *Maintain a vibrant mix of uses*
- *Has regard to the framework set out in the West End Design Code*
- *Maximise the area’s contribution to Oxford’s knowledge economy*
- *Enhance public realm along the waterways*
- *Enhance connectivity throughout the area, including along and across waterways*
- *Enhance the pedestrian and cycling experience*
- *Ensure that the heritage of the area informs and guides new development proposals*
- *Create easy and attractive transport interchange*
- *Reduce car parking*

### Policy SP1: Sites in the West End

*Planning permission will be granted for a number of mixed use developments across the West End. Residential development and/or student accommodation across the West End should deliver a minimum of 734 homes on the following sites:*

| <i>Site</i>   | <i>Minimum number</i> |
|---|-----------------------|
| <i>a. Oxford Station and Becket Street Car Park</i> | <i>20</i>             |
| <i>b. Student Castle Osney Lane</i>                 | <i>206</i>            |
| <i>c. Worcester Street Carpark</i>                  | <i>18</i>             |
| <i>d. Island Site</i>                               | <i>40</i>             |
| <i>e. Oxpens</i>                                    | <i>450</i>            |

*Planning permission will only be granted for new developments that have regard to the framework set out in the West End Design Code.*

*Planning permission will only be granted for redevelopment of the station and Becket Street Car Park if it improves the station for passengers and creates a strong sense of arrival to Oxford, and is in accordance with the Oxford Station SPD.*

*Planning permission will only be granted for development on Oxpens where it enhances Oxpens Field to create a high quality open space, includes new high quality and well- located public realm, creates an active frontage*

*along Oxpens Road, enhances connectivity to Osney Mead including future proofing the proposals so they do not prevent the landing of a foot/cycle bridge across the Thames and has regard to the Oxpens SPD.*

*Planning applications for the Island Site and Oxpens site must be accompanied by a site- specific flood risk assessment and development should incorporate any mitigation measures.*

## **Policy SP2: Osney Mead**

*Planning permission will be granted for a mixed use development that includes employment uses, academic uses, student accommodation, employer-linked affordable housing and market housing. The development of an innovation quarter is encouraged. The development is expected to deliver around 247 homes. Other complementary uses will be considered on their merits.*

*The site would only be suitable for academic institutional uses provided that the requirements of **Policy H9** are met.*

*Planning permission will not be granted for development that prejudices the comprehensive development of the whole site. A masterplan approved by the City Council should be developed prior to any development, and all development should comply with the masterplan.*

*New high-quality public open space should be created on the site.*

*Footpaths to and through the site should be provided and existing routes enhanced. The masterplan should consider in greater detail how and when a new pedestrian and cycle bridge will be delivered linking this site with the other side of the river.*

*Development should be designed to enhance the relationship and connection between the site and the river and to enhance physical and visual permeability of the site. Development should be designed to have a positive impact on views, particularly the view from Hinksey Hill to the historic core.*

*A Comprehensive Flood Risk Management Strategy should be produced in support of the Flood Risk Assessment for this site. The Flood Risk Management Strategy should be developed in consultation with Category 1 organisations as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.*