

# West End and Osney Mead SPD Scoping Consultation

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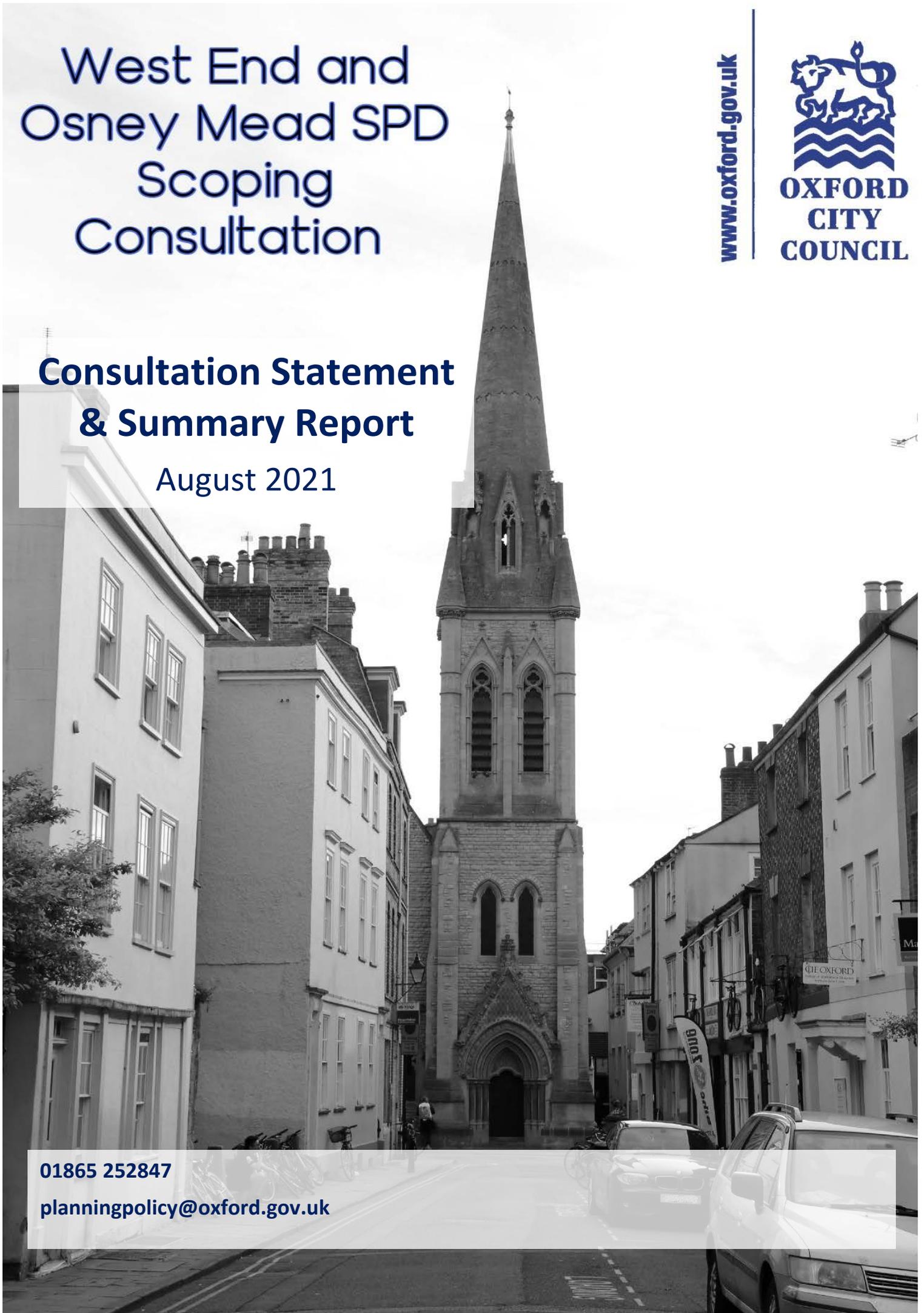


## Consultation Statement & Summary Report

August 2021

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## 1. Introduction

The Council recently ran a consultation exercise as part of the initial scoping work for the new West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and this report summarises the responses received as part of that exercise. The Consultation was open between 19<sup>th</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and was publicised using a variety of methods including information on a specific webpage for the SPD; emails to a contact database of voluntary organisations, businesses and neighbourhood and residents groups; as well as posters put up locally in the site area.

The questionnaire that accompanied the consultation contained some general questions about how respondents felt about the area, some questions about the scope and vision of the SPD (which was set out in the supporting Issues and Scope document) and some questions to identify priorities for what should happen in the area in the future.

This summary report is structured in two parts. After setting out some broad details about the demographics of respondents who engaged as part of the exercise, the first half of the document takes each of the consultation questions in turn and draws out the key themes, issues and ideas that were put forward. The second part of the document sets out the responses that were received on online site area maps published via Google Jam board.

## 2. Demographics of respondents

The consultation questionnaire was completed by 204 respondents through the consultation portal. 15 representations were made by email, largely comprised of organisational responses and statutory consultees. These representations are summarised separately from the other responses in section 4.

Of those respondents who accessed the consultation portal and who chose to declare their gender identity, there was a fairly equal split between females and males, though slightly more females, as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Gender identity of consultation portal respondents**

Gender Identity	Total	Percent
Female	99	48.53%
Male	89	43.63%
Prefer to describe self as	1	0.49%
Prefer not to say	11	5.39%
Not Answered	4	1.96%

The age breakdown of respondents was again fairly evenly distributed as shown in Table 2, though a quarter of responses came from the 65+ cohort (58 responses), making up the largest pool of responses. The smallest response rate came from the under 16 (1 response), followed by ages 16-24 and 25-34.

**Table 2 – Age ranges of consultation portal respondents**

Age	Total	Percent
Under 16	1	0.49%
16-24	6	2.94%
25-34	15	7.35%
35-44	32	15.69%
45-54	38	18.63%
55-64	30	14.71%
65+	58	28.43%
Prefer not to say	21	10.29%
Not Answered	3	1.47%

With respect to the ethnic background of respondents to the consultation, which is broken down in Table 3, the majority of respondents who answered this question reported that they were white/white British at 79% of responses.

**Table 3 – Ethnic background of individuals who responded via the consultation portal**

Option	Total	Percent
White/White British - English	122	59.8%
White/White British - Welsh	2	1.0%
White/White British - Scottish	5	2.5%
White/White British - Northern Irish	1	0.5%
White/White British - Irish	2	1.0%
Any other white background	29	14.2%
Mixed/ Multiple - White & Asian	1	0.5%
Mixed/ Multiple - Any other mixed background	2	1.0%
Black/Black British - Any other Black background	1	0.5%
Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background	1	0.5%
Other ethnic group	2	1.0%
Not answered	36	17.6%

We also asked respondents to state whether they considered their day to day activities to have been limited because of a health problem, or disability, which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. As can be seen in Table 4, the majority of responses were no (around 84%), however just over 8% answered yes, either a little or a lot.

**Table 4 – Extent of limitations to daily activity reported by respondents via the consultation portal**

Extent of limitations to daily activity	Total	Percent
Yes, limited a lot	3	1.47%
Yes, limited a little	15	7.35%
No	171	83.82%
Prefer not to say	12	5.88%
Not Answered	3	1.47%

### 3. Questionnaire summaries

#### 1a) What things do you like most about the West End and Osney Mead area at the moment?

There were several responses to this question, and the answers touched on a range of areas including the location of the site area itself, the quality of the built and natural environment, and the facilities that service the area.

The positive attribute that was cited very often is the easily accessible natural environment in and around the site area. This includes the 'green' features, such as the meadows, and the 'blue' features such as the watercourses, riverside areas and the lock. Common themes that arose from the comments included the quality of the spaces which do not look obviously managed, and the richness in biodiversity and types of habitat that could be found in the area. Much was made of the ease of access to these areas with respect to the rights of way and the proximity of such rich habitats to the city centre. Although not a natural feature in the truest sense, the cemetery was also mentioned as making a positive contribution, as a quiet enclave as well as a space that can provide a range of habitats.

With respect to the built environment, the positive attributes tended to be specific areas of buildings that were considered to make a positive contribution by reason of their architectural or visual qualities, their character and their local or national significance. Buildings and areas specifically mentioned include the Grade II listed St Thomas Church, the Jam Factory buildings and the historic homes and streetscape on Osney Island.

The ice rink was mentioned several times, being described as a local landmark as well as a key facility and asset for the community and city as a whole.

#### 1b) What should we try to retain (this could include the general character, particular buildings, facilities that you use, public open spaces and so on)?

The responses generally built upon what was discussed in the previous question, with several of the identified assets reiterated here. The themes of the responses were along the lines of accessibility/rights of way across the site area, the natural spaces, community amenities and notable features in the built environment.

The green spaces and natural features were often described as positive attributes that should be retained, as well as the public rights of way that allowed for relative ease of access to and from the city centre. The comments tended to focus as much on the retention of the 'naturalness' of the spaces and their capacity for encouraging biodiversity as they did space that is available for recreation. The retention of public rights of way was also raised in comments that specifically mentioned access to the canals, water courses and riverside which are used as connections as well as recreation.

The positive comments on some aspects of the built environment were reiterated here with calls to preserve the historic buildings and streetscene (St Thomas Church, Osney Island homes and streetscene, Victorian architecture across the West End) as well as landmarks of local significance such as the Jam Factory buildings. The character of the lock and riverside areas were also described in positive terms and deserving of enhancement/preservation. The ice rink, as well as the adjoining

green space, was mentioned here as an asset worth keeping, in line with the comments received previously.

A number of commenters mentioned the relative lack of community amenities in the area, which are expanded upon in later sections. There was therefore a great deal of importance implied in the comments that was attached to the ones that currently exist, particularly those that were unique to the area and part of its character. The consensus of such respondents was that any development should continue to retain the community amenities, with particular mention made of the Jericho coffee merchants, the Jam Factory, fishmongers/butchers and the associated restaurant and café.

## 2a) Are there any problems in the West End and Osney Mead area at the moment that you would like to highlight?

Respondents highlighted a variety of problems that they considered to impact the area at present. In relation to the built environment itself, it was raised a number of times that the area serves as a poor gateway into the city for visitors and suffered from a lack of character/sense of identity. Respondents highlighted that there was generally a feeling of dilapidation and dereliction with a low quality public realm that included poor-quality street furniture, large areas of poorly-utilised space (including expansive car parks and poorly maintained green spaces), as well as a disjointed feeling arising from piecemeal development over the years. There were also issues with taller buildings interfering with the skyline, and some feeling that the layout of the area had not been designed to a human scale. Comments also picked up on a lack of certain uses in the area like:

- Vacant retail and business units
- Community and/or leisure facilities, including education
- Affordable housing

Issues relating to transport and movement around the area were also commonly raised. Congestion and car dominance was a recurring theme, with traffic problems on Botley Road as well as filtering off into side streets a regular issue. There was a clear desire by many to reduce the need for cars and to limit car use in the area, as well to address the difficulty cars brought for pedestrians and cyclists where they came into contact with each other. Other respondents were more focussed on improving the experience for car users on particular roads. Access for emergency vehicles was also a concern raised.

It was highlighted regularly that there is poor cycling and walking infrastructure and a couple of times that conflict arose between cyclists and walkers using the same paths, with disabled access being flagged as an issue in places too. Respondents picked up on the difficulty with navigating through the area with a lack of signage and lack of legibility to some of the street patterns. Permeability throughout the area was challenged by barriers such as the railway, main roads, but also the river and a lack of crossing points.

Public transport options were felt to be disjointed with limited connections to the rest of Oxford further exacerbating the isolation from the rest of the city. The railway station was flagged as being sub-standard and in need of updating.

Feelings of safety were raised a number of times and this seems to be impacted for a variety of reasons. There were issues of anti-social behaviour witnessed in the area including littering, drug taking, and

people being subjected to abuse, particularly at night and around the night clubs which several respondents considered to be negatively impacting amenity. At night, it was felt that areas were poorly lit and which exacerbated feeling unsafe, particularly for women.

The other recurring theme related to the natural environment of the area. The history of flood risk and poor drainage were flagged, as well as the poor quality sewerage system, with flooding events impacting walking routes especially around the river. There was a desire for more soft-landscaping and it was highlighted that the area is particularly grey in places with a lack of trees, shrubs and other wildlife areas. The canal and river were considered under-utilised by some, and in connection with congestion issues, air quality was a concern as well as noise.

Various areas were specifically flagged as having problems, including the Botley road area which was highlighted as being run down, feeling unsafe particularly at night (also a problem for existing links across the river), the vicinity of Oxpens and Osney Mead in general. Particular locations flagged as needing attention included, the power station, the former petrol station, as well as the ice rink (various responses expressed the desire to protect it, but also to enhance and modernise the facility).

## 2b) What measures can be taken to ensure the area is an appealing and attractive place to visit?

Many of the suggestions for improving the area naturally built upon the issues that had been identified in the previous question.

It was highlighted that there was a need for improving the welcome to the city for visitors. Many of the comments related to improving the quality of the built environment, such as cleaning up and improving street furniture, improving the legibility of streets through better signage, lighting for after dark and increasing permeability for pedestrians through more crossings, broader pavements etc. Respondents expressed a desire to limit building heights and preserve views, as well as taking influence from the heritage of the area and making more of the historic architecture, whilst also utilising the highest environmental and sustainability standards in new buildings. It was felt that there needed to be a better use of space, limiting parking and that public spaces needed to be better maintained, updated with higher quality materials.

Various suggestions were made for the types of land uses that should be encouraged in the area. It was felt that mixed-uses ought to be encouraged so as to generate activity in the area throughout the day and into the evening, and to make a place where people wanted to live and work. It was felt that the SPD should try to foster a sense of community in the area, to invest in social infrastructure like community centres, play grounds and other facilities for young people. Sports and leisure facilities were also important for helping people to stay healthy, amongst these suggestions included a new swimming pool as well as improvements to the Ice Rink. Housing was also important to respondents, measures should include high amounts of affordable housing, houses with gardens, as well as housing catered to different groups like the vulnerable and the elderly. It was also highlighted that it will be important to balance the needs of new residents with those of the existing communities nearby and that the supporting infrastructure not be forgotten.

Investment in independent businesses and pop-up studios was suggested, as well as trying to encourage world-class research into the area. Better controls on amenity were also desired, whilst outdoor dining, pubs and communal spaces to sit and relax were also important.

Many of the measures suggested related to improving transport and access within the West End and Osney Mead. Additional linkages across the river and railway in the form of new bridges were mentioned several times, as well as wide-spread improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure. Connections to the wider city in the form of improved public transport offerings were also important as well as better linkages between these transport options. The railway and bus station needed various improvements as part of this focus on public transport, including attention on the underpass, secure cycle storage and general public realm improvement. Numerous comments focussed on the desire to address congestion issues in the area and the need for reducing traffic and the reliance on the car, though it was also flagged that resident/visitor parking should not be forgotten.

Numerous suggestions also addressed the natural environment and better stewardship over it. It was important to respondents that open spaces are protected and improved to encourage people to use them more, this included the cemetery. Increasing tree cover and soft landscaping around the area were common comments as well as incorporating wilder spaces for biodiversity. A couple of comments also reflected a focus on food growing, such as allotment provision and community gardens. There was a desire to make more of the waterfront areas, improving access along the river and better connecting it with the wider area. Addressing flood risk was also a common theme, with attention needed on flood alleviation measures and sensitivity taken towards locations within the flood plain.

### 3a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content of the SPD?

There were 190 responses to this part of the question and the results of these are summarised in Figure 1. Far more of the respondents indicated they were in agreement with the content of the SPD than in disagreement, however the largest single category of responses overall were neutral to the content.

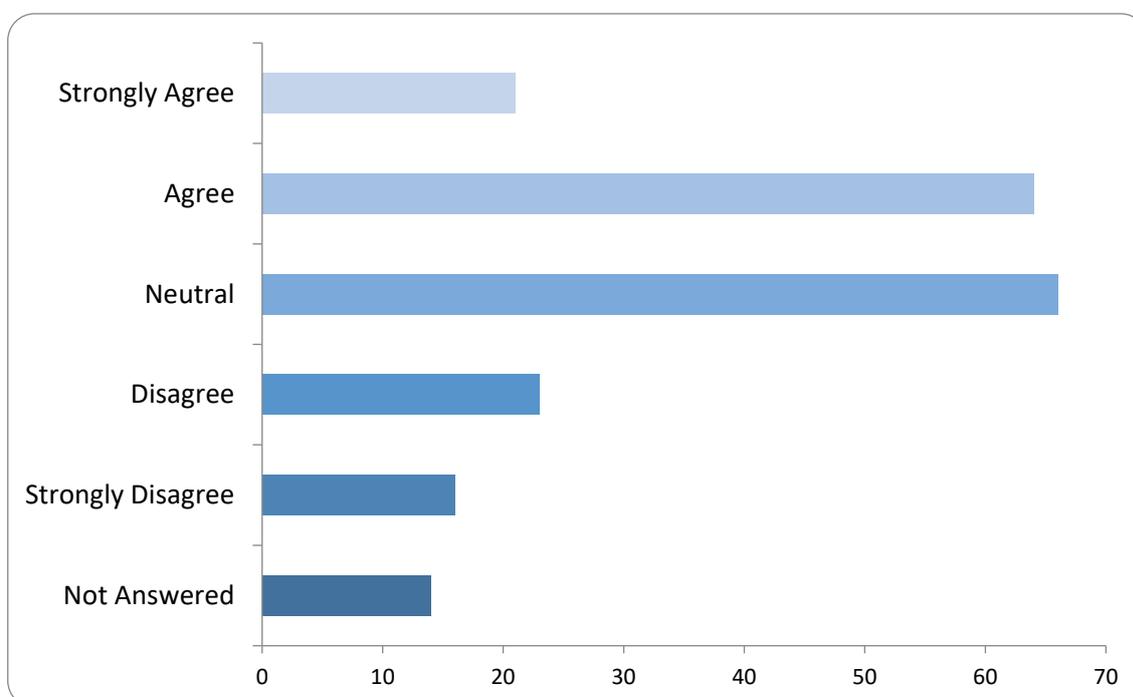


Figure 1 – Summary of the consultation portal responses to question 3a.

### 3b) Is there anything else you think it should include (see section 4 of the supporting document)?

Some respondents had called for an expansion or increased emphasis on certain aspects of the vision statement, in order to stress their importance or to emphasise the level of priority that was felt that these deserved. These areas include design quality, improvements to transport links and connectivity to and from the site, and the prioritisation of walking and cycling option. There were a few suggestions that even more could be done to place sustainability and challenges from climate change at the core of plans. Housing and specifically affordable housing was raised several times, with calls to take the maximum opportunity to make provision in this area. There was some mention of student accommodation but invariably these were highly unsupportive.

In terms of omissions, there was the suggestion that the statement did not adequately address the issue of flood risks or the options with respect to mitigation strategies. Several respondents had stated the desire for specific mention of the ice rink. Many comments comprised of suggested approaches to the ice rink, including ongoing maintenance, improvements or upgrades, and redevelopment of the site. As a whole the preference is for the retention of the ice rink in some form within the area.

With the format of the consultation process itself, it was suggested that future engagement exercises should put in place communication support for residents with accessibility issues. While the comments were made in the context of people with hearing impairments, the implication is for this consideration to be made for other types of limitations.

### 4a) Is there anything you think should be added to the vision for the area (set out in section 5 of the supporting Vision and Scope document)?

A few respondents agreed with the vision as it was, there were a couple of comments about needing to be bolder, as well as a range of suggestions for additional focus or new additions to the vision.

A large number of comments expressed a desire to have greater emphasis on the natural environment and climate emergency. Common points raised included the need for more open space and more trees, making space for nature including wild areas, addressing flood risk, and air pollution. The need to strive for zero-carbon development was commonly raised as well as wider resilience to climate change. Several respondents also wanted to see greater emphasis on integration with the river.

Respondents voiced that they wanted to see high quality design in any new development and development that was sympathetic and reflective of the heritage/history of the area including any archaeology. In line with protecting open space, it was felt important that brownfield sites were focussed on first. Human-scale to design was important, whilst there was some aversion to higher density development and tall buildings in the area. It was also important that existing communities' needs were met alongside the needs of any future residents.

Community came up several times in the responses and the need for making space for organisations that can strengthen and bring together people together. Various comments related to the social feel of the place. For example, it was felt that the vision needed a greater focus on the types of uses being encouraged in the area, particularly housing to meet various groups' needs (including affordable housing), and a variety of mixed-use development incorporating a balance between residential and commercial as well as restaurants and retail. There were various comments in

relation to the need for schools and education uses to meet perceived deficiencies; as well as leisure and sports facilities promoting health and wellbeing. There was a desire to encourage globally recognised architecture and research, but also to support green job creation, SMEs and smaller independent businesses. One comment raised that they would like to see support for small music venues.

A final overarching theme to the suggestions in relation to the vision was centred around movement, transport and accessibility. The need for addressing congestion was important to many, reducing car use wherever possible, and balancing the need for a car without making the area car-dominated. A focus on enabling more walking and cycling as well as infrastructure to make this safer and easier was highlighted regularly, this included crossing points at roads, improved legibility for navigating streets as well as safe, attractive and direct routes. Improvements in the public transport infrastructure was also important to people, as well as improving links to the rest of the city and wider country. Once again, calls for better links across the river were voiced. One comment also raised that consideration needs to be given to horse riders in respect to the bridle way running through the area.

#### 4b) Is there anything you do not agree with in the vision for the area?

A number of comments expressed the opinion that the vision was too vague or needed to be bolder. Others were happy with the vision but wanted to see continued community engagement throughout the development of the SPD.

Several responses felt that the vision was skewed too much towards economic development, and concern was expressed that there was too much emphasis on office growth in light of shifting working patterns in future. Questions were also raised over the appropriateness of focussing on innovation, research/academia and science provision when other sites in the city already offer these roles. Others felt that the innovation centre concept had not been sufficiently explained and were therefore unclear about what it meant for the area.

A number of responses to this question related to the topic of housing. Many wanted to see a greater focus on housing delivery and community uses, rather than a focus on innovation or commercial uses. There were calls for higher amounts of affordable housing (even fully affordable housing), and social housing, whilst several comments expressed that they would not want to see more student accommodation, however. There was concern about there being more high density development as well as more tall buildings coming forward in the area. Where development does come forward, it was highlighted that this should be sympathetic to heritage and be of a high quality.

More widely it was felt that the vision needed to address the role of arts. It was also felt that the vision lacked attention on the topic of sports and leisure venues for peoples' health and wellbeing.

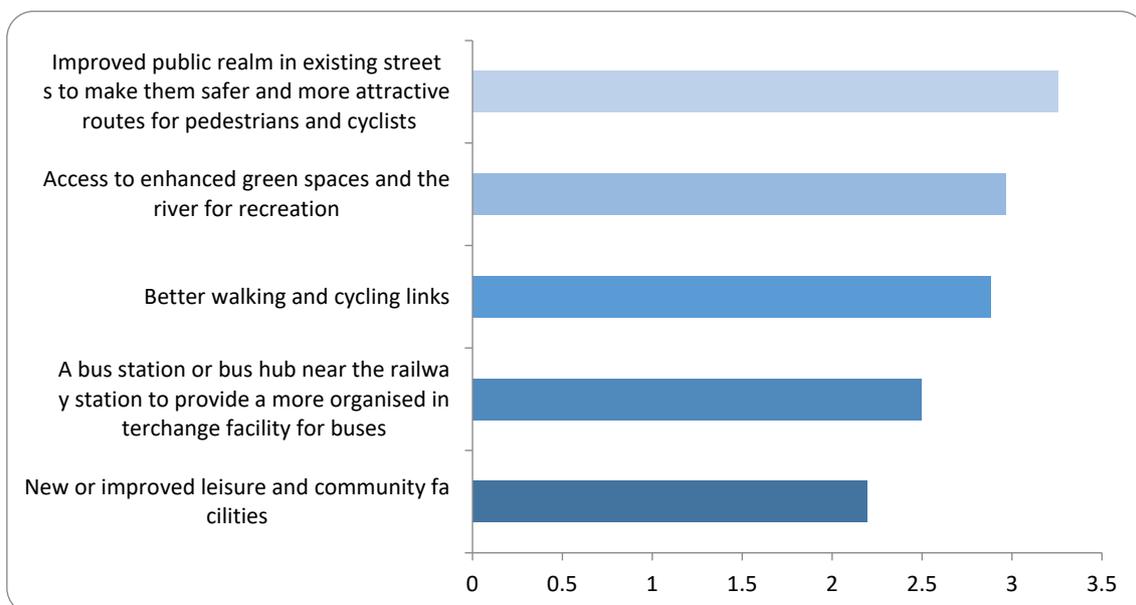
There was a fairly strong feeling that the vision was not taking good enough account of the climate emergency and the impacts of development on it. It was felt that the vision needed to be stronger in setting out the need for carbon neutrality. Biodiversity and broader consideration of sustainability principles were also suggested to be lacking, as was the need to address flooding issues and to avoid building in the flood plain.

A commitment to improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists was raised as being needed, some expressed concern that more needed to be done to address conflict between these two means

of movement, particularly where they currently share space. Some felt that more development would lead to more traffic congestion and that this could have knock on impacts for air pollution, though a couple of responses were clear that the need for car access should not be forgotten, particularly for those living outside of the area of unable to travel alternatively. The issue of improving access in some areas such as the waterfront did raise concerns over privacy impacts on nearby gardens too. Comments were also received regarding the need to focus on improving public transport, and that the vision was not sufficiently addressing the needs of the station and the wider lack of integration in rail services in the area.

### 5) What facilities do you think it is most important to have in the West End and Osney Mead?

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance a number of options for what would be considered most desirable to have in the West End and Osney Mead area. The rankings are illustrated below in Figure 2. The option that was ranked most highly overall was for improvements to the existing public realm in attractiveness and safety for pedestrians and cyclists, followed by access to the river and enhanced green spaces for recreation.



Item	Ranking
Improved public realm in existing streets to make them safer and more attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists	3.25
Access to enhanced green spaces and the river for recreation	2.97
Better walking and cycling links	2.88
A bus station or bus hub near the railway station to provide a more organised interchange facility for buses	2.50
New or improved leisure and community facilities	2.20

**Figure 2 – Summary of the consultation portal responses to question 5.**

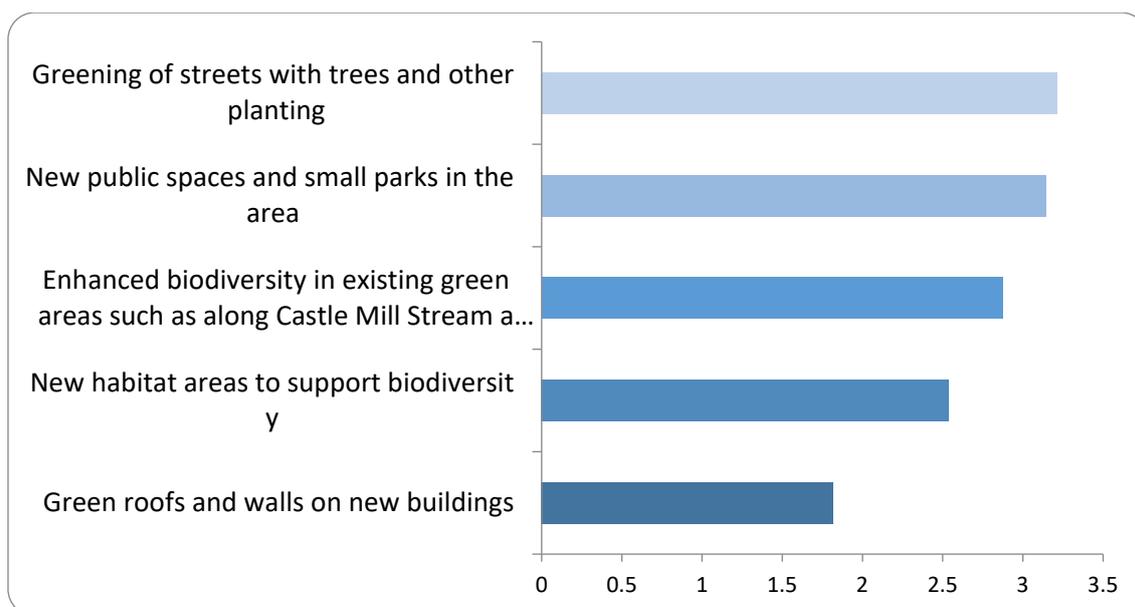
#### **Q5. Other additional options**

There were 83 additional responses to this part of the question.

- Several respondents stated that housing, and affordable and key worker housing in particular, should be a priority even in this part of the city and any masterplan should make adequate provision.
- Community facilities are deemed to be lacking in the site area, and there are calls to provide more.
- The Ice Rink is mentioned as a valuable asset and several respondents called for its retention and the enhancement of its setting, including the provision of a bus hub/station nearby to increase its accessibility.
- A respondent pointed out what they considered to be wasted opportunities to address improvements to cycling infrastructure around Botley Road and Frideswide Square.
- A pedestrian/cycle bridge is mentioned here, as with responses to other questions, as a vital necessity. Also in relation to a river crossing, improved signage and other linkages are also considered to be necessary.
- The wildlife corridors that form part of the existing natural and green features are seen as important for preservation and retention.

#### **6) What do you think should be the priorities for enhancing landscape, biodiversity and open space in the area?**

For this question respondents were asked to rank the selection from 1 to 5, where 1 is the most important and 5 is the least important. The responses received are illustrated in Figure 3. The option ranked most highly was for greening of streets with trees and other planting, followed by new public spaces and small parks.



Item	Ranking
Greening of streets with trees and other planting	3.21
New public spaces and small parks in the area	3.14
Enhanced biodiversity in existing green areas such as along Castle Mill Stream and along the Thames	2.87
New habitat areas to support biodiversity	2.54
Green roofs and walls on new buildings	1.82

**Figure 3 – Summary of the consultation portal responses to question 6.**

#### **Q6. Other additional options**

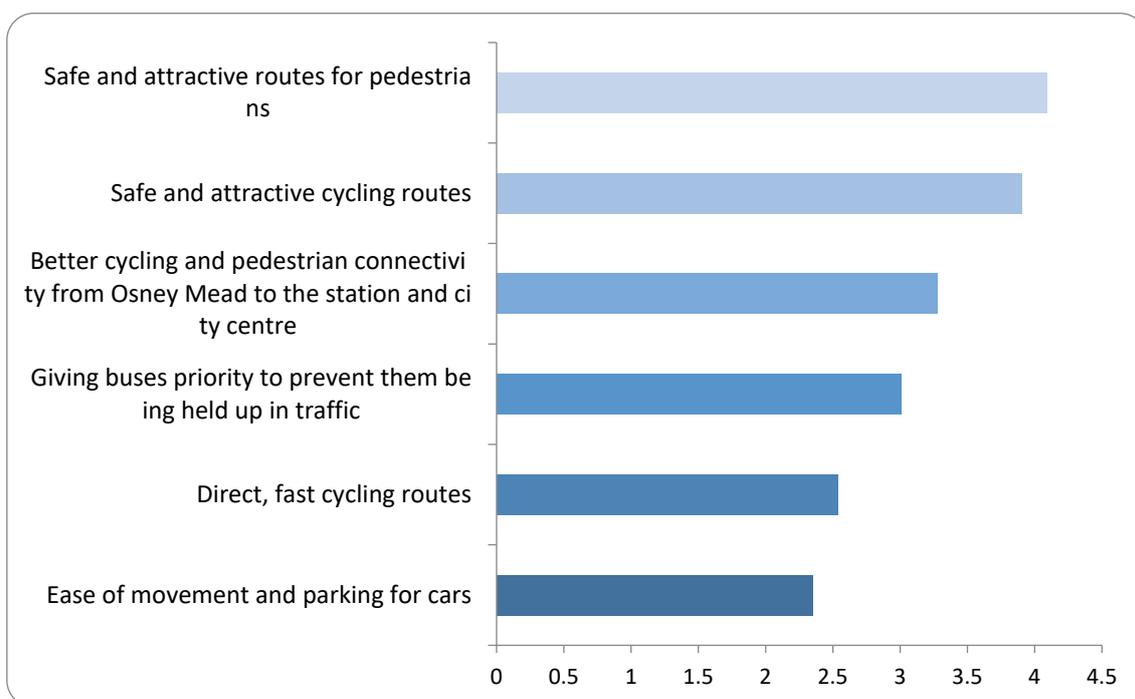
There were 63 additional responses to this part of the question. It was clear from a number of comments that it is difficult to prioritise one option over the others, and that there is a place for each option. There was some support for additional tree planting, as well as other planting that has value for biodiversity. Increased connectivity amongst green spaces was also brought up by several respondents. The desire to first see enhancement of existing greenery, as well as protecting what is already there (e.g. mature trees) was important to several people.

With respect to new green infrastructure, it was important to respondents that appropriate maintenance/management was secured for anything new; one person raised the issue that smaller spaces could become hot spots for anti-social behaviour. Species selection was also highlighted by several people, it is important to ensure that species are chosen for their biodiversity value (over aesthetics), and that the right tree is needed in the right place, with care taken not to exacerbate air pollution, impacts on peoples' health, or on street flows.

Issues of drainage, and avoiding an increase in hard surfacing within new development were raised. The city's blue spaces were also flagged for their value to the city by a number of respondents with the desire to see better use of the rivers and canal and protect them from further degradation.

### 7) What is the most important for the movement access strategy for the area?

Respondents were asked to rank what they consider should be the most important element for a new movement strategy for the site area from 1 to 6, where 1 is most important and 6 least important. The rankings are illustrated below in Figure 4. The provision of safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists were the most highly ranked options by respondents. Safety and attractiveness of routes were much more prioritised than directness and speed, particularly with respect to cyclists. The ease of movement for cars and provision of parking spaces was ranked lowest.



Item	Ranking
Safe and attractive routes for pedestrians	4.09
Safe and attractive cycling routes	3.91
Better cycling and pedestrian connectivity from Osney Mead to the station and city centre	3.27
Giving buses priority to prevent them being held up in traffic	3.00
Direct, fast cycling routes	2.54
Ease of movement and parking for cars	2.35

**Figure 4 – Summary of the consultation portal responses to question 7.**

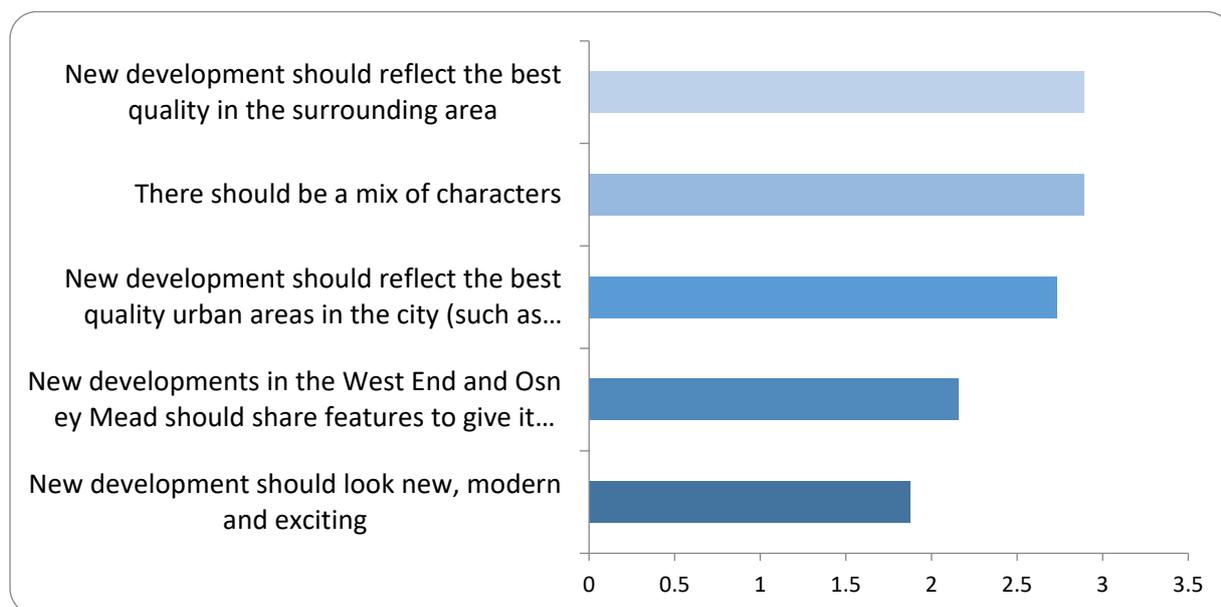
#### Q7 Additional Information

There were 71 further responses to this part of the question.

- The majority of the responses expressed a desire for improved bus and other transport network connectivity in order to reduce reliance on cars. The improvement of infrastructure to enhance car movement and the provision of parking generally ranked low as a priority.
- An alternative option raised by a respondent involved the creation of a second access to Osney Mead in order to relieve congestion on the Botley Road as well as providing for an emergency access. There were also calls for an expansion of accessible charging points for EVs.
- Responses were weighted more towards the creation of safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists, than towards direct and faster routes. The formation of a pedestrian/cycle bridge was mentioned by several respondents as a desirable feature.
- The green spaces and natural features in and around the site area were considered positively by several respondents and there were calls for their protection and enhancement.

### 8) What should be the character of new developments in the area?

To help inform the design guidance, respondents were again asked to rank their answers in terms of importance, where 1 is of most importance and 5 of least importance. The responses received are illustrated in Figure 5. Two options were joint first in terms of popularity, ‘new development should reflect the best quality in the surrounding area’ and ‘there should be a mix of characters’, these were followed by ‘new development should reflect the best quality urban areas in the city’.



Item	Ranking
New development should reflect the best quality in the surrounding area	2.89
There should be a mix of characters	2.89
New development should reflect the best quality urban areas in the city (such as the city core)	2.73
New developments in the West End and Osney Mead should share features to give it a recognisable style	2.16
New development should look new, modern and exciting	1.88

**Figure 5 – Summary of the consultation portal responses to question 8.**

### **Q8. Additional comments**

59 responses were received suggesting additional information. Perhaps reflecting the broad topic of character and good design, the additional responses to this question were varied. Terms like ‘exciting’ and ‘character’ were noted to be subjective and not automatically equivalent to what might be considered good.

There was a clear desire for respect of the existing heritage and a need for design to be sympathetic to the character of the city and the wider natural environment. Several respondents raised that the skyline ought to be protected, with a preference for low rise buildings. There was some desire to reflect the industrial heritage of parts of the area within new design.

Alternatively, other raised that they would like to see more modern buildings, with high calibre of environmental sustainability, including zero emissions, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and also incorporation of ecology.

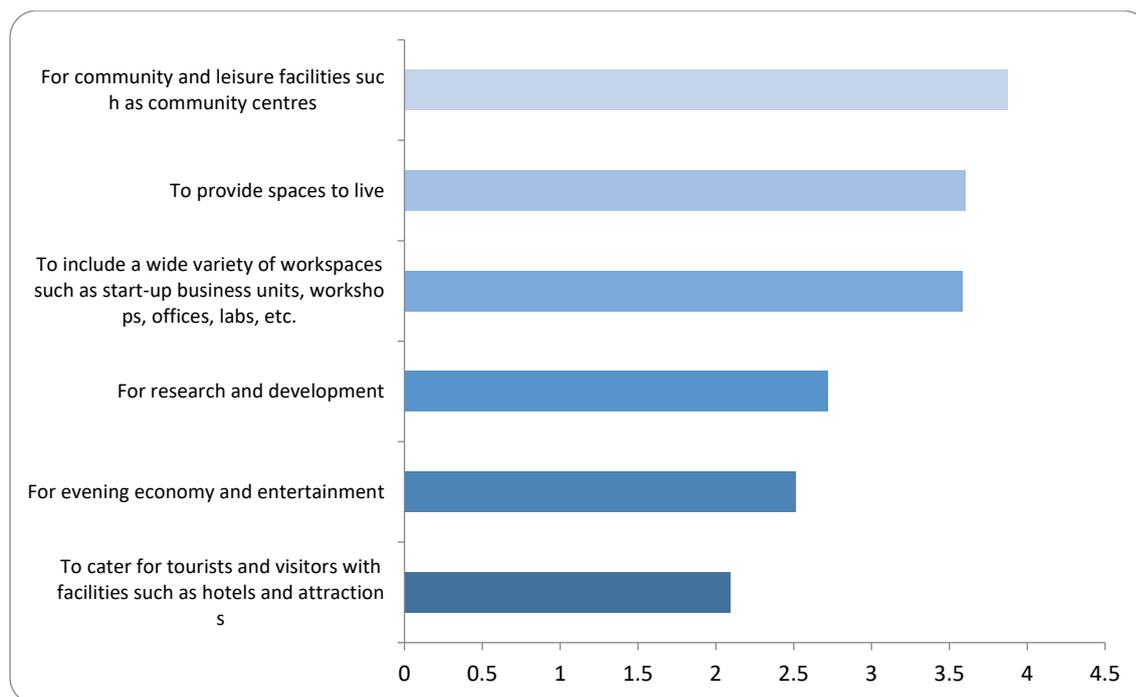
Others appreciated a mixture of styles, but highlighted the importance of a consistent and sympathetic transition between these styles. A couple of respondents highlighted the need for use of materials which will ‘age well’ and be of high quality, utilising natural materials where possible,

Some respondents raised that the priority ought to be functionality over aesthetics, whilst others preferred to see aesthetically beautiful and attractive designs

9) What activities would you like to see in the area, what would you like to do there and how do you think the area should be used?

Please rank the following in terms of importance, where 1 is of most importance and 6 of least importance.

The rankings are illustrated below in Figure 6. Community and leisure facilities were considered to be the most important/desirable use for the area. Housing was also highly prioritised, closely followed by the provision of workspaces of the type that may best suit small to medium scale business activities.



Item	Ranking
For community and leisure facilities such as community centres	3.88
To provide spaces to live	3.61
To include a wide variety of workspaces such as start-up business units, workshops, offices, labs, etc.	3.58
For research and development	2.72
For evening economy and entertainment	2.51
To cater for tourists and visitors with facilities such as hotels and attractions	2.09

Figure 6 – Summary of the consultation portal responses to question 9.

## Q9. Other comments

There were 51 additional responses to this part of the question.

- Housing, community facilities and workspaces including start up business units, workshops, labs and similar, were all ranked as desirable for priority. Enhanced and diverse cultural offers were also seen as desirable, as well as sports, leisure and other health/wellbeing activities. There was also the suggestion to provide a post office and a delivery centre.
- Other uses such as student and tourist accommodation, evening economy premises and R&D spaces were ranked very low. There was a preponderance of views stating that housing, of mixed tenures and affordable housing in particular, should be a priority even in this part of the city and any masterplan should make adequate provision. However there were also concerns raised about the potential density of development, with high rise development generally considered to be inappropriate for the area.
- If tourist and short stay uses are to be included, one proposed suggestion was that novel approaches be considered such as a cycling hotel or other car free venue or similar, in order to avoid problems with congestion, and other negative behaviours associated with such uses.
- There were calls to conserve and enhance the green and natural features in the area, particular mention was made of the 'green barrier' between Osney Mead and Osney Island.
- Mention was made again here about the need for a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the Thames.

## 10) Further comments - Is there anything further you would like to add?

88 respondents made further comments at the end of the questionnaire. Naturally, the responses to this question covered a wide variety of issues that were touched upon earlier in the questionnaire, including those felt not to have been given enough consideration.

### *General comments on the consultation itself*

A number of comments through the questionnaires noted the appreciation for the development of the SPD and the chance to make comments. Several people expressed a willingness to continue to engage on the development of the SPD, and highlighted the importance of ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the process. There was also excitement to see change happen in the part of the city that is being focussed on.

There was, however, some distinct opposition to the use of ranking questions in the consultation itself with a number of respondents raising issues with the difficulty of prioritising when each often had merit. There was also some feeling that the questions were either too generic, or too vague to be able to appropriately respond, as well as some questioning over whether their engagement would have added value to the project, or if their ideas would be listened to.

The broad ranging comments raised a variety of points that the SPD needed to be stronger on, these have been summarised into a few key themes:

### Climate change and the natural environment

- Climate emergency and alignment with zero carbon aspirations.

- Ecology and a focus on nature.
- More trees and green spaces.
- Management and maintenance of public spaces.
- World-leading green, sustainable and environmentally aware development.

#### Design, heritage and public realm

- High quality, prestige developments.
- Limiting high rise development and preserving existing sky line.
- Utilise heritage opportunities and preserve historic character.
- Need mixed uses and to consider phasing of the new development, with an even balance between delivery of business, housing and other uses over time.
- Use of natural landscaping to limit visual impact of new development and preserve privacy.
- Make a thriving entrance to city.
- High density housing.
- Improved/high-quality public realm.
- Need to consider the need for supporting infrastructure (inc roads, sewers, flood defence).

#### Housing

- Housing for local residents and key workers.
- The need for housing over office space.
- The need for Council housing and affordable housing.
- Consider needs of existing communities in area as well as new ones.

#### Economy and business

- Support for local businesses.
- More shops and cafes to support future residents and workers.
- Consider long term impacts of covid, question need for more shops/offices that could remain empty due to changing user habits.

#### Community and wellbeing

- Protect and provide community facilities.
- Encourage sports for health and wellbeing.
- Preserving/promoting community cohesion which could be at risk from many rented properties or student accommodation.
- Protect and/or enhance the ice rink.

#### Transport and movement

- Footbridges over the river to improve connections.
- Improve connections within the area (cycling and walking).
- Active travel first and connected streets.
- Parking for visitors.
- Expanded public transport options.
- Address congestion.
- Concern that Oxford's major transit sites poorly situated and don't connect to city centre well.

Other

- Need to consider how this will be funded.
- Need to engage with the universities.

## 4. Responses received outside of the consultation portal

The Council received 15 additional responses via email, many of which were from statutory bodies and larger organisations.

### Statutory bodies

The **Environment Agency** comments included:

- Confirming the need to update evidence base for flood risk as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) from the Local Plan 2016-2036 uses old Thames flood modelling.
- In relation to waste water management, a need for additional details about the number of new dwellings inputting into the sewer and a method for how the STW capacity will be assessed.
- The need for making reference to previous assessment work on the Oxford Meadows SAC and that this should include an assessment of human impacts of new residents using the meadows.
- The SPD should generate an improvement in green infrastructure including multi-functionality in particular green SuDS.
- Recommend policy of 110L/person/day or less for water use due to water stress nature of area.
- Further analysis needed on adaptation to climate change including the assessment of the 1% AEP flood level plus an appropriate allowance for climate change. Also analysis of the interrelationship between people's health and wellbeing and green infrastructure.

**Historic England** comments:

- Note there is heritage in wider area of West Oxford beyond the red line, for example views from the castle, the Thames path to the immediate north-east of Osney Mead, the conservation areas, other heritage assets as well as longer views, such as from Boars Hill and Raleigh Park, which should inform and guide new development proposals.
- Development parameters should be significantly developed by the SPD, especially in respect of building heights. Should seek to ensure that the new skyline in this area is visually deferential to the historic skyline, does not detract from the historic skyline and is interesting in its own right.
- As part of views considerations, the SPD should consider grain, particularly in long views, finer grains can attenuate impact on views already noted in previous view cones study, as well as use of darker, less reflective materials as view cones study already picked up.

**Natural England** comments:

- Noted that the topic this Supplementary Planning Document is unlikely to have major effects on the natural environment, but may nonetheless have some effects.
- SPD could consider making provision for Green Infrastructure (GI) within development, and that there may be significant opportunities to retrofit various types of green infrastructure in urban environments (e.g. green roofs, walls, trees).
- SPD may wish to consider incorporation of biodiversity features into development, perhaps providing guidance on provision of elements like bird/bat boxes within fabric of building, along with an example of guidance from Exeter.
- SPD may wish to provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community. They point to several tools that may be applicable

such as Landscape characterisation and townscape assessments, and associated sensitivity and capacity assessments.

- The NPPF includes a number of design principles which could be considered, including the impacts of lighting on landscape and biodiversity.

**Highways England** comments:

- Highlight that any proposed new growth will need to be considered in the context of impacts on the Strategic road network including the cumulative impact from already proposed development.
- Particularly supportive of SEA Screening Table 2: Criteria 1d Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme: Air quality as this seeks to reduce transport emissions in line with NPPF sustainable principles.
- Seek to be consulted regarding any studies that may be being prepared in relation to transport infrastructure at the scoping stage, in order to ensure it meets Highways England's requirements for assessing any potential impact on the SRN appropriately and thereby avoid abortive works. If any impacts to the SRN are identified we welcome early discussions regarding any mitigation plans, including but not limited to potential schemes, funding sources and timescales.

**Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks** comments:

Highlight that there is various electricity infrastructure including underground power lines and overhead power cables of varying specifications crossing the site which form an essential and integral part of Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks' wider network and as such must be retained.

Modifying these lines (particularly the 132v line) would be a major undertaking and should be avoided (they recommend these are considered permanent physical features) – and layout of site should allow the lines to remain undisturbed if possible.

Any conditions imposed, should permission be granted, must be on the developer and not the Distribution Network Operator, as is the case for other existing infrastructure. They would consider that the granting of planning permission without further discussion and agreement as to how their equipment can be accommodated within the proposal to be unacceptable.

Different loads placed on the power supply from new development will come with various upgrade requirements depending on the scale of demand – specific details have been provided in their response.

Aside from these, additional comments included:

- Connections for new development from existing infrastructure can be provided subject to cost and time.
- Any costs for necessary upstream reinforcement required would normally be apportioned between developer and DNO (Distribution Network Operator). Maximum time-scales normally no more than 2 years.
- In order to minimise costs, wherever possible, existing overhead lines can remain in place with uses such as open space, parking, garages or public highways generally being permitted in proximity to the overhead lines. Where this is not practicable, or where developers choose to lay out their proposals otherwise, then agreement will be needed as to how these

will be dealt with, including agreeing costs and identifying suitable alternative routing for the circuits.

- Any anticipated relocation of existing overhead lines should be formally agreed with SSEN, prior to submission of a planning application.

In a wide ranging response, encompassing feedback from a variety of internal departments, **Oxfordshire County Council** welcomed the plans to prepare a new SPD for the area and made further comments:

- Noted the importance of the area for acting as a gateway to the city for many visitors arriving by public transport.
- An excellent opportunity to lead by example actively promoting resource efficiency, circular economy and waste reduction.
- Consider that a wider area than just that shown in blue in Fig 1 will be affected by the proposals and this should be clearly covered in future consultations.
- Transport teams highlight that the area plays a central role to addressing transport issues in the city. Consideration should be given to whether sites (or parts of sites) may be used for transport purposes, without compromising the delivery of wider planning and regeneration objectives. Examples for consideration suggested include:
  - visitor coach parking, bus interchange operation, infrastructure to support zero/low carbon transport, and cycle infrastructure.
  - The need for consistency between the SPD and the SPD addressing the expansion/enhancement of Oxford Station with the opportunities it provides to improve transport connections being significant. Will also need to address options for multi-modal interchange facility – e.g. connections to buses, taxis and cycle parking.
  - Opportunities should be explored/incorporated to facilitate Connecting Oxford and Zero Emission Zone.
  - Should set highest expectations for sustainable transport making reference to the LCWIP. As well as need to reduce travel demand, exploring principles of 20 minute neighbourhood.
  - Take into account the forthcoming County Council transport strategy (LTCP).
- Air quality issues are particularly critical in the centre including the West End – the SPD should be supported by a high level air quality impact assessment and set strong expectations that development should consider with respect to this issue. Buildings and streets should be designed to minimise exposure to pollutants using a range of features to support pollution dispersal including green infrastructure. These considerations extend to management of construction related emissions.
- Flood risk is a key issue, with parts of the area lying in flood zone 3 and County Council acting as Lead Local Flood Authority can provide necessary advice in this regard.
- OCC owns a number of properties in West End area. OCC estates is keen that SPD does not stifle development/redevelopment options. Would like to engage with the Council at earliest opportunity to ensure approach facilitates delivery of schemes and responds to market demands rather than identifying specific uses for each site as SPD develops.
- More clarity on how the SPD addressing Oxford Station will be incorporated with this SPD would be welcome (Strategic Planning team).
- County supports the principle aim of the SPD.
- Waste team would like to see the framework for enhancing green infrastructure specifically reference community assets and infrastructure that help reduce waste and build community

cohesion e.g. community fridges, space for the sharing economy (library of things), refill stations and space for local food growing. Also welcome reference to reducing carbon.

- Innovation Hub made various comments including that future proofing design should be addressed in the spatial framework and in other places, seek to ensure innovation can flourish through provision of necessary infrastructure including integration of digital and physical spaces, that innovation is sought in the design of new buildings and public spaces, that accessibility for all users including those with specific needs (disabilities, ages) and that inclusivity and diversity be a priority in early design stages.

## Landowners

There were several responses from owners of land in the area, or their representatives.

Savills, on behalf of Christ Church, comments:

- Area of SPD should encompass the blue and pink sections in Figure 1 for several reasons:
  - To ensure that permeability and accessibility can be provided to the key growth areas and those at the Westgate and wider area;
  - The Train Station SPD previously proposed creating a new plaza and entrance to the station to the west of the railway line;
  - To enable enhancement of the Botley Road streetscape and adjacent development as the key gateway into, and first impression of, the area; and,
  - To ensure comprehensive planning in the area of change.
- Blue area is vital for ensuring accessibility between Osney Mead and West End, train station is a key connecting route and will be more so in future. Enhancing cycling/walking access in these areas will be important.
- The Botley Road and land west of the railway bridge and railway station itself each need to be addressed in the SPD as they are key to the functioning of the area and in need of improvement.
- The line of the River Thames is seen as a more logical boundary to the west rather than the railway line.
- Content of SPD generally supported except for the focus area which needs to be expanded to include the above comments. The lack of viability/feasibility details were however a concern and need to be established to provide certainty for developers.
- Vision for the area is generally supported but it needs to be forward-thinking incorporating how technology; work/life balance; transport/movement and the environment will shape the area over the plan period and beyond. It was also raised that whilst it is very important to respect the historic environment the area has huge potential for modern architecture and therefore the SPD should not stifle innovation but allow flexible control.

CBRE, on behalf of Nuffield College:

Agree with the commentary of the consultation document and the ambition set out, have a number of comments focussed on several locations in the area in relation to its emerging Nuffield West End Masterplan:

- The Nuffield West End sites have a number complexities and challenges to balance for example around the mix of existing and proposed uses; enabling innovation and business growth; and managing the balance between heritage, preservation and the need for transformation and change in order to realise the Council's and wider ambitions;

- Viability is finely balanced and there will be many ‘pushes and pulls’ on the sites moving forwards. Inherent flexibility within the SPD will therefore be important particularly as the development of West End Area of Change will also come forward over a number of years. Must therefore provide a suitably flexible framework for development to come forward and avoid being overly prescriptive where possible;
- SPD requirements in relation to uses should consider changes in relation to the use Class Order including the new Class E and also enable proposed land use mixes with flexibility built in to allow for resilience and adaptability over time;
- Design code should encourage and co-ordinate high quality design but also be sufficiently flexible to enable individual sites to respond to the specific character area within which they sit and to be based on the more detailed design development by design teams on individual sites. Any design code should act as a guide to enable a bespoke design response to come forward on individual sites;
- The existing skyline within the West End is relatively low rise. Being bold and recognising the need for transformation and change in bringing forward a new Innovation District, should consider where greater height could sensitively be introduced in order to introduce variety and interest and to assist in wayfinding/legibility for example at gateway locations;
- The Nuffield West End sites will come forward alongside wider changes to movement patterns within the City, including around bus networks and facilities. Any changes to bus facilities would need to be very carefully considered to ensure that the opportunities for enhanced public realm and vibrant active frontages on sites in the West End are realised;
- Would welcome recognition of the various complex and competing priorities in bringing forward development within the West End and that viability challenges will inevitably need to be balanced against the myriad of individual policy objectives and requirements.

Rocke Associates, on behalf of Oxford Westgate Alliance:

- Notes the uncertainty around future investment that remains due to the pandemic and highlights that the SPD will need to carefully consider this.
- Flags the importance of the area for containing the various transport hubs and its role as a key arrival point into the city. *Enhancement of these arrival nodes, and of the routes between them and the main retail centre to the east, is therefore an imperative. Such enhancements should be both physical, to facilitate movement on foot and by cycle and to reduce conflict with vehicular traffic, and in terms of public realm to make them attractive and safe to use, create positive perceptions, and to encourage sustainable travel modes.*
- Supports the principal ambitions for the area to transform it into a globally recognised Innovation District supported by new homes to create a living community. Note that, the foundations for the area to act in this capacity are already in place, and the SPD should seek to capitalise on these, principally in the form of public realm improvements to improve connectivity and attractiveness.
- Any retail and related facilities should be local scale and complementary (rather than competitive) to existing uses like the Westgate Centre – existing commercial/service infrastructure should not be duplicated to the detriment of the existing city centre.
- SPD should principally seek to ‘stitch in’ new uses into existing layout setting a clear spatial framework for enhancements in connectivity and public.
- Would be pleased to collaborate with the City Council, and request involvement in the proposals as they evolve.

Prior + Partners, on behalf of Oxford West End Developments Ltd (OxWED):

- Support the ambitions for the SPD and welcome the codification of existing policy, ideas and supporting background work into a single document which builds on the Local plan policy.
- Important that the SPD reinforces the principle that each of the sites across the West End may contribute in different ways to the wider ambitions and acts as a framework that ensures that sites, which may provide elements of the underpinning infrastructure, support wider ambitions and funding from a variety of sources which may come forward at different timescales.
- OxWED and the Oxpens project team are very keen to engage with the planned workshops with key landowners, stakeholders and developer teams which the scoping document suggests will commence in May.
- Should look to generate dynamic live/work/play environment. Sites in the area offer opportunities for compact residential development and more innovative products like aparthotels or co-living. Should also explore opportunities to support space for start-ups that can cater to younger, university residents.
- Distribution of uses should be limited to key focuses, proportional in detail (avoiding over-prescription) and be set in context of viability. Needs to incorporate flexibility to recognise timescales for delivery.
- Needs effective coordination and application of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Design framework for area may be best presented as a 'design guide' due to the size of the area, with fewer examples of absolute coding elements and more focus on interpretive elements that outline the Council's expectations and ambitions without presenting limited options or preventing site-specific design responses.
- OxWED believe that the SPD should cover the area outlined within the blue line on Figure 1 because the SPD could support delivery of new connection from the railway station as well as redevelopment opportunities along Botley Road.
- SPD is opportunity to reinforce importance of enhancing existing and creating new connections through and to sites across West End. Need to ensure Oxford station redevelopment is supported by changes in local area for buses. Roles of streets needs to be informed by understanding of mechanisms to promote active travel.
- Considerations of supporting infrastructure should be guided by existing Local Plan viability work where relevant and should be a key topic of engagement going forward.

The University of Oxford commented that they strongly support the proposed scope of the SPD and the stated vision for the area and that they were pleased to declare that themselves as one of the partners with the City Council who:

“wish to see the West End transformed from an underperforming, underdeveloped edge of city centre location, to a globally recognised Innovation District that is integrated with a strong community and a vibrant mixed use quarter”.

## Other stakeholder responses

Osney Island Residents' Association comments:

The redevelopment of Osney mead is welcomed by Osney Island residents, provided it can be done sensitively with regard to neighbourliness and it results in much needed improvements to local infrastructure.

- Concern about sensitivity of area to south west of island which is a vital habitat for various species. Any new development should ensure the existing natural screen between Osney Island and Osney Mead is preserved and, ideally, extended to ensure its continuing viability and amenity. Any buildings located close to the Osney Stream must be of appropriate scale and design. Levels of noise and light pollution must not be allowed to disturb the peace and quiet of the area.
- Raise potential that existing building on the site is subject to a covenant preventing access on the Mead side to the river bank though unverified.
- Stress importance of the towpath and would like to see its continuing separation from residential development to continue to act as green corridor. Would like to see additional seating, widening of the path at points as well as other community facilities, e.g. playground, gyms etc.
- Highlight that redevelopment of Osney Mead is an opportunity for enhancing local infrastructure to the mutual benefit of the University and the city which hosts it.
- There is a need for cultural uses in this part of the city, e.g. and arts centre. Space should also be maintained for small independent retailers
- Allowing access to the EA site from Ferry Hinksey Road and Osney Mead should be a key element in the new development
- Buildings should aim for architectural distinction and longevity.
- The presence of a significant number of new dwellings will require extra school places as the current schools are at capacity.
- The needs of older people in light of an aging population need to be considered and provided for.

CPRE comments:

- As a centrally located brownfield site, CPRE very much supports the proposed regeneration of the West End & Osney Mead area to make more efficient use of the land. But a few issues to consider:
  - State that the housing figures should be revised upwards on the basis that the number of new jobs created will create a need beyond what the council has planned for.
  - Whilst they note the importance of protecting views in and out of the city, the density of housing ought to be revised upwards to make most efficient use of the brownfield land, consider that current proposals are significantly under developed. They state that high density does not equate to high rise, and can be achieved effectively through good design
  - Do not agree with the vision, feel that *instead of being developed for no longer needed offices and hotels, we believe that the West End & Osney Mead area would be the right location for a great deal of affordable/social family housing and a school and health centre, all with good access to the City Centre, nature parks and green spaces to the south of the river.*

## ROX comments:

- Oxford has an amazing assortment of historic and modern buildings as well as open space but there is also a great opportunity to re-develop the SPD area. Balance will be essential in the SPD approach, retaining character buildings and creating inspiring new architecture.
- View of the skyline should be protected, plans should make most of public space and waterfronts.
- Generally supportive of most items listed under vision and scope apart from a few exceptions:
  - High density living needs to be well-designed and located where it provides privacy and does not detract from overall appearance of area.
  - West End Design Code may need to be revisited after views from consultation are taken into account.
  - Knowledge economy is vital, but there are other areas within/close to city including Osney Mead catering for this.
  - Agree it is important to enhance public realm along water ways, should include facilities that support this. Views of Thames from Oxpens should be opened, consideration of re-introducing canal wharf in part of Worcester car park.
  - Better access to and across western side of city by good use of available space is essential to creating more vibrant city. New link road through Osney Mead and over Thames near ice rink would give flexibility for traffic movement.
  - All new thoroughfares will need good cycle lanes, with more suitably placed cycle racks. Pedestrian routes need improving and should be wider wherever possible to allow for prams and wheelchairs.
  - Protect the good historic buildings and only allow new ones which will add positively to the heritage of Oxford.
  - Chance has to be taken to link the different modes of public transport by creating a hub, near to the new railway station.
  - Understand the desire for this to reduce air pollution, but still be a need to cater for those, whether visitors or residents to be able to access the city centre. This is particularly true for the disabled, the infirm and young families. For the fitter, with a new bridge over the Thames, a new car park created on Osney Mead would only be a 10/12 minutes' walk to the centre, helping to reduce the volume of traffic going under the station bridge. By 2030 the great majority of cars are expected to be electric and sufficient charging points will be required for the new residents and for visitors.

## Comments by Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (OAHS)

In a detailed response, concern was expressed that the SPD does not give sufficient regard to the Central, Osney Island and University Conservation areas or the constraints on new development that they present. Also ignores archaeology. Main comments covered the following:

- Concern that the vision for development will encroach on the Oxpens Meadow, rather than other existing areas of developed land.
- SPD should push for renovation of existing buildings over demolition/rebuilding to reduce embodied carbon costs.
- SPD should give guidance on 'hidden heritage' that may exist beneath currently developed sites.

- Before SPD is issued, there should be a concerted effort to capture any additional heritage assets that may not currently be listed.
- Have provided an analysis of ten distinct character areas, some more modern than others.
- Under topic of transport, highlight the importance of an overall transport policy for area; an improved park and ride service could be attractive in conjunction with removal of car parking in certain locations; potential for more radical choices like closing bus station and creating alternatives at park and ride sites; safe cycling/pedestrian routes need to consider width that avoids conflicts between users and allows for social distancing.
- Under topic of alternative uses, traffic options are important to success of alternative uses in terms of safety/accessibility; a good location for housing provision; question the need for scientific/research uses so close to the city centre particularly in light of changing working practices; highlight international importance of the business Oxford Archaeology and its contribution to knowledge economy.
- Under topic of landscape, highlight importance of climate change and biodiversity; and need to consider the management and placing of assets in right places, e.g. trees that do not obscure buildings, maintenance of parks/open spaces; seems better to enhance existing spaces before creating new ones.
- Under topic of design, character need to be informed by specific context of site – SPD could identify character zones however; across the area new developments should be open (not gated) and set back from street to avoid canyon effects and mitigate air/noise pollution; as well as more specific suggestions responding to the character of each of the ten character areas identified in their response.
- Flooding is an issue across much of SPD area and concern is raised that SPD does not address potential for increased rainfall in future – any flood plain development should submit a flood risk assessment.
- Also provide an annex with an extract of comments previously submitted to central government’s ‘Planning for the Future’ white paper consultation. Amongst these comments are points not raised above, including that buildings are three dimensional and this needs to be considered in design guidance, concerns about loss of unknown archaeological assets and suggested approaches to ensuring these are considered through the proposed new planning process;

#### Labour County Council Candidate

Felt that the movement, transport and public realm section needed fleshing out further (e.g. how does this fit in with Connecting Oxford?). Would like to understand the work that has gone in so far into the transport implications and traffic modelling for these plans.

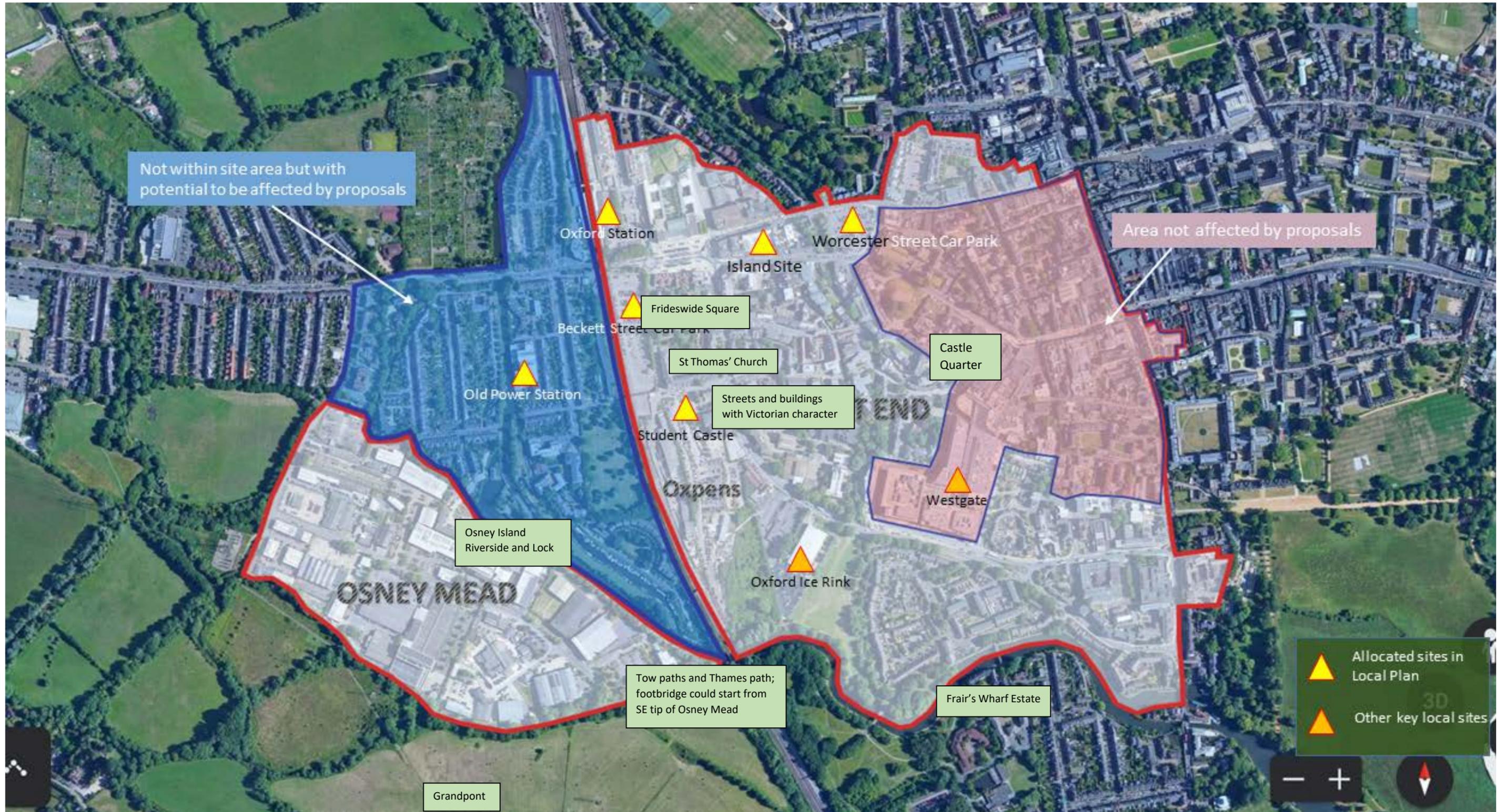
## 5. Jam Board summaries

We made use of Google Jamboard as a further means of getting views on the vision of the SPD, in a way that could be tied to identifiable areas as specifically as possible. Jamboard is an online whiteboard on which comments could be placed using virtual 'sticky notes' among other means.

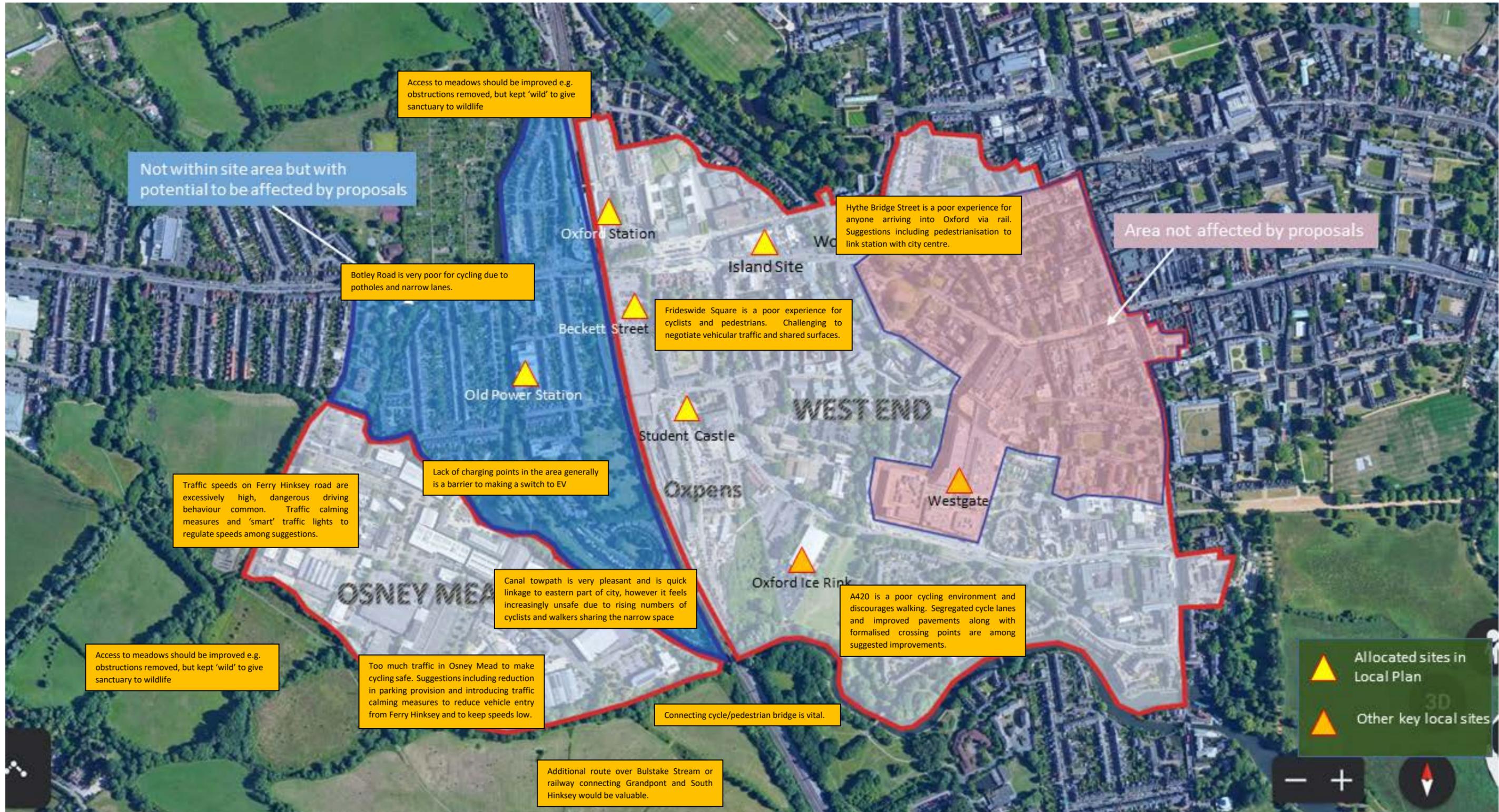
Four maps of the site area were posted on Google Jamboard with themes and questions to guide responses, which we requested to be made via 'sticky notes' on the map wherever the respondent wished. A link to the board was posted on our webpages. The maps were also accessible to anyone who had the link. As it was completely open access, no identifiable information was collected from respondents and as such all comments were completely anonymous.

In all, 110 individual comments were received over the consultation period. The following maps show summaries of the collated comments and the locations to which they apply, where possible.

Which parts of the area do you like to spend time in (inside or outside)?



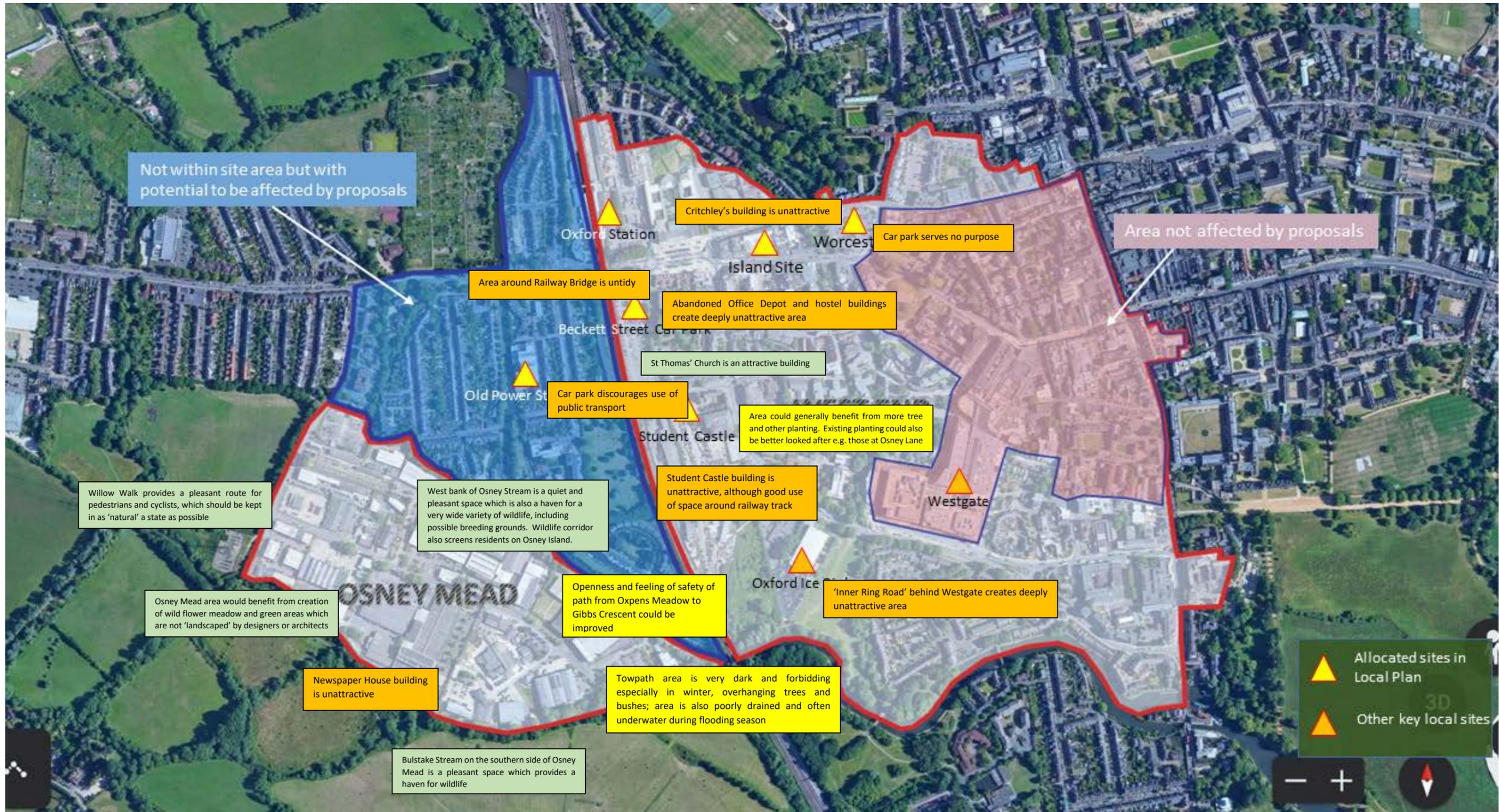
How do you move around or through the area and are there barriers to moving around as you would like?



Please mark the green spaces you like in the area or where within the area you think there might be an opportunity to enhance existing or create new green spaces.



Which parts of the area do you find visually attractive and unattractive?



## 6. Summary and next steps

The proposed vision and content of the SPD as set out in the consultation were subject to various levels of acceptance by respondents. Many had suggestions for additions to the scope, or for giving topics greater emphasis, these generally related to the issues highlighted below.

The responses from the consultation made it clear that there are features of the area of the West End and Osney Mead that people liked and wished to be retained. The easily accessible natural environment was a feature of appreciation for many including wilder areas, the river and open spaces. Specific buildings or clusters of buildings were highlighted for their positive contribution to the area because of their architectural or visual qualities too. Whilst there were remarks about the lack of community amenities, there was a feeling that what is there at present, such as Jericho coffee merchants, the Jam Factory, fishmongers/butchers and the associated restaurant and café ought to be retained.

The responses highlighted a number of issues which the City Council will need to ensure are addressed in the SPD. The built environment was commonly referred to as being of poor quality, derelict and disjointed, with areas of wasted space and poorly maintained open space. Congestion and car dominance was a commonly raised problem, as was the provision of public transport and its integration with wider areas. There were also issues relating to poor quality walking/cycling infrastructure, a difficulty navigating the area for many with various barriers to movement such as the river, railway and main roads; as well as issues of feeling unsafe, particularly for women, - this seems to be prompted by various types of anti-social behaviour and poor lighting. In relation to the natural environment, flood risk is a concern; as is the prominence of grey landscaping and an environment broadly lacking in greenery like trees and spaces for biodiversity. The canal and river were felt to be under-utilised and there are also concerns about pollution including air and noise. Suggestions for improving the area's appeal were wide-spread and often built upon addressing the concerns highlighted above.

The feedback from the consultation will be valuable in guiding the scope of the SPD as it is developed. It is important to respondents that the area presents a positive welcome to visitors into the city using public transport, that the needs of existing communities nearby are addressed, as well as the needs of new communities. Recurring themes throughout the consultation responses can be summarised as relating to:

- Built environment – buildings and spaces that use high quality materials and design, that are sustainable, and that respect the existing heritage and character of the area, including the skyline.
- Natural environment – green infrastructure like trees and open space, as well as blue infrastructure like the canal and river, also measures to protect/enhance biodiversity.
- Climate change – including the need for addressing decarbonisation and the climate emergency, resilience to flooding etc.
- Movement and connectivity – addressing congestion, supporting more people to walk/cycle, making movement around the area easier including through better linkages to the wider city.
- Housing – provision of affordable housing and housing that meets the needs of a variety of groups.

- Community facilities – the need for more spaces to promote community feelings as well as sports and leisure uses to promote health and wellbeing.
- Businesses and innovation – mixed use development, support for SMEs and independent businesses, cafes and restaurants as well as retail, need for flexibility around changing office/retail behaviours particularly in light of covid

The jam board maps and individual comments also helped to identify a broad list of locations that were the focus of attention for respondents and will be helpful in directing the SPD's focus. The future of the Ice Rink was mentioned a number of times for example, as well as the train and bus station facilities, the congestion on the Botley road and surrounding roads, as well as the former petrol station.

The next steps for this project will be for the City Council to share these findings with the consultants commissioned to work on the development of a spatial framework for the area. We will also utilise the feedback to help develop a draft of the full SPD which will be subject to further consultation next year. Further engagement will be conducted with various stakeholders as we work on this emerging document.

