

Oxford City Council
Planning Policy Team
Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford
OX1 1BX

20th December 2023

Oxford Local Plan 2040 – Proposed Submission

Dear Planning Policy,

Introduction

Just for letter as background- not copy into database:

CBRE Limited is instructed by Activate Learning to submit planning representations to the Oxford City Council Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan 2040 – Proposed Submission consultation.

Activate Learning is a key partner of the City in the delivery of post 16 year old education, delivering education study programmes and work-based training operating across Oxfordshire and beyond. Activate Learning operates from two campuses in Oxford, namely the City of Oxford College on Oxpens Road and the technology and construction campus at Cuddesdon Way. The Oxford based College offers a broad spectrum of career pathways for post 16 year old and adult learners including A Levels, improving GCSE outcomes, access to higher education programmes and a wide variety of vocational courses including accountancy, business, care, science, beauty therapy, construction, early years provision, engineering, e-sports, hospitality, media, music, sport and tourism amongst many others.

The City of Oxford College, Oxpens, is situated in the heart of the city of Oxford, strategically located to be accessible to the wider Oxfordshire community. The College delivers a critical educational service for those Year 12s and over to continue in education and notably provides a range of pathways not traditionally delivered in the school environment. The College importantly has strong business connections and provides and supports apprenticeship qualifications. The Activate Learning Group works with more than 2,000 businesses to identify and support the training needs of their future employees as well as upskilling employees they already have.

The City of Oxford College sits in a strategic location within the heart of the city and importantly within the West End area of change where it provides a hub for inclusive education and community learning. The area has already been the subject of considerable change with the delivery of the Westgate Centre and will see further change when the Oxpens development comes forward. It is worthy to note the recently adopted West End and Osney Mead SPD identified the College site as a medium to long term opportunity to deliver improvements to the site and wider area.

Support for Chapter 1:

These representations have been submitted to support the key ambitions as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to stress the critical importance of ensuring continued support for the delivery of education provision within the city as well as supporting longer term future opportunities for the reprovision and redevelopment of the Oxpens campus. The draft Plan identifies that the city has a number of strengths and weaknesses. It is clear that as part of its economic weakness there is a lack of high-quality office space in the city centre, where there is high demand and that there is a disparity in education and skills of the population and therefore in access to jobs. The compact nature of the city means that there is a limited housing stock, and this can lead to difficulties attracting and retaining staff, which affects the running of institutions and businesses. It is also recognised that supporting appropriate opportunities for education, learning and skills development can help to foster a more diverse and inclusive economy.

Activate Learning fully supports the Council's ambition to ensure Oxford will be a healthy and inclusive city to live in, providing much needed accommodation for all; a fair and prosperous city supporting education, learning and skills

development for all; a biodiverse city resilient to climate change enhancing ecological networks and delivering improvements to the green and blue network where possible; and an inclusive city. Policy S1 sets out the spatial strategy to achieve sustainable growth. There are many opportunities to regenerate and renew parts of the city in order to meet these ambitions however it should be recognised that there are and will continue to be competing demands which will need to be carefully balanced to ensure the best outcome for the city in the long term.

Furthermore Activate Learning support and welcome the opportunity to continue to work closely with the City Council on the delivery of Community Employment Plans particularly supporting the delivery of apprenticeship training and future employment support to help meet the needs of the local community.

With respect to a number of the specific policies we would comment as follows: **4 reps for policies as stated:**

Policy C1, Town Centre Uses sets out that town centre uses will be permitted in City centres. Whilst the policy notes community facilities amongst those permitted uses we would seek the specific inclusion of education uses.

Policy C2, Maintaining vibrant centres supports development which achieves the densification and growth in the city centre achieving high density development. We support the desire to achieve improved permeability, intensification and making efficient use of land particularly where its existing use is inefficient, dated and not fit for purpose. We support the wording of the policy which recognises that it applies 'where relevant'.

Policy C4, Protection, alteration and provision of learning and non-residential institutions provides an overarching policy approach which supports the provision, redevelopment and relocation/reprovision within sustainable locations within the city. Whilst it is not explicitly stated it would be helpful if it were acknowledged in the supporting text to this policy that the replacement or relocation of a facility should be designed to meet future needs and that does not equate to a 'like for like' floorspace replacement particularly where a facility is inefficient and does not meet modern needs.

Policy WEAOF, West End and Botley Area of Focus supports the future redevelopment of the West End area. This policy is supported and is considered to provide a positive framework for the delivery of medium and long term development opportunities which fall beyond the key allocations identified in the emerging Plan. It is considered this Policy when read alongside Policy S1 provides an appropriate mechanism to support future opportunities.

Should you have any queries with respect this submission we would be happy to meet and discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Tero
Executive Director

cc. Philip Waddup, Activate Learning
Steve Ball, Activate Learning