

**Statement of Common Ground between Oxford City Council and National Highways****Submission Draft (Regulation 19) Oxford Local Plan 2045****June 2026****1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between Oxford City Council and National Highways for the Oxford Local Plan 2045. This SoCG reflects and confirms the current position on matters agreed by both parties with regards to issues of soundness and maintaining effective cooperation.

1.2 Oxford City Council is producing a new Local Plan covering the period 2025-2045. The SoCG reflects the latest position agreed by the parties and is provided without prejudice to other matters that the parties may wish to raise. The area covered by this Statement is Oxford, which is the area covered by the Oxford Local Plan 2045. Where matters arise that are cross-boundary, the Council is also working with its neighbouring local authorities and other SoCGs have been prepared on cross boundary matters.

**2.0 Background and Maintaining Effective Cooperation.**

2.1 The Local Plan 2045 has been prepared within a changing strategic national context. The legal Duty to Cooperate test was revoked on 25 March 2026 and has been replaced by a policy test whereby plan-making authorities now should demonstrate “effective cooperation”.

2.2 National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such National Highways works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

2.3 Oxford City Council and National Highways have been engaging together throughout the formulation of the Local Plan 2045. National Highways have provided feedback at key stages of the Local Plan preparation process, including the Preferred Options consultation (2025), and the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation (2026). The relevant consultation summary reports provide of this feedback. Officers have also engaged with each other at key points outside of the formal consultation cycle via virtual meetings to discuss matters relating to the policy-shaping and supporting evidence, and to collaborate seeking to resolve areas of disagreement wherever possible.

2.4 The Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation (hereafter “*the Reg. 19 consultation*”) saw Oxford City Council publish its full Local Plan and supporting evidence base which it proposed to submit for examination to Central Government in June 2026. As per the relevant legislation/regulations, this version of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 was one that the City Council considered to be ‘sound’ for adoption, meeting the specific requirements for soundness as are outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework. In response to the Reg. 19 consultation, National Highways provided feedback on relevant strategic policies and site allocations, and key evidence base documents.

2.5 Following the end of the Reg. 19 consultation on 13 March 2026, Oxford City Council met National Highways to discuss their response and to try and find a way forward in relation to the issues identified within the Local Plan and supporting evidence. This meeting took place on 26 March 2026.

2.6 At the meeting on 26 March 2026, officers from Oxford City Council and National Highways discussed the comments from National Highways on the strategic policies and site allocations and evidence base. Comments received from National Highways were either supportive of the plan and its policies or of a general nature. Table A.1 of Appendix A provides a summary of the comments from National Highways.

### **3.0 Strategic matters**

3.1 Comments received from National Highways in relation to specific sites were limited to those sites which were in close proximity to the SRN. General comments were made in relation to the sites near the SRN about the importance of consulting National Highways at the planning application stage.

3.2 National Highways also recognised that traffic modelling had been undertaken to assess the level of growth proposed in the Oxford Local Plan 2045 on the A34 (which forms part of the SRN). National Highways also recognised that the level of traffic impact as a result of proposed Local Plan growth projected on the A34 was unlikely to be material.

### **4.0 Concluding remarks/areas of agreement**

4.1 Oxford City Council and National Highways have worked together throughout the preparation of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 preparation process and subsequently during the meeting in March 2026. The discussions have been productive, and the City Council is appreciative of the feedback provided by National Highways.

4.2 The two parties agree that there are no changes required to the plan and that National Highways comments are broadly supportive or are general comments in relation to the SRN.

4.3 The parties agree to continue to work together to deliver a sound plan within the timescales available.

**Signed on behalf of National Highways**

**Patrick Blake**

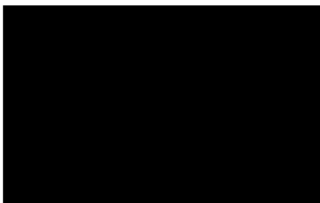


**Title – Spatial Planning Manager**

**Date: 3 June 2026**

**Signed on behalf of Oxford City Council**

**David Butler**



**Title – Director of Planning and Regulation**

**Date: 10 June 2026**

## Appendix A – National Highways comments and Oxford City Council responses

Table A.1: National Highways Reg. 19 representations and City Council Responses

| <b>Policy/<br/>para</b>                  | <b>Summary of Representation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>City Response</b> | <b>Change proposed</b> | <b>National Highways<br/>further response</b> |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Vision                                   | NH welcomes the Council's vision to deliver a sustainable, connected and resilient city with a particular emphasis on environmental sustainability, and as part of this, measures which encourage sustainable and active transport and minimise the need to use the private car to travel.                                                                                                                     | Support noted        | No change proposed     | n/a - support                                 |
| Chapter 7                                | NH welcomes, specifically chapter 7's focus on transforming Oxford into a liveable city with many facilities within walking distance for residents and supporting a transition to sustainable and active forms of transport, including an expectation of low car development, aligns greatly with our strategy.                                                                                                | Support noted        | No change proposed     | n/a - support                                 |
| Site allocations/<br>Transport modelling | <p>Chapter 8 provides details of the following site allocations which border the SRN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy SPN3 – Oxford North Remaining Phases</li> <li>• Policy SPN5 – Pear Tree Farm</li> <li>• Policy SPN6 – Red Barn Farm</li> </ul> <p>No employment sites border the SRN.</p> <p>Oxford City Council has carried out traffic modelling work which indicates that the</p> | General comment.     | No change proposed     | n/a - general comment                         |

| Policy/<br>para       | Summary of Representation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | City Response                                                                                   | Change proposed                                                                                   | National Highways<br>further response                                                           |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | <p>overall impacts from Oxford City's Local Plan growth on the A34 will unlikely be material.</p> <p>Nevertheless, these sites will still need to pay close attention to the impact on the SRN during planning application stage, particularly the impact on the Peartree Roundabout. National Highways expects to be consulted further on these sites when proposals come forward.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                 |
| Draft Local Plan 2045 | <p><u>Support</u><br/>We are supportive of the Oxford Local Plan draft, and the ambition to deliver a liveable city traversable by active travel modes, as well as public transport solutions. Limiting the increase in car journeys not only maintains the SRN, but reduces environmental impacts of travel, and increases the efficiency of other transport measures.</p> <p><u>General comment</u><br/>We have provided feedback where necessary on the respective Policies considered to have potential impact on the SRN and note at this stage the Local Plan does not provide details or understanding of the impact to capacity at the local road network level. The SRN needs to be added to this requirement as</p> | <p><u>Support</u><br/>Support noted</p> <p><u>General comment</u><br/>General comment noted</p> | <p><u>Support</u><br/>No change proposed</p> <p><u>General comment</u><br/>No change proposed</p> | <p><u>Support</u><br/>n/a - support</p> <p><u>General comment</u><br/>n/a - general comment</p> |

| <b>Policy/<br/>para</b>     | <b>Summary of Representation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>City Response</b> | <b>Change proposed</b> | <b>National Highways<br/>further response</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                             | well as a need to assess capacity when required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                      |                        |                                               |
| General support for process | <p>National Highway supports Oxford City Council's commitment to work with partners to consult on potential developments coming forward within the city.</p> <p>We look forward to continuing the ongoing work with all parties to identify and produce a robust transport strategy which would inform the size and scale of development deliverable within Oxford up to and beyond the Local Plan process.</p> | Support Noted        | No change proposed     |                                               |