[redacted]

From: Nick Pinhol [redacted]
Sent: 12 March 2026 11:00
To: Planning Policy
Cc: [redacted]

Subject: Oxford Local Plan 2045 - Consultation Response

Dear Oxford City Council Planning,

I am writing on behalf of Oxfordshire Cricket regarding the Oxford Local Plan 2045 consultation, and to highlight a significant concern around the potential loss of cricket facilities within the city.

Cricket participation in Oxford is growing strongly, particularly among young people and women and girls, and local clubs are already operating close to capacity. However, cricket provision within Oxford is extremely limited. There are only seven affiliated cricket clubs operating within the city boundaries, and just three currently provide junior cricket, while three provide women and girls' programmes.

The current Local Plan housing allocations place three of these seven clubs under direct threat, Oxford CC, East Oxford CC and Oxenford CC. These clubs collectively support two of the three city's junior programmes, two women and girls' programmes, and the city's disability cricket provision. If these sites were lost, Oxford would risk losing nearly half of its affiliated cricket clubs within the city boundary, alongside a significant proportion of its youth and inclusive participation pathways.

This situation must also be viewed in the context of several cricket facilities that have already been lost within the city over the past twenty years, meaning the remaining infrastructure is already under pressure.

Cricket clubs in Oxford are volunteer-led community hubs supporting physical activity, youth development, social inclusion and community wellbeing. Once playing fields are lost, they are extremely difficult, and often impossible to replace in an urban environment like Oxford.

We fully recognise the importance of delivering new housing for the city, and Oxfordshire Cricket is keen to work constructively with Oxford City Council, councillors and partners to help find solutions that balance housing delivery with the protection of vital community sports infrastructure.

Attached is our formal consultation response to the Local Plan, which I have attached for your information. **If you could kindly confirm receipt of our response, that would be appreciated.**

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further and explore how we can work together to ensure cricket continues to thrive within Oxford for future generations.

Thank you for your time and for your work supporting communities across the city.

Many Thanks

Kind Regards

Nick

Nick Pinhol

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[redacted]

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Twitter: @oxoncb



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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Oxford Local Plan 2045
Submission Draft
COMMENT FORM

Part A

You only need to fill Part A in once

Your name: Nick Pinhol

Organisation (if applicable): Oxfordshire Cricket

Address: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Date: 12/03/2026

Data protection:
Please note that your response will be made available for inspection by the public in paper form at the Council's offices, or other locations as appropriate for the purpose of facilitating public access.

Your personal details will be properly safeguarded and processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Your information will be used for The Oxford Local Plan 2045 Proposed Submission Consultation only, and we will only store your data until the Oxford Local Plan 2045 is accepted. Information you give in this form could be shared with the Independent Examiner at the examination stage of the Local Plan process.

We cannot accept anonymous comments.

☐ If you are happy for us to state your name and the first line of your address and postcode when publishing your response(s), please tick this box.

☒ If you would rather all personal details except your name and a non-specific address (e.g. Oxford) to be obscured, please tick this box.

	Yes	No
Do you wish to speak at the examination hearings? (Please note that the Inspector will decide who to invite to speak)	◉	○
Do you wish to be notified when:		
the Council submit the Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Government?	◉	○
the Inspector's Report is published?	◉	○
the Oxford Local Plan 2045 is adopted by the Council?	◉	○

GENERAL ADVICE

For advice on making a comment, please see the accompanying notes page. It is also available at www.oxford.gov.uk/oxford-local-plan-2045

When completing the form,

- You only need to complete Part A once
- Use Part B to make your specific comments. You may complete Part B multiple times to comment on different parts of the Oxford Local Plan 2045.
- Cover concisely all the information and evidence you feel supports or justifies your view, as this will normally be your only opportunity to tell us about it.
- Be as precise as possible.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

Please submit completed forms by email or post to:

planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk

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

If you have any questions please feel free to get in touch with the Planning Policy Team
T: 01865 252847
planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk
www.oxford.gov.uk/localplan2040

Please ensure your comments reach us by **4.00pm on Friday 13th March 2026.**
Thank you for participating.

12th March 2026

Re: Oxford Local Plan 2045 – Proposed Submission Consultation

Dear Oxford City Council Planning Policy Team,

Oxfordshire Cricket welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the **Oxford Local Plan 2045 Proposed Submission**.

As the governing body for recreational and grassroots cricket across Oxfordshire, we work with clubs, schools, volunteers and communities to support participation and ensure the long-term sustainability of cricket across the county.

While we recognise the importance of delivering new housing within Oxford, we are deeply concerned that elements of the proposed Local Plan risk significantly reducing the already limited supply of cricket facilities within Oxford City. The cumulative impact of historic losses of cricket grounds, together with current development allocations and ongoing planning applications, presents a direct threat to the sustainability of cricket provision within the city boundaries.

Growth of Cricket and Increasing Demand for Facilities

Participation in cricket across Oxfordshire continues to grow, particularly among young people and women and girls.

Evidence from the Oxfordshire Cricket 2025 Impact Report demonstrates the strength of this growth:

- **4,605** junior players participated in competitions across the county
- **926** girls competed in junior competitions, representing nearly a 20% increase year-on-year
- **72** teams participated in women's club competitions, representing 30% growth
- **2,684** participants took part in national programmes (All Stars and Dynamos), a 24% increase from 2024

Across Oxfordshire more broadly in 2025:

- **8,040** children engaged with cricket through schools, community programmes and bursary schemes
- **187** young volunteers contributed almost 2,000 hours to community cricket initiatives
- More than £358,000 was invested into clubs and facilities across the county

Within **Oxford City specifically**, participation data shows continued growth:

- Junior participation increased **2.47% year-on-year**
- Girls' participation increased **53.16%**
- Dynamos (ages 8–11) participation increased **55.26%**

These figures demonstrate clearly that demand for cricket facilities is increasing, particularly among younger players and women and girls. Any reduction in the availability of playing fields will place significant pressure on the remaining facilities and restrict the ability of clubs to accommodate this growth.

Limited Cricket Infrastructure Within Oxford City

Cricket provision within Oxford City is already limited and concentrated within a small number of clubs and facilities.

Currently there are **only seven affiliated cricket clubs operating within Oxford City boundaries**:

- Oxford Cricket Club
- Wolvercote Cricket Club
- Oxenford Cricket Club
- Risinghurst Cricket Club
- East Oxford Cricket Club
- Isis Cricket Club
- Oxford University Cricket Club

Of these seven clubs:

- **Only three currently provide structured junior cricket programmes**
- **Only three provide women's and girls' cricket programmes**
- **One club provides disability cricket provision**

This means that a relatively small number of clubs support the majority of youth participation, female participation, and inclusive cricket activity within the city.

Disproportionate Impact of Proposed Development Allocations

The Local Plan's proposed housing allocations place **three of Oxford's seven affiliated cricket clubs under direct threat**:

- Oxford Cricket Club
- East Oxford Cricket Club
- Oxenford Cricket Club

These three clubs play a particularly important role in delivering participation opportunities.

Collectively they provide:

- **Two of the city's junior cricket programmes**
- **Two of the city's women's and girls' programmes**
- **The city's disability cricket provision**

The potential loss of these facilities would therefore represent a disproportionate reduction in cricket provision within Oxford, removing a significant proportion of the infrastructure that supports youth development, women's cricket, and inclusive participation.

Given the small number of clubs within the city boundaries, the loss of multiple facilities simultaneously risks undermining the long-term sustainability of cricket in Oxford.

Historic Loss of Cricket Facilities

The current proposals must also be considered within the context of **historic losses of cricket provision within Oxford**.

Over the past two decades a number of cricket facilities have already been lost, including:

- Barton Road
- Cowley Marsh (grass wicket)
- Horspath Road (two pitches)
- Cutteslowe Park Lower
- Sunnymead Park grass wicket
- Margaret Road Recreation Ground ("The Quarry")

These losses have already reduced the capacity of the city to accommodate cricket participation, placing additional pressure on the remaining grounds.

Current Planning Threats

In addition to historic losses, several existing cricket facilities are currently identified for potential redevelopment within the Local Plan housing allocations, including:

- Jesus College sports ground
- Lincoln College sports ground
- Oxford University Press Jordan Hill sports ground

Alongside these allocations, the currently proposed planning application **25/00307/FUL** would result in the **loss of two cricket grounds and associated training facilities**.

The cumulative impact of these proposals could therefore result in multiple operational cricket grounds being lost within a relatively short timeframe.

The Importance of Protecting Playing Fields

Cricket facilities are particularly difficult to replace once lost. Unlike many other sports facilities, cricket grounds require:

- Large areas of contiguous land
- Long-term pitch preparation and maintenance
- Appropriate soil and drainage conditions
- Supporting infrastructure including pavilions and training nets

Within a densely developed urban environment such as Oxford, replacing lost cricket grounds is extremely challenging.

National planning policy recognises this risk and emphasises the importance of protecting playing fields unless **equivalent replacement provision can be secured**.

At present there is no clear evidence that replacement cricket facilities of equivalent quality and accessibility could be delivered within the city to offset the potential loss of the existing grounds identified in the Local Plan.

Strategic Implications for Sport and Community Wellbeing

Cricket clubs play a significant role in supporting wider community objectives including:

- Public health and physical activity
- Youth engagement and development
- Social cohesion and volunteering
- Inclusion and disability participation
- Opportunities for women and girls in sport

Reducing the availability of playing fields at a time when participation is growing risks undermining these wider policy objectives.

Without adequate facilities, clubs will struggle to:

- accommodate junior teams
- expand women's and girls' cricket
- provide inclusive community programmes
- support volunteers and community engagement.

Oxfordshire Cricket's Position

Oxfordshire Cricket therefore strongly encourages Oxford City Council to:

1. Protect existing cricket playing fields within the Local Plan framework.

2. Reconsider housing allocations that would result in the loss of operational cricket grounds unless appropriate replacement provision can be secured.

3. Work collaboratively with Oxfordshire Cricket, local clubs and Sport England to develop a long-term strategy for cricket facilities within the city.

4. Ensure that any development proposals affecting sports grounds provide replacement facilities that are:

- equivalent or better in quality
- accessible to existing users
- delivered prior to the loss of existing facilities.

Conclusion

Cricket in Oxford is growing rapidly and delivering significant social, health and community benefits.

However, the cumulative loss of facilities through historic development, together with current Local Plan allocations and ongoing planning applications, risks causing irreversible damage to the city's cricket infrastructure.

With only seven affiliated clubs operating within Oxford City boundaries, and several of these currently under threat, the loss of additional playing fields would have a disproportionate impact on junior cricket, women and girls' participation, and inclusive community programmes.

We therefore urge Oxford City Council to ensure that the Oxford Local Plan 2045 protects existing cricket facilities and supports the sustainable growth of community sport within the city.

Oxfordshire Cricket would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council and partners to develop a long-term strategy for protecting and enhancing cricket provision for current and future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Pinhol

[redacted]

Oxfordshire Cricket