Examination of Oxford Local Plan 2045

Historic England, Written Statement

November 2026

Historic England is the principal Government adviser on the historic environment, advising it on planning and listed building consent applications, appeals and other matters generally affecting the historic environment. Historic England is consulted on Local Development Plans and provides advice to ensure that legislation and national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework are thereby reflected in local planning policy and practice.

The tests of soundness require that Local Development Plans should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Historic England's representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan are made in the context of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to the historic environment as a component of sustainable development.

Historic England - Written Statement

Introduction

This statement addresses the Inspector's questions with regards to Matter 4 of the Local Plan Examination: Stage 2 Matters, Issues and Questions. This written statement should be read alongside Historic England's comments submitted at previous consultation stages of the Local Plan.

Matter 4: Site Selection Methodology

Issue 2: General Site Allocation Requirements

Q2 What is the justification for repeating and cross-referencing other policy requirements in each allocation, for example, requirements relating to drainage, heritage and design?

We do not agree that the individual site allocations repeat the Local Plan's general heritage policies (HD3–HD5). In our view, the urban design and heritage criteria set out within each allocation provide necessary, site-specific detail. Where appropriate, they incorporate targeted cross-references to other relevant policies. Rather than creating unnecessary repetition, this approach clarifies site-level requirements, identifies particular specific considerations and provides greater certainty for applicants, the local community, and decision-makers, consistent with paragraph 16(d) of the NPPF and the requirement for plans to set a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment (paragraph 203). We therefore consider this drafting to be sound and support the Council's approach.

Q4 What is the justification for referencing the Council's High Buildings Technical Advice Note ('TAN') in some site allocations? Is it sufficiently clear what is required of proposals for new development?

The potential impact on Oxford's historic environment of new tall buildings requires careful consideration. Oxford is set within a low-lying river basin, the historic core contains one of the country's densest concentrations of highly graded heritage assets, framed by surrounding hills that offer long range views of its skyline. The Tall Building TAN provides additional guidance for assessing impacts. We therefore support references within individual site allocations where relevant. We do see some merit in explicitly stating the relevant height threshold quoted in the TAN within the site allocation for clarity.