Examination of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 – Stage 2 Hearings: Statement on behalf of Christ Church

Matter: Matter 5: Site Allocations

Issue: Issue 1: West End and Botley Road Area of Focus

Hearing Date: 24 November 2026 (Afternoon Session)

The following comments on selected questions in the MIQ's are submitted on behalf of Christ Church (ChCh). ChCh is one of the largest Oxford College's and a significant landowner in the City.

Issue 1: West End and Botley Road Area of Focus

Q1 Is Policy WEBRAOF justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy?

1. Policy WEBRAOF is justified in terms of it identifying the West End and Botley Road area as one of Oxford's most important regeneration opportunities. This is consistent with the Vision and Policy S1 objectives of maximising the efficient use of previously developed land, supporting sustainable growth and helping address housing and employment needs.

2. However, the policy is not fully effective in its current form. This is because the Area of Focus (AoF) boundary excludes land to the west of Oxford Station. The AoF also excludes sites allocated under Policy SPCW2 which are important and well related to the regeneration of the wider area and will act as a catalyst in delivering regeneration on this important gateway into the City.

3. Extending the Area of Focus boundary would provide a more positive and comprehensive framework for encouraging regeneration in the West End and Botley Road. It would also better align the AoF with the extent of the Oxford Growth Commission's '*Oxford Central / West End*' Opportunity Area, recognising the role of these sites in delivering housing, economic growth and wider regeneration benefits (see also Map 2 of the OGC's Interim Report dated December 2025).

Q2 What is the boundary of the West End and Botley Road Area of Focus based on, and does it include all the allocations SPCW1-12?

1. ChCh owns land which is allocated under the SPCW policies. Set out below is a list of those sites and comments on whether they are located within the AoF boundary or not:

   - Botley Road Sites around Cripley Road including River Hotel and Westgate Hotel (Policy SPCW2): Not included in the AoF.
   - Faculty of Music (Policy SPCW4): Not included in the AoF.
   - St Thomas School and Osney Warehouse (Policy SPCW11): Included in the AoF.

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SPCW2: Botley Road Sites including River Hotel and Westgate Hotel

Q1 What is the justification for allocating three individual sites under the same policy?

1. ChCh owns all three sites which are the subject of Policy SPCW2. ChCh has liaised with the City Council as part of the drafting of this policy and supports the regeneration of this land. (See also paragraph 10.4.3 of ChCh's Regulation 19 response for suggested amendments to this Policy).

2. The policy allocates three areas of land given the landownership boundary.

Q2 How and when will the allocation come forward and is it developable within the plan period?

1. All three ChCh sites can come forward within the Plan period. These sites can deliver a range of uses, as identified in the policy. However, the range of uses should be broadened to include student accommodation, as identified in ChCh's response to the Regulation 19 Plan (see paragraph 10.4.3); and a revision made to the affordable housing policy (see paragraphs 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 and 10.4.2).

Q3 What is the policy expectation for the River Hotel and Westgate Hotel, which are described by the Plan as forming part of the Oxford Heritage Asset Register? Is the allocation justified and consistent with national planning policy insofar as heritage matters are concerned?

1. No response.

Q4 Is the allocation justified, having particular regard to local and national planning policies concerning flood risk?

1. Yes, given that the sites represent previously developed land. Redevelopment would be appropriate subject to addressing any flood risk concerns.

SPCW4: Faculty of Music

Q1 What is the latest position regarding the approved planning permission for the site? How does it relate to the proposed allocation (including the site boundary)?

1. Since the grant of planning permission on 29th January 2026 (OCC Ref. 25/01872/FUL), work has continued on behalf of ChCh to deliver the new Graduate Centre. This work includes the discharge of Condition 6 of the planning permission (Historic Buildings Recording) on 10th July 2026. However, the permission has not yet been implemented albeit that ChCh is in the process of appointing a contractor to undertake the building work. There are still a number of pre-commencement conditions to be discharged but it is expected that implementation will begin in the first half of 2027.

2. ChCh fully supports the allocation and its retention in the Local Plan. The allocation should not be removed from the Plan as this would remove any future flexibility in the delivery of development of this site.

3. The allocation boundary is the same as the planning permission site boundary.

Q2 What is the justification for requiring a car-free development in this location and how are proposals expected to reduce car parking along Floyds Row?

1. No response.

SPCW11: St Thomas School and Osney Warehouse

Q1 What is the current use of the site and how/when will it come forward for development? What evidence is there to indicate that the site is developable within the plan period?

1. The current planning use class of the buildings are for commercial uses, Class E. The building are let on commercial leases. They happen to be occupied by charitable organisations.

2. ChCh reiterates its response to the Regulation 19 Plan that the site does not include any community facilities (ie Use Class F).

3. ChCh supports the regeneration of the two parcels of land which are the subject of this proposed allocation and has liaised with the City Council as part of the drafting of this policy. ChCh is discussing the delivery of development of its two parcels of land, which are covered by this proposed allocation, with adjoining landowners with a view to progressing with redevelopment in the coming few years.

Q2 Having regard to the answer to Q1 above, what is the justification for the reprovision of community uses on the site?

1. There are no community uses (Class F) on site. The policy needs to be updated to remove such references as per our Reg 19 response.

Q3 Is the allocation justified, having particular regard to local and national planning policies concerning flood risk?

1. The allocation is considered justified. The two parcels of land which are the subject of this policy are within a highly sustainable and accessible urban location where opportunities for redevelopment are generally limited.

2. The allocation has been informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The policy includes a number of safeguards to address flood risk, including a sequential approach to development, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, and detailed consideration of safe access, egress and evacuation arrangements. These requirements are consistent with Policy G7 of the draft Local Plan.

3. ChCh notes that the NPPF does not preclude development in Flood Zone 2. Namely, where flood risk is appropriately managed through the Sequential Test and, where necessary, the Exception Test.

4. Policy SPCW11 also provides developers with flexibility to incorporate flood resilience and mitigation measures into any future (re)development scheme. The existing buildings on the site involve footprints which create opportunities for future adaptation, reuse and redevelopment over time. Flood resilience and mitigation measures can also be incorporated into any future (re)development scheme for the remainder of the site, which is currently underused. This will help to ensure the long-term resilience and efficient use of the site.