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

Matter: Matter 5: Site Allocations

Issue: Issue 2: Cowley Branch Line Area of Focus

Hearing Date: 26 November 2026

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 2: Cowley Branch Line Area of Focus

Q1 What is the justification for requiring financial contributions towards public transport enhancements, from trip-generating uses within a 1,500m buffer zone of the proposed Cowley Branch Line stations? How has the zone been established and is it based on appropriate available evidence?

1. ChCh supports the reinstatement of passenger services on the Cowley Branch Line and recognises the significant benefits that this could bring to residents, businesses and employees in this part of Oxford.

2. However, the justification for requiring financial contributions from all trip-generating development within a fixed 1,500m buffer is unclear. The Plan does not explain why 1,500m has been selected, nor demonstrate that this is the appropriate catchment area for contributions.

3. A 1,500m radius may broadly reflect a reasonable cycling distance and potential catchment for station users. However, the Plan does not demonstrate how all development within that area would generate a need for public transport enhancements. Nor does the Plan say why contributions from all such development are necessary and proportionate. The absence of a clear methodology makes it difficult to assess whether the proposed buffer zone satisfies the tests of being justified, effective and proportionate.

4. ChCh reiterates that there should not be an open-ended requirement for financial contributions towards public transport enhancements. The policy should make clear that, once those enhancements have been funded and delivered, no further contributions will be sought for the same infrastructure. This would not meet the CIL Reg 122 tests of being necessary.

Q2 Outside the 1,500m buffer area, what is the justification for Policy CBLAOF stating that proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis? What is the infrastructure that the policy seeks to deliver and how is this related to the allocations in the Plan?3

1. No response.

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