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

Matter: Matter 12: Transport

Issue: Issue 2: Parking Design Standards (Policies C7 and C8)

Hearing Date: 08 December 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 2 – Parking Design Standards – Policies C7 and C8

Q1 **Is the approach to parking standards consistent with national planning policy in paragraph 112 of the Framework, which sets out the factors to take into account when setting standards?**

Q2 **Is the approach consistent with paragraph 113 of the Framework, which explicitly states that maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport?**

1. ChCh has previously confirmed its support for Policy C7 and notes that the policy requirements are based on the 2023 Oxfordshire County Council (OXCC) Parking Standards for New Developments.

2. It is pertinent to note that, in April 2026, OXCC adopted revised parking standards that introduced significantly more restrictive requirements. On 17th June 2026, Savills, on behalf of ChCh and a number of other University colleges and developers, raised concerns that the standards would create barriers to growth and housing delivery (see attached letter).

3. Savills' letter stated that OXCC's 2026 Standards represented "*such a substantial shift in the extent and degree of parking controls that it will undermine the delivery of new communities*". Furthermore, they offered "*absolutely no flexibility in approach*", and that they would have "*a significant adverse impact on the ability of housebuilders to viably deliver new homes*". Savills letter also stated that the standards could "*significantly delay*" the delivery of much-needed housing and result in "*fewer new homes, including Affordable Homes, being built across the county*".

4. On 14 July 2026, OXCC withdrew its 2026 standards. The 2023 parking standards remain those adopted in 2023.

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5. For clarity and effectiveness, the Plan should confirm in both its relevant policies and supporting appendices that the applicable parking standards are the 2023 Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards for New Developments.

Q3 What is the justification for requiring compliance with the Oxfordshire County Council Street Design Guide, which falls outside the scope of the development plan?

No response.

Savills Letter to Oxfordshire County Council (dated 17th June 2026)

17th June 2026

David Jackson

Head of Planning and Savills Earth - UK Board Director

[redacted]

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Robin Rogers
Director of Economy and Place
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
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OX1 1ND

Dear Mr Rogers,

Oxfordshire Parking Standards: a Barrier to Growth and Success

Parking standards in Oxfordshire are set by the County Council in the context of its Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), which it adopted in July 2022. The key role of the standards is to strike a balance between accommodating essential transport needs and promoting sustainable travel options to reduce congestion, pollution, and traffic hazards. The purpose of this letter is to raise concerns that arise from the latest standards introduced by the County Council, which have tilted that balance towards excessive restriction, that will have significant unintended consequences and compromise the county's ability to compete as a globally important centre for innovation, research and learning.

On 21st April 2026 Oxfordshire County Council at a meeting of its Cabinet adopted new parking standards (2026 Standards) that it proposes should apply across the whole of the county. The 2026 Standards introduce very significant changes to the previous standards (2023 Standards) particularly with respect to provision on sites for new homes. In relation to residential development, the proposed changes have two principal effects:

- to introduce a new category for which a reduced level of parking provision is required – referred to as 'Car Light' - with 50% of car parking provided off-plot within the development area; and
- to amend the previously existing criteria for 'Car Free' communities, mainly by increasing walking distances, and by doing so significantly extending the area in which new homes will have to be built with no parking provision (other than those for disabled people and car clubs).

The signatories to this letter are supportive of the County Council's transport objectives as expressed in the LTCP, including:

- reducing car usage:
- increasing active travel and public transport usage;
- improving safety including the 'Vision Zero' target; and
- improving connectivity.

This support has been demonstrated through pro-active engagement with the County Council, working under the 2023 Standards, to deliver innovative solutions to car parking provision that are consistent with the LTCP.

Notwithstanding this support, the signatories are deeply concerned that the 2026 Standards represent such a substantial shift in the extent and degree of parking controls that it will undermine the delivery of new

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communities that are key to addressing the current unaffordability of homes in Oxfordshire. This is particularly the case with the changes to the Car Free criteria that will significantly extend the area over which this regime will now apply. It is noted that the newly adopted standards offer absolutely no flexibility in approach when it comes to the requirement for car free and car lite development meeting the criteria set out. Homes without parking provision are simply not attractive to many purchasers, or indeed liveable for certain groups in the community, for example those unable to walk the distances prescribed in the standards in comfort / a reasonable timescale or who rely on a vehicle to deliver local services like health workers, trades people and delivery drivers. Additionally, there are people who work unsociable hours when public transport options are limited, and walking/cycling is less attractive particularly for more vulnerable groups due to lack of security / natural surveillance.

This will not only have a significant adverse impact on the ability of housebuilders to viably deliver new homes, but also undermine the infrastructure improvements that are delivered alongside these homes including additional public transport services, footpaths and cycleways, open spaces, and additional biodiversity / habitat benefits. Additionally, it is the major new homes projects that deliver Affordable Homes, for which there is a critical need in the county, and this need will only persist and indeed become more severe without delivery of these new communities.

The 2026 Standards impact not only new communities, but also existing residents because it will be a requirement of Car Free projects that Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) will be introduced into neighbouring communities in order to manage the risk of overspill parking being displaced to nearby roads. This will have the effect of requiring residents in those neighbouring communities to pay an annual fee to park on-street.

In light of the above, the signatories consider that the 2026 Standards (if applied by Local Planning Authorities) are likely to give rise to a range of unintended consequences;

- entirely to undermine, or at the least significantly delay, the delivery of much-needed homes including those schemes which have already been granted planning permission given that the County Council has indicated that the standards are to be applied even at the Reserved Matters stage (effectively a retrospective intervention);
- fewer new homes, including Affordable Homes, being built across the county and thus further exacerbating the existing crisis in affordability in Oxfordshire;
- a withdrawal of investment from new business / commercial spaces consequent on the drop in the attractiveness of Oxfordshire as a location for businesses to move to / grow in the area as a result of lack of affordable housing options available for the required workforce; and
- a consequent loss of investment across other forms of infrastructure including schools, public transport, walking / cycling routes and habitat creation, which are all supported by economic growth and the delivery of homes.

These impacts arise at a time when the County Council is reminded by the Minister of State for Housing and Planning as set out in his letter of 12th February 2026 (see page 351 of the Cabinet report of 21st April 2026) that:

'*Economic growth is the number one mission of this government*'.

The letter from the Minster also identifies that through taking a sub-regional approach the expected outcome is:

'*… that (we will) build more homes, co-ordinate the delivery of strategic infrastructure, grow the economy, and improve the environment and climate resilience*'.

The 2026 Standards put at risk Oxfordshire's contribution to these sub-regional objectives and therefore 'The Case for a Thames Valley Mayor' that is also set out in the Cabinet report pages 365 – 372.

We therefore request that the County Council withdraws its decision to adopt the 2026 Standards and instead undertakes a full and open consultation on how the 2023 Standards might be refreshed / modified. The consultation should provide both an explanation of the options for revision to the existing Standards and the evidence base on which these options have been identified. The consultation should also explore the wider implications of any change in Standards, not just the transport impacts. Any conclusions the County Council reaches from this process should demonstrate how the feedback received from the consultation has informed any changes to the Standards that are then taken forward.

We look forward to taking forward this dialogue in a positive and fully engaged manner and as supporters of the objectives and ambition of the LTCP.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

David Jackson

Director

For and on behalf of:

Oxford University Development (University of Oxford and Legal & General)
Brasenose College
Christ Church
Exeter College
Magdalen College, Bursar
New College
Nuffield College, Bursar
St John's College, Principal Bursar

Bellway Homes Ltd
Catesby Estates
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