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DD: 07976 603735
E: jonathan.bainbridge@bidwells.co.uk
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Katharine Makant
Programme Officer
Via email: KMakant@makantprogrammeservices.co.uk

Dear Katharine

OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2045 EXAIMATION STAGE 2 HEARING STATEMENT – PIONEER GROUP

I write on behalf of The Pioneer Group ("Pioneer") in response to the Inspector's Questions for Stage 2 of the examination of the Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045, further to the detailed representations submitted at Regulation 19 stage.

As set out in our Regulation 19 representations, Pioneer is a leading developer and operator of life science and high-tech campuses. In 2024, Pioneer announced an intention to deliver new development bespoke to the needs of Oxford Science Enterprise ('OSE'), in partnership with The Crown Estate.

In June 2025, a full planning application (25/01588/FUL) was submitted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Ozone Leisure Park. The proposals comprise a mixed-use science and innovation-led development including research and development floorspace, active ground-floor uses, the restoration of the Grade II* listed Minchery Farmhouse, a new community leisure facility, a Cowley Branch Line mobility hub, public realm and biodiversity enhancements, together with associated infrastructure and supporting development.

The application relates to draft Site Allocation SPS13 and Oxford City Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant permission, subject to the agreement of a s106 on 14 July 2026. As such, it is directly relevant to the Inspector's consideration of Matter 5, Issue 2 and we wish to raise the following matters in response to the Inspector's questions.

Matter 5 – Site Allocations

Issue 2 – Cowley Branch Line Area of Focus

SPS7 – Kassam Stadium, SPS11 – Overflow Car Park at Kassam Stadium and SPS13 - Ozone Leisure Park

Q1: What is the latest position regarding the proposals for the new football stadium, and consequently, the redevelopment of the existing stadium, overflow car park and leisure site?

The redevelopment of SPS13 (Ozone Leisure Park) is not dependent upon the relocation of Oxford United Football Club. Oxford City Council has already resolved to grant planning permission for the comprehensive redevelopment of this site (SPS13) under application 25/01588/FUL. The principle of redevelopment has therefore been accepted, and the site has a clear pathway to delivery independent of

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proposals affecting SPS7 and SPS11. Accordingly, any uncertainty regarding the timing or delivery of a new football stadium does not undermine the allocation or deliverability of SPS13.

Q2: What is required of the masterplan referred to by Policies SPS7, SPS11 and SPS13? Does the Plan require the sites to come forward as part of a single, comprehensive development?

It is both realistic and necessary that the individual allocations are capable of coming forward independently, provided that doing so does not prejudice the delivery of the overarching vision and objectives for the Cowley Branch Line Area of Focus. This is particularly important in the case of SPS13, which has already secured a resolution to grant planning permission as a standalone redevelopment proposal, thereby demonstrating its ability to be delivered independently of the wider allocations.

Q3: What evidence is there to indicate that the sites are developable within the plan period?

In relation to SPS13, there is substantial evidence demonstrating that the site is deliverable within the Plan period. The site has been subject to extensive technical assessment through the planning application process, including consideration of matters relating to transport, heritage, ecology, design, environmental impacts and infrastructure requirements. Viability and market demand have also been tested through the preparation of the planning application.

Importantly, Oxford City Council resolved to grant planning permission for the redevelopment of the site in July 2026, confirming that the Council considers the scheme to be acceptable in principle and capable of delivery. Furthermore, the site benefits from committed developer interests, a clear delivery strategy and an identified end-user market associated with Oxford's internationally significant science and innovation sector. Taken together, these factors provide compelling evidence that SPS13 is deliverable within the Plan period.

Q4: Is it sufficiently clear what uses will be permitted across the sites? For example, Policy SPS7 refers to the 'precedent' for employment uses, which will be acceptable as a 'secondary' use on the site. Are the policies clear and effective?

Pioneer considers that sufficient flexibility should be retained to enable genuinely mixed-use development. The policies should focus on securing the minimum housing objectives set out within the allocations, whilst allowing an appropriate degree of flexibility in the detailed mix of complementary uses. Such an approach would ensure the allocations remain effective throughout the Plan period and maximise opportunities to deliver economic growth, homes, community facilities and sustainable development outcomes in a coordinated manner.

Other Matters

We refer you to our Regulation 19 response in relation to the following matters/policies:

- Matter 7 – Issue 1 - Policy H3: Affordable Housing Contributions from New Commercial Development
- Matter 8 – Issue 2 - Policy E4: Affordable Workspaces
- Matter 9 – Issue 1 - Policy C1: City, District and Local Centres
- Matter 10 – Issue 1 -Policy R2: Embodied Carbon
- Matter 11 – Issue 1 - Policy S3: Infrastructure Delivery in New Development
- Matter 11 – Issue 2 - Policy S4: Plan Viability
- Matter 13 – Issue 2 - Policy HD2: Making Efficient Use of Land
- Matter 13 – Issue 2 - Policy HD6: Views and Building Heights

I trust that the information and submissions set out in this Hearing Statement will assist the Inspector in considering the matters raised and inform the forthcoming Hearing sessions.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Jonathan Bainbridge
Partner, Planning