

OXFORD CITY CENTRE ACTION PLAN

2021 - 2030

A detailed line drawing of a street scene in Oxford City Centre. It features historic buildings with multiple stories, many windows, and a prominent church spire on the right. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of people walking and a street sign. The drawing is in a sketchy, artistic style.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

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CITY CENTRE ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT

CONTEXT

Part A provides a headline profile of Oxford's city centre alongside a summary of its primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as a summary of the actions already underway to support a positive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPROACH

Part B defines a hierarchy of the Action Plan and presents the four distinct workstreams and their clear objectives, which drive the projects and commitments within the Action Plan.

ACTION PLAN

Part C outlines the catalyst initiatives and projects that will support Oxford in achieving the objectives of this Action Plan, grouped by workstream. Full project details can be found in the Projects & Places Appendix.



IMPLEMENTATION

Part D sets out how change will be coordinated across stakeholders. Responsibility for leading on and supporting delivery will be shared by a range of different organisations.

CITY CENTRE ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT: PROJECTS & PLACES APPENDIX

PROJECTS

This section provides further detail on the catalyst initiatives and projects that will support Oxford in achieving the objectives of this Action Plan, grouped by workstream.

STREET-BY-STREET

This section explores some potential location-specific opportunities and considerations for an improved public realm across Oxford city centre, to help define the scope for a public realm strategy.

CITY CENTRE ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT

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FOREWORD

CONSULTATION DRAFT

This is a draft for consultation. To help stakeholders contribute effectively, a series of questions have been included in this document. We are specifically seeking your views on these questions. Questions are asked at the end of each section about the content presented, and are highlighted in green.

This project began as a collaboration between Oxford City Council and local stakeholders in 2019, with the objective of identifying a set of actions that would strengthen the resilience of our city centre. At the same time we've developed a citywide Economic Strategy which I also encourage you to read and comment on.

The process has been tested by COVID-19. As one of the UK's fastest growing cities and again named as the top UK city for economic success and wellbeing of the community for the fourth year in a row, Oxford, like many other places across the UK, was facing a sudden impact of unparalleled challenges.

As Oxford begins to emerge from the pandemic, having done much to protect and meet the needs of the most vulnerable, the focus must be on turning one of the most difficult periods in the city's history to one of positive response and action.

The need for flexibility and change has long been acknowledged in other strategies, including the [Oxford Vision 2050](#) and [Oxford Local Plan 2036](#). The aim of this Action Plan is to identify specific issues and interventions that are focused on improving the resilience of the city centre in an integrated way.

Across all of the project aims and ambitions, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for all residents of, and visitors to, Oxford is recognised as an agreed priority for all its stakeholders, and all current and new initiatives will be checked through this perspective to ensure they comply.

As outlined on page 5 alongside, the Action Plan focuses on four workstreams, each of which is defined by a series of objectives and under which a series of projects have been identified to deliver them.

This Action Plan will help to ensure the city centre continues to perform for the social, economic and environmental good of Oxford and its residents. This will include helping the council and partners to:

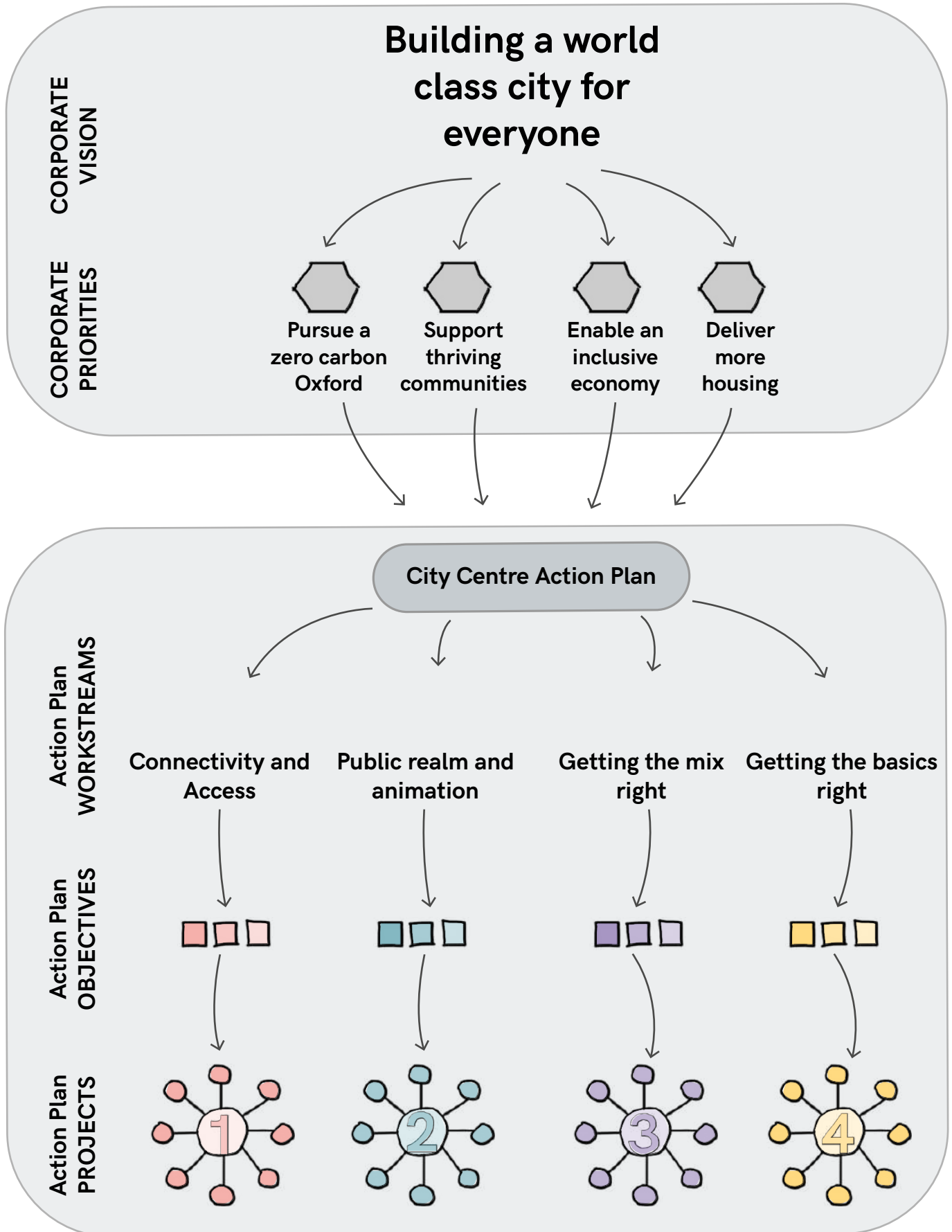
- + respond to the current challenges facing the high street and being prepared to respond to future and emerging trends
- + improve the experience of the city centre for the people who live, work, study and visit here; including committing to inclusion, normalising accessibility planning in project development, and making best use of digital innovation
- + create a supportive environment for local businesses to thrive
- + access public funding with an approved, community-owned strategy and vision
- + ensure a city-wide focus on pursuing a zero carbon Oxford, supporting thriving communities, and delivering more housing are applied city centre priorities
- + maintain and enhance Oxford's reputation and role as a driver of the local and regional economy with a focus on contributing to an inclusive economy.

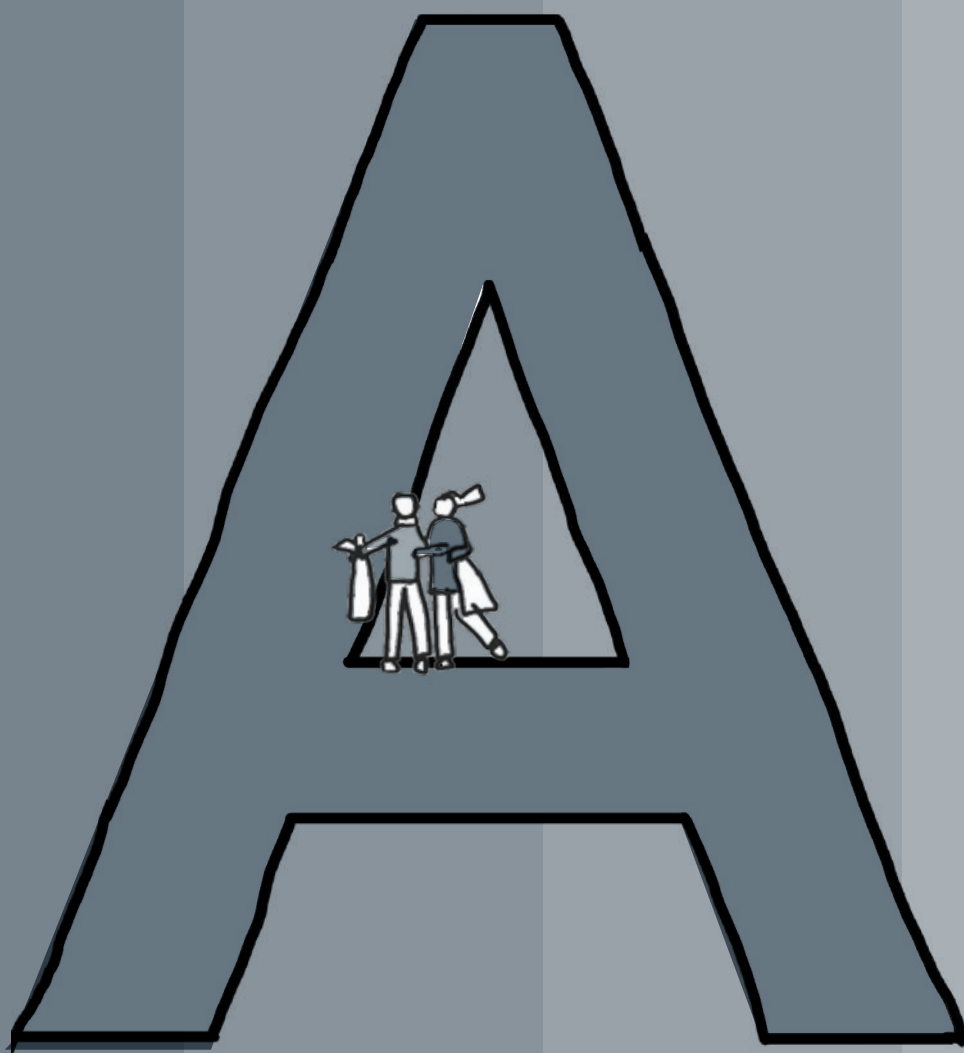


Councillor Susan Brown

Leader, and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships

ACTION PLAN HIERARCHY





CONTEXT

This part of the Action Plan provides a headline profile of Oxford's city centre drawn from an extensive evidence base. It includes a number of actions that have already been committed to in supporting recovery from the pandemic.

THE CITY CENTRE TODAY

CENTRAL CONSERVATION AREA

Much of the city centre is covered by the Central Conservation Area (CCA) and contains the medieval core of the university. The [CCA Appraisal](#) identifies opportunities to enhance the conservation area in ways that would sustain the city's cultural, economic and social prosperity. Development should explore opportunities to rebalance the space within streets from vehicles to pedestrians, identify sites for a new network of 'micro parks' where people can stop and dwell in streets, increase public access to existing green spaces and celebrate the characteristics of the city that make it so distinctive and special.

WEST END AND OSNEY MEAD AREA OF CHANGE

The recently adopted [Oxford Local Plan 2036](#) highlights Areas of Change within the city, and includes major development opportunities including at Oxpens, Oxford Rail Station, and Osney Mead.

Much of the area is under-utilised and does not reflect Oxford's international reputation or live up to its potential.

As Oxford University increases its ownership of land at Osney Mead there is an increased potential to further integrate and enhance this whole area to the south west of the centre and around the station.



FIGURE 1 Covered Market



FIGURE 2 Bonn Square and Westgate Centre



FIGURE 3 Gloucester Green



FIGURE 4 Oxpens



Central Conservation Area

West End and Osney Mead Area of Change

City waterways

Major Development Sites

- 1 Oxford Rail Station
- 2 Oxpens
- 3 Osney Mead
- 4 Clarendon Centre
- 5 Covered Market
- 6 Island site

Key Places

- 7 Westgate
- 8 Gloucester Green
- 9 Bonn Square
- 10 Bus Station

FIGURE 5 Oxford city centre places

THE CITY CENTRE TODAY

BASELINE EVIDENCE

This Action Plan has been informed and influenced by a number of emerging and adopted documents prepared to guide Oxford's future. A full review of evidence is contained within the supporting **Evidence Base Report** compiled in late 2019 / early 2020. Some key headlines are as follows:

ECONOMIC PROFILE

11% Employment in the city centre has grown by 11% since 2013, which is close to the national average.¹

- + Businesses starting up within the city centre increased from 59 in 2012 to 139 in 2018. While a positive trend, this is still relatively low for a city of Oxford's scale and status.²

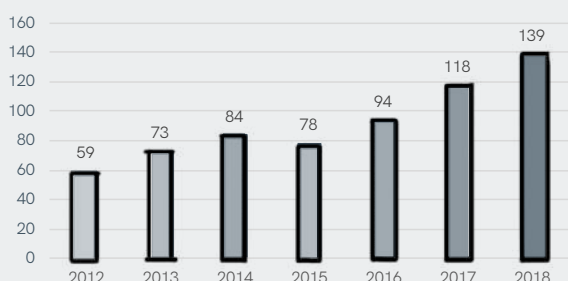


FIGURE 6 Number of new businesses registered within the city centre 2013 - 2018

- + Retail vacancies in the city centre increased from 6% in 2018 to 11% in 2019. Through 2019 and early 2020 the headline vacant unit number was falling. It spiked again after three lockdowns but by Summer 2021 was falling again to c.13%. This is above the national retail vacancy rate of c.10%.³



- + The Knowledge Economy, Public Administration, Education and Health dominate the city centre economy.¹

COMMERCIAL PROFILE

44% Retail's share of the market has decreased from 49% to 44% since 2008.³

- + Prior to COVID-19, retail rental rates have increased from £50 per sq ft in 2015 to £65 per sq.⁷



- + Office vacancy rates in the centre have been persistently low over the last five years. Rental values are, however, comparatively low, likely linked to the lack of high quality stock on the market.⁷

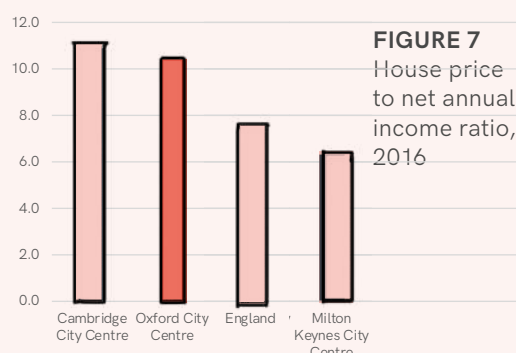


FIGURE 7 House price to net annual income ratio, 2016

- + House prices in the centre are around 11 times higher than annual salaries, making it more unaffordable than most city centres.⁸

SPATIAL PROFILE

- + Much of the city centre is covered by one of four conservation areas and contains the medieval core of the university. It also includes the West End, which has been long identified as having significant growth and development potential.



- + A constrained urban form and land use pattern puts pressure on public space; results in a lack of green space; and creates competing interests between uses.

- + The centre's narrow medieval streets create competition between uses.

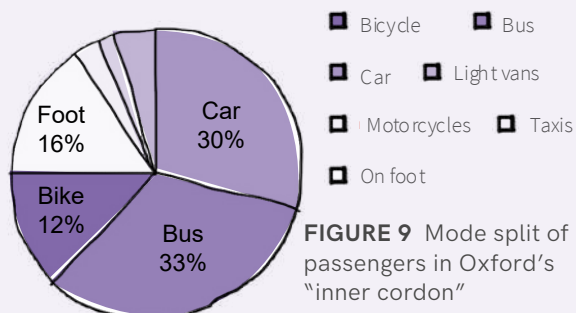
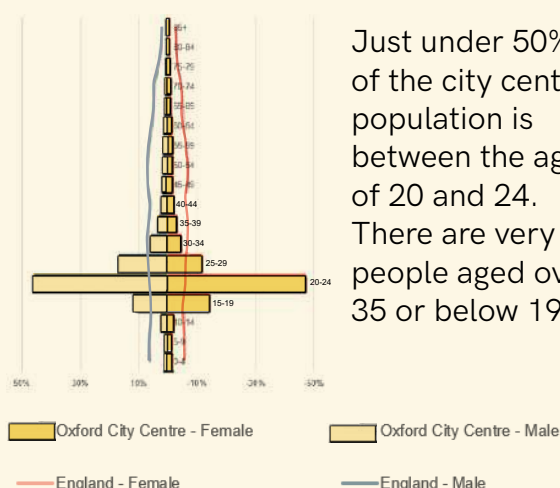


FIGURE 9 Mode split of passengers in Oxford's "inner cordon"

- + Pre-COVID-19, on average 150,000 people journeyed into and out of the centre each day. 33% of these trips were made by bus, 30% by car, 15% by foot and 12% by cycle.⁵

SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

***Note:** a number of the listed factors in these sections will have changed during COVID-19, but most can be expected to re-establish in the years ahead.



Just under 50% of the city centre population is between the ages of 20 and 24. There are very few people aged over 35 or below 19.⁴

FIGURE 8 City centre population structure.

- + One in 17 deaths in Oxford is related to air pollution.⁵ However, air pollution levels decreased by 29% during the 2020 lockdowns.⁶



Rough sleeping increased significantly until 2017. Although it has since decreased, the number of people rough sleeping remains high for a city of Oxford's size.⁷

SOURCES

- 1 - ONS BRES, 2019
- 2 - Companies House, 2019
- 3 - Experian GOAD, 2019
- 4 - Annual Population Survey, 2018
- 5 - Oxford Transport Strategy, 2015
- 6 - Air Quality Annual Status Report, 2020
- 7 - Oxford City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Evidence Base, 2021
- 8 - Co-Star, 2019
- 9 - ONS, Median House Prices, Net Annual Income, 2018
- 10 - Oxford City Council [Economic Quick Facts](#)
- 11 - UK Business Count, 2019

THE CITY CENTRE TODAY

FRAMEWORK FOR A RESILIENT CITY CENTRE

As we seek to recover and rebuild from the pandemic, we must question what exactly is it that we are rebuilding toward.

In his article *Towns, High Streets and Resilience: A Question for Policy* (2021), Leigh Sparks, Professor of Retail Studies at Stirling University, highlights "the often-stated desire to return post-pandemic to 'normal' is confronting questions over whether the pre-pandemic 'normal' was resilient, sustainable, or indeed desirable."

The decline of town centres and high streets, begun well before the COVID-19 pandemic, exists in part as the retail sector is experiencing massive change, requires less space and is under severe commercial pressure. Retail and other businesses have been moving out of centres and contributing to the leeching of functions out of the centre. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where visitor and workforce footfall has plummeted in the centre.

The need for flexibility and change has long been acknowledged in Oxford; it is, for example, featured in the Oxford Vision 2050 and Oxford Local Plan 2036. Our challenge is to grow the resilience of the city centre to address the shocks and stresses we are now even better placed to anticipate.

1 Define resilience

There needs to be more clarity about what resilience means, and the purpose it serves, in the local context. Resilience needs to be defined for - and by - Oxford's communities, so it is clear who benefits, why and how.



2 Challenge the status quo

Resilience is often thought of as the ability to rebound from shock. This often overlooks existing issues of how a place really works for its community. The drive for resilience, therefore, has to be open to the idea of challenging the existing order of things, ways of acting and types of organisations and impact. Places are about their communities, and thus resilient centres need to be about resilience for the benefit of that community. For example, Oxford city centre has a limited value retail offer to serve its communities, and there are few opportunities, due to rent levels and availability at the right size, for local independent businesses to set up.



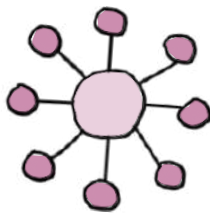
3 Rethink the cost of city centre development

Like many places, Oxford city centre has seen a number of national retailers and businesses declining and moving out. To stop this leakage and create a sustainable centre, we must rethink how development is costed. This implies challenging the current balance between in-town and out-of-town development and operations, new build and renovation cost disparities and the imbalance between private and social costs and benefits.



4 Value local networks

When pursuing resilience, it is important to consider how the system works and for whom. To prioritise a small number of large firms in many sectors, who rely on their national and international networks, can be at the expense of the resilience of towns and local businesses, who rely on their local networks. A definition of resilience which values local networks as integral to the success of the place is more likely to build wealth that stays within the community, and build capacity locally.



5 Intervene

The current system has seen places and people left behind and without access to basic needs and facilities. The dominance of large and distant businesses reduces local opportunities and leaves centres at the mercy of decisions taken well out of context. Much of current policy makes it easier and cheaper to develop away from the centre, exacerbating the problem. Intervention - both in supporting certain things but also in stopping others - is required in the name of local prosperity, health and sustainability.



THE CITY CENTRE TODAY

STRENGTHS



- + **International brand that attracts business and visitors.** Oxford generally attracts approximately 7 million visitors per year, generating £780 million of income for city businesses.¹⁰

- + **Strong business confidence.** Despite the challenges of the pandemic, more than 20 businesses opened in vacant city centre units between October 2020 and summer 2021, at which point, agents reported more than 30 other units under offer.



- + **A globally renowned and recognised city.** Internationally recognisable heritage assets create a distinct, high quality, built environment.
- + **Institutional landowners driving new opportunities.** The success of Oxford's economy is significantly enhanced by the presence of its two universities. Research capabilities and the ready supply of graduates mean that Oxford is an attractive location for a range of businesses.



- + **Well established sustainable travel.** A compact city where cycling rates are high, bus services are comprehensive and frequent, and rail services are expanding and being improved.
- + **A driver for the regional and national economy.** The city has one of the highest concentrations of 'knowledge intensive' businesses in the UK and is considered the 'service centre' for the Oxfordshire economy.¹



- + **High quality open space and waterways.** Waterways and green spaces are a fundamental part of Oxford's character, landscape and setting.
- + **A strong cultural and creative sector.** Oxford has excellent cultural opportunities from world-class museums, historic libraries and gardens, to a wide-ranging programme of theatre, music and entertainment.



- + **Attractive evening economy with a broad offer.** Oxford city centre offers a wide range of cultural and leisure uses and provides a diverse night-time offer.
- + **Partnership working.** Success in taking forward key projects and programmes relies on partnership working with key organisations. This is already well established in Oxford.

WEAKNESSES



- + **High levels of congestion resulting in poor air quality.** Key routes are at capacity in the AM/PM peak. Crowd and coach congestion is common. Air quality is amongst the poorest in the UK.



- + **Low quantum of publicly accessible green space.** The majority of green spaces and planting is located within private spaces primarily within the city's colleges, or at the edges of the city centre. This also results in low biodiversity in the city centre core. Apart from Bonn Square and Gloucester Green, there are few locations for pedestrians to dwell in public spaces.

- + **Lack of residential provision acts as a barrier to diversifying the city centre.** A lack of housing in the centre, and a lack of affordable homes means a lower residential population able to enjoy its amenities. It places dependency on visitors and in-commuters, which has shown to be a challenge during COVID.⁸

- + **Lack of prime city centre office / co-working space.** Vacancy rates have been persistently low over the last five years and very little new stock has come to the market. There have been almost no transactions for 4-5 star space over the last five years.⁸



- + **Heritage sensitivities.** The majority of the city centre is extremely sensitive in heritage terms, with a significant number of listed buildings and a high proportion covered by conservation areas. These are key strengths but also pose some challenges, for example, in adapting buildings to alternative uses and/or to improve their carbon performance.

- + **High housing costs and high levels of homelessness.** The number of people rough sleeping in Oxford increased significantly in the eight years leading up to a peak in 2017. Since then, the number has decreased, but still remains high for a city of Oxford's size. The price of housing has also steadily increased during that time with Oxford one of the least affordable places to live in the UK. There is a need to ensure there are effective solutions to support people into housing and away from rough sleeping.⁷



- + **Rail capacity limited, and congested arrival experience.** The main train station sits at the edge of the city centre, with relatively poor visibility of pedestrian and cycle routes.

- + **Challenging SME business environment.** City centre attracts national retail and hospitality brands; though this has meant higher rent levels and a more challenging environment for independent retailers and start ups.¹¹

THE CITY CENTRE TODAY

OPPORTUNITIES



- + **Reprioritise street space.** Use the pilots undertaken during COVID-19 recovery, such as Broad Street being part-pedestrianised in summer 2021, and implementation of Connecting Oxford, to inform a strategy to reprioritise street space to improve the environment for people. Broad Street and St Giles' have the potential to become significant civic spaces.

- + **Maximise the West End opportunity.** The largest-scale mixed-use development Oxford city centre has seen and one of the largest urban transformation opportunities in the UK.



- + **Accommodate a wider range of uses across sectors.** A strong and increasing demand for city centre space in the science, tech, co-operative and cultural sectors provides an opportunity to explore new types of space and leases.
- + **Diversify the experience.** In addition to public realm improvements, it is important that the city centre mix is attractive to Oxford's diverse community and visitors. One element of this is a comprehensive, collaborative and organised programme of events, activation and animation to help improve the experience for more people and boost dwell time.



- + **Encourage more student and residential uses.** Encouraging high quality student and residential development to bolster footfall and overall vibrancy.
- + **Promote distinctive development.** Development should contribute to the city's unique sense of place.



- + **Build upon the carbon emissions pledge.** Continue to act on the Climate Emergency declaration and the work of the the Citizens Assembly to deliver interventions to reduce emissions in the city centre.
- + **Increase visitor stays.** Identify further opportunities to support longer visitor stays through provision and promotion of more overnight accommodation alongside promotion of existing and new cultural attractions.



- + **Improve safety and ambience.** Improve the safety and ambience of the city, in support of the day and evening economies.
- + **Enhance accessibility and sustainable travel options.** With car parks at capacity at the weekends, it is clear that public transport, principally buses, alongside active travel, such as walking and cycling, are critical and must grow as a proportion of daily trips if Oxford is to thrive.

THREATS



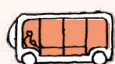
- + **Competing pressure for street space.** Inadequate pedestrian space along many streets, particularly when there are high visitor numbers. This is particularly an issue on the High Street, Carfax, St Aldate's and Magdalen Street.



- + **An economy reliant on workers and visitors.** Relatively low residential population in the centre results in an economy reliant on workers and visitors.

- + **Lack of suitable workspace.** Very little new office space has been created over recent years and there is a lack of suitable and/or flexible workspace to meet the needs of many businesses.

- + **Constrained SME and independent market.** The number of businesses starting up within the city centre increased from 59 in 2012 to 139 in 2018.² While a positive trend, it is still relatively low for a city of Oxford's scale. Commercial rents rarely vary to allow for growth of the independent sector.⁸



- + **COVID-19 recovery.** Congestion and dependence on public transport may mean a slower recovery for some key elements of the economy as people take time to regain confidence using these modes.

- + **Permitted Development restricts strategic opportunities.** Changes to permitted development and to use class regulations reduce available stock for expansion of diversifying sectors.



- + **Some big retail and major employers moving out.** Core area highly dependent on retail and hospitality sectors, which may have a challenging future. Some closures are leaving large retail units empty and potentially difficult to fill. Working from home trends are likely to remain high post COVID-19 pandemic, which is also reducing footfall.

- + **Ensuring an inclusive offer for Oxford's communities and visitors.** The southern part of the city has relatively high levels of deprivation. This is not primarily driven by income, but by factors like health, education, skills and training levels.



- + **Increasing vacant units.** While performing well, the opening of Westgate resulted in an increase of vacancies across the wider city centre. In September 2020, the number of vacant units in Oxford city centre had increased by 17 since March 2020 (up from 57 to 74). While lower than some predictions, there are now a number of small clusters of vacant units to be tackled.

ACTIONS TO RESPOND AND RESTART

WHAT ARE WE ALREADY DOING?

Although the pandemic clearly opened up some significant challenges for the city centre, partnership working between stakeholders has also delivered some beneficial changes.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

CITY CENTRE ACCESS

PUBLIC REALM AND SAFETY

An '**open online**' **web listing** for information about businesses open online and for delivery during lockdown

Marketing campaigns focused on supporting local businesses and encouraging visitors back safely after national lockdowns

On-street **city centre ambassadors** and community response officers, and a special COVID-secure team to support and ensure businesses complied with the new measures



Free **park & ride parking** in August and December 2020, with Oxfordshire County Council

Over **200 new bike parking spaces** in the city centre and 130 additional spaces at Park & Ride sites, with Oxfordshire County Council

More than 50 city centre businesses provided with support for **outside tables & chairs**, including the part-pedestrianisation of St Michael's Street and George Street (temporarily)

More than **£50m in grants and £58m of rate relief to businesses city-wide** by 30th September 2021, with additional funding following later in the year



Hand sanitiser at key locations and extended opening hours of public toilets.

Public health signage in the city centre, local centres and shopping parades, and creating a suite of signs as a resource for businesses to download online and use in their premises

Removing street clutter to support an enhanced cleaning regime and helping visitors to socially distance



Trialling **one-way pedestrian routes** on the busiest city centre streets to help people maintain social distancing

Designated rest areas to decrease the number of people pausing in the busiest thoroughfares



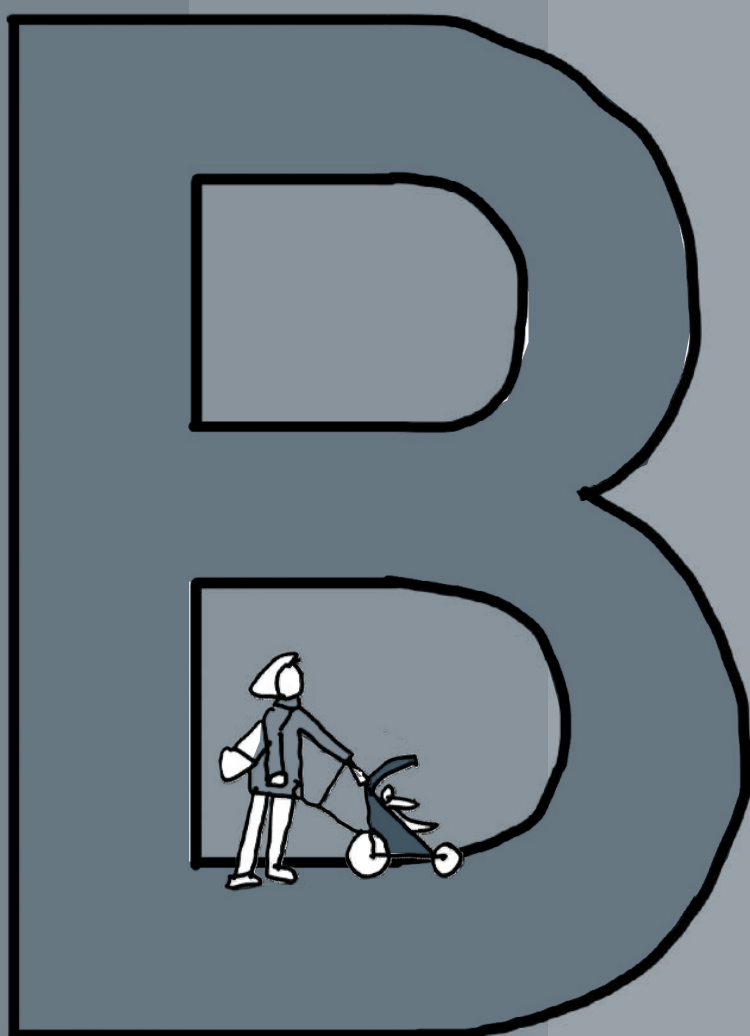
Focus group with a number of disabled people and representatives of disabilities groups to inform interventions

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified to set the context for the Action Plan. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions:

Is there anything in the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats presented on pages 14-17 that you would change?

Are there any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats that you would add?



APPROACH

Part B defines four distinct workstreams and their clear objectives which drive the projects and commitments within the Action Plan.

ACTION PLAN HIERARCHY

ACTION PLAN ELEMENTS

The Action Plan focuses on four **workstreams**, each intended to focus on a different thematic area of work. Each workstream is defined by a series of **objectives**. These workstreams and objectives are detailed below.

Under each workstream sits a series of **projects** identified to deliver against the objectives over time. Projects are outlined in Section C and further detailed in the Appendix. Each project clearly articulates what the project is, its primary delivery partners, an explanation of its importance, and a focussed list of actions to ensure partners and stakeholders are aligned under next step actions.

City-wide priorities on responding to the climate emergency, delivering a zero carbon Oxford, supporting thriving communities, enabling an inclusive economy, and delivering more housing are all fundamental to the approach being set out.

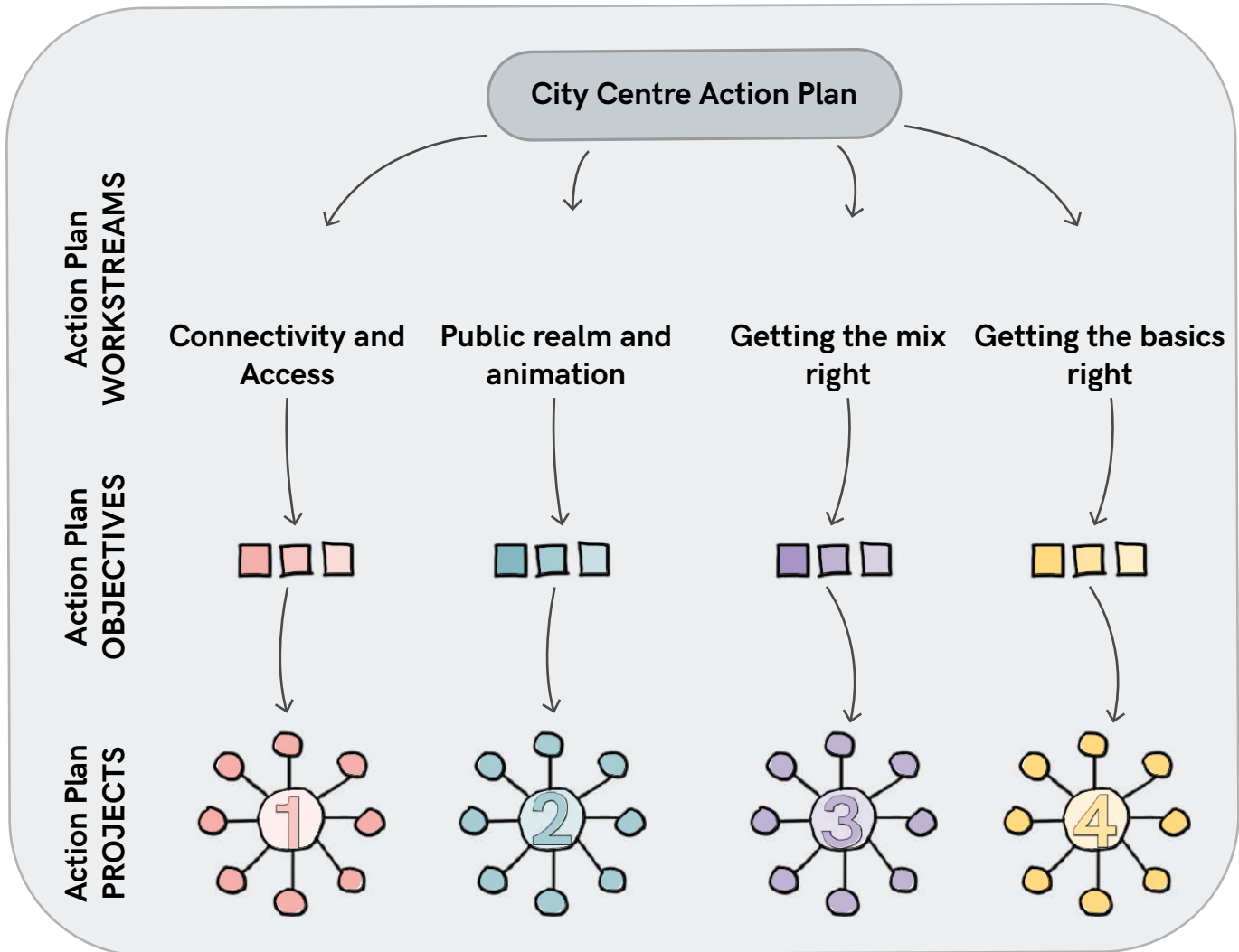
WORKSTREAM AMBITIONS

Delivering a city that is easy, safe and efficient to move around with increasing use of active travel and public transport will be harnessed through a series of actions focussed on **connectivity and access**.

Shaping a city that celebrates the beauty of Oxford and delivers spaces that encourage new activities and dwell times - with a commitment to evolving a healthy, 'people first' environment - will be given priority through a series of actions focussed on **public realm and animation**.

An overriding objective of the City Centre Action Plan is to ensure it is well placed to support the inclusive economy ambitions set out in Oxford's city-wide Economic Strategy. A vibrant city centre is one that is lived in, worked in, shopped in, and played in. Our stakeholders recognise the importance of being an inclusive city centre, including enhancing its attractiveness as a place to start and grow businesses for under-represented sectors; with opportunities to work across skills levels; where the importance of paying the Oxford Living Wage is widely accepted; and so that all of our communities feel it is a safe, welcoming, accessible and attractive place for them to spend time in. Introducing housing (city living) and supporting night time and leisure uses are also key parts of a successful, 24-hour city centre. A series of projects will focus on **getting the mix right**.

A successful city also must **get the basics right**, and this plan introduces actions that will continue to enhance the city centre for all those who use it.



WORKSTREAMS AND OBJECTIVES



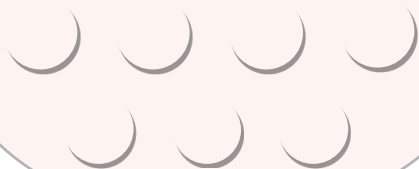
CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

Limit private vehicles, reduce conflict and congestion, and create space for buses, bikes, and people.

OBJECTIVES

- O1.1** Reduce traffic congestion by limiting private vehicle trips through the city centre, freeing up space for public transport, cyclists, pedestrians, and businesses
- O1.2** Facilitate a **world class public transport network**, working with bus and rail industries to improve gateways, interchanges and connections, plus faster, more reliable journeys into and through the city centre
- O1.3** Prioritise development of a range of **new delivery and collection options** including electric, pedal-power and more
- O1.4** Deliver **better walking and cycling** infrastructure, capitalising on the city centre's human scale and accessibility, and responding to the existential threat of the climate emergency

PROJECTS



PUBLIC REALM & ANIMATION

Improve the public realm and provide events and experience to animate it and boost dwell times.

OBJECTIVES

- O2.1** Celebrate our outstanding **heritage assets**, through access, adaptation and retrofit, as well as better public realm, lighting and activation
- O2.2** Re-prioritise **roadspace** to create opportunities for different uses, and to create **new civic spaces** where people can meet, relax, celebrate, and be creative
- O2.3** Improve air quality, create **more green space**, and improve **waterway access**, to support physical and mental health and our attractiveness as a destination

PROJECTS



GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

Enhance the attractiveness of the city centre as a place to start, maintain and grow a business.

OBJECTIVES

- O3.1** Diversify uses by building and repurposing to create new places to live and work
- O3.2** Support the **best of our retail, hospitality, leisure and services** to recover and evolve, while ensuring the spaces to support a **new wave of business growth** and jobs
- O3.3** Encourage the growth of **more economic sectors**, including science, tech and creative, to attract and retain talent in the city centre
- O3.4** Promote more **overnight visitor stays**, increasing their enjoyment of our city, while maximising the contribution to the local economy

PROJECTS



GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Mediate and promote the diverse range of activities and uses in the city centre.

OBJECTIVES

- O4.1** Strike a balance between tourist visits, ensuring greater levels of visitor satisfaction and increasing return trips; and residents, students and workers going about their daily lives
- O4.2** Strengthen the **feeling of safety** through the work of the Council's Safer Oxford team, Thames Valley Police, Oxford Community Safety and City Centre Crime Partnerships

PROJECTS

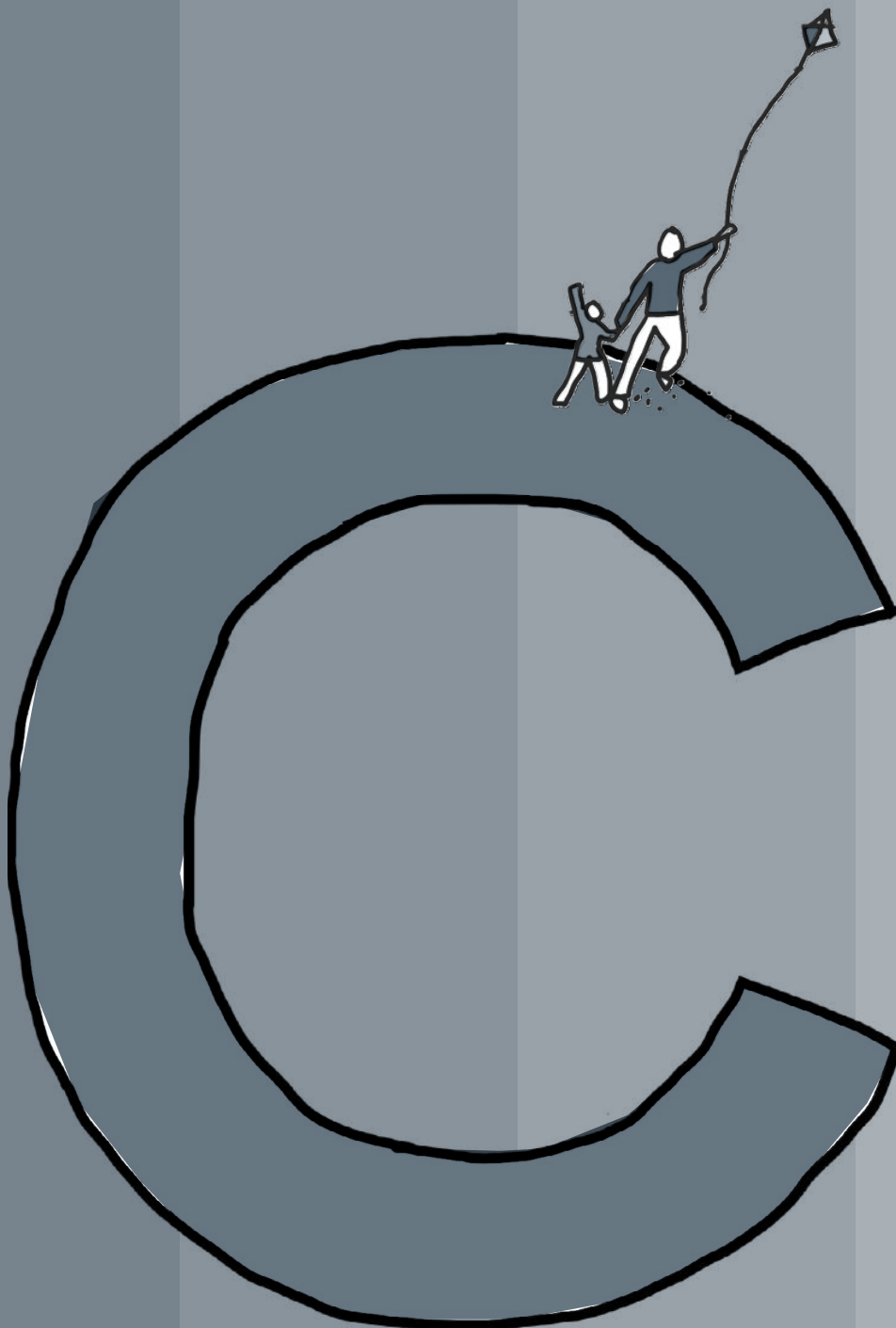
CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the structure and objectives of the Action Plan. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions:

Are the workstreams and objectives appropriate?

Do you consider there is anything missing that should be included?

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ACTION PLAN

Part C outlines the catalyst initiatives and projects that will support Oxford in achieving the objectives of this Action Plan, grouped by workstream. Full project details can be found in the Projects & Places Appendix.

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS



1 CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

Limit private vehicles, reduce conflict and congestion, and create space for buses, bikes, and people.

DESCRIPTION

While Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council are taking significant steps to improve the connectivity and access arrangements across the city centre through proposals such as Connecting Oxford and the Zero Emission Zone, there is still much to do.

Actively planning for an increase in the use of more sustainable modes, as well as enhancing the arrival experience, are major priorities for the city.

While reducing through car journeys and promoting active travel are core objectives, they come with a commitment to take into account the needs of people who rely on vehicles to access the city centre and to recognise the importance of disabled parking bays, availability of taxi locations, bus drop off and pick up points close to destinations, and sufficient space and suitable surfaces for those in wheelchairs on pavements and at crossing points.

OBJECTIVES



PROJECTS

Connecting Oxford

Connecting Oxford aims to reduce congestion; reprioritise roads for public transport, active travel, civic space and businesses; and reduce pollution in the city centre. The proposed measures being considered include traffic filters, a workplace parking levy, new and improved bus, cycling and walking routes.

Zero Emission Zone

Oxford Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) aims to reduce air pollution, tackle the climate emergency, and improve health by introducing a charge for vehicles entering the zone based on their emissions. Only 100% zero emission vehicles would be able to enter the zone free of charge (subject to exemptions). A pilot ZEZ in the heart of the city centre is scheduled to start in early 2022.

Oxford Railway Station Redevelopment

Oxford Railway Station will be undergoing significant transformation to facilitate an anticipated doubling of passengers, allowing East-West rail service improvements including more trains to London faster, frequent direct trains to Cambridge, and potential direct connection to Bristol. Improvements include two new railway lines and platforms, a new western entrance and station building on the Botley Road, and a multi modal transport interchange.

Oxpens & Osney Mead Connectivity

The delivery of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Thames between Oxpens and Grandpont, and path improvements between the proposed bridge and Osney Mead will provide convenient, attractive and improved connectivity for walking and cycling between the city centre, Rail Station and Osney Mead.

New Delivery (and Collection) Solutions

To reduce the impact of freight trips by large and / or polluting vehicles in and around Oxford's city centre, we will work with Oxfordshire County Council on exploring options around freight consolidation and develop proposals for new delivery and collection solutions that will also benefit Oxford's businesses.

Visitor Coach Strategy

Support Oxfordshire County Council in short and long term options for where visitor coaches can drop and layover in a way that lessens negative impacts, aligns to the ZEZ and Connecting Oxford, but supports visitor trips.

Park & Ride Enhancements

Oxford City Council is committed to work with Oxfordshire County Council to evolve and enhance the offer of existing Park & Rides. This forms part of the strategy in the Local Transport Plan (LPT4) to enhance the current five Park & Ride sites and increase capacity in the city's outer ring.

PUBLIC REALM & ANIMATION



2 PUBLIC REALM & ANIMATION

Improve the public realm and provide events and experience to animate it and boost dwell times.

DESCRIPTION

The quality of the public realm and experience of the city centre for residents and visitors does not always befit the city's global status. A high quality public realm is fundamental to establishing a vibrant city centre.

To achieve long term improvements a public realm strategy that encourages new activities and greater dwell times, and allows people to enjoy high quality, outdoor public spaces is needed. To achieve this, it must be considered alongside a movement framework that re-prioritises road space based on congestion being reduced through ZEZ and Connecting Oxford.

OBJECTIVES



PROJECTS

City Centre Public Realm & Movement Strategy

The Public Realm & Movement Strategy will, subject to funding, revisit traffic management and prioritisation in the city centre in a comprehensive way to support a more comfortable, less congested experience for people using the city centre, to encourage increased dwell time and access for sustainable travel. The strategy will also set out wider public realm improvements including exploration of further pedestrianisation options, and increasing the amount of public green space and biodiversity in the city centre core.

Interim Public Realm Improvements

There are several interventions that are not reliant on movement and, therefore, can be progressed alongside development of a wider public realm strategy under Project 2.1 subject to funding being secured. This includes short term interventions which would not undermine a longer-term strategy. This project, therefore, highlights public realm improvements that support the city centre's unique identity and strengthen its economy that are not reliant on strategic interventions.

City Centre Shopfront Design Advice

Oxford City Council has developed a Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, which takes the form of a planning Technical Advice Note (TAN) accompanying Oxford's Local Plan 2036. This has the aim of conserving and enhancing Oxford's architecture, public realm, heritage and image.

The Street-by-Street section in the Projects & Places Appendix focuses on the 10 streets or groups of streets that make up the 'outdoor' city centre.

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT



3 GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

Enhance the attractiveness of the city centre as a place to start, maintain and grow a business.

DESCRIPTION

Oxford city centre has a strong profile of shops and businesses, attracting national brands, as well as strengths in knowledge, creative and cultural sectors.

However, high retail rents, the decline and displacement of big retail and businesses, and a lack of suitable workspace have created a challenging environment for shops and businesses - especially SMEs.

A lack of affordable housing has also created a centre reliant on workers and visitors.

There is an opportunity to strengthen and diversify the city centre's mix of uses, providing new and flexible spaces for businesses to grow, and enhancing the residential and night time offer so as to capture more footfall in the centre. The development of the West End provides a major opportunity for this, as it will increase and diversify the residential and commercial offer and create an innovation district of national significance.

OBJECTIVES



PROJECTS

Oxford West End

Oxford West End is the largest-scale mixed-use development the city centre has seen and one of the largest transformation opportunities in the UK. A series of coordinated developments are being brought forward as part of an over-arching vision co-created by local landowners and stakeholders to deliver an innovation district. Together these have the scale to meet urgent demand for start-ups, spin-outs, and HQs in the city centre, alongside new homes.

City Centre Major Development Projects

Major development projects and sites will be advanced in a holistic manner. This includes working with developers and stakeholders on a coordinated approach to curating the mix of uses, public realm improvements, maximising the social value of development, and construction impacts.

Target & Reduce Vacant Units including 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' Project

Work with landlords and agents to reduce the number of vacant city centre units, including the reduction of underutilised upper floor space. In addition to seeking long-term occupancy, this will target the temporary use of vacant buildings, partly via the ongoing 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' project.

Covered Market Evolution

There are a number of strategies being developed to support the successful long-term viability of the Covered Market and its businesses. This includes a leasing and operating strategy, a masterplan, a heritage-led asset management & maintenance plan, an activation and animation strategy, a branding & marketing strategy, and an environmental sustainability strategy.

Workspace

In order to deliver on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy vision which positions Oxford as one of the world's top three innovation ecosystems, Oxford needs space for high-value priority sectors to grow and expand as well as affordable space for small businesses, social enterprise, and the third sector.

Stimulate the Night-Time Economy

Support business owners and managers to develop a programme of recovery and rebuild measures for the night-time economy, including exploring the potential for new and diversified uses of buildings alongside their primary uses.

Culture and Creative Businesses

Work with landowners to provide the right spaces and leases in the city centre for independent, cultural and creative businesses, and develop opportunities to widen and strengthen the role and presence of these communities.

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT



4 GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Mediate and promote the diverse range of activities and uses in the city centre.

DESCRIPTION

Oxford is a city that's highly attractive to a range of people including, residents, workers, shoppers and hospitality / leisure / services customers, students and visitors with sometimes competing objectives - for example, between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists - and the need to preserve the city centre's rich architectural heritage, against development pressures.

Oxford City Council and stakeholder partners will seek to mitigate and mediate conflicting issues and priorities to increase the functionality and appeal of the city centre, while promoting the diverse range of activities that exist.

A range of operational enhancements are proposed to ensure that the city centre is improved as a safer, healthier and more enjoyable place in which to spend time for all our communities.

OBJECTIVES



PROJECTS

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Working with people who present as homeless or are sleeping rough, and with a range of partner organisations in the public sector, community, charity and social enterprise sectors to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

Street Scene Management

Continue to work with Oxford Direct Services and other stakeholders to develop effective street scene management and cleaning and waste regimes. Encourage businesses, city centre customers and visitors to play their part.

Tourism and Visitor Management

Tourist and visitor management is critical to providing a quality and memorable experience for visitors, driving footfall into the city centre and balancing the impact on businesses, residents and the public realm. We will explore funding options for work with the destination management organisation and individual attractions and businesses to review visitor arrival points; develop a strategy for visitor routes and signage; and review our provision of visitor information to ensure it is sustainable.

Reducing Crime and Antisocial Behaviour

Creating a safe city centre, and one that is perceived to be safe to all, is fundamental to its economic success. Collaborative joint working on a combined, strategic, responsive approach is required to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Oxford city centre.

Marketing and Promotion

Work with city centre businesses and partners to achieve a strong collective approach to marketing and promotion, including exploring funding options for promoting the city centre's brand and messaging, and establishing it at the heart of all communications. This will celebrate its unique place qualities including its history, world-class architectural heritage and university institutions; as well as its strengths in retail, hospitality and leisure, and in culture, community and social enterprise.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

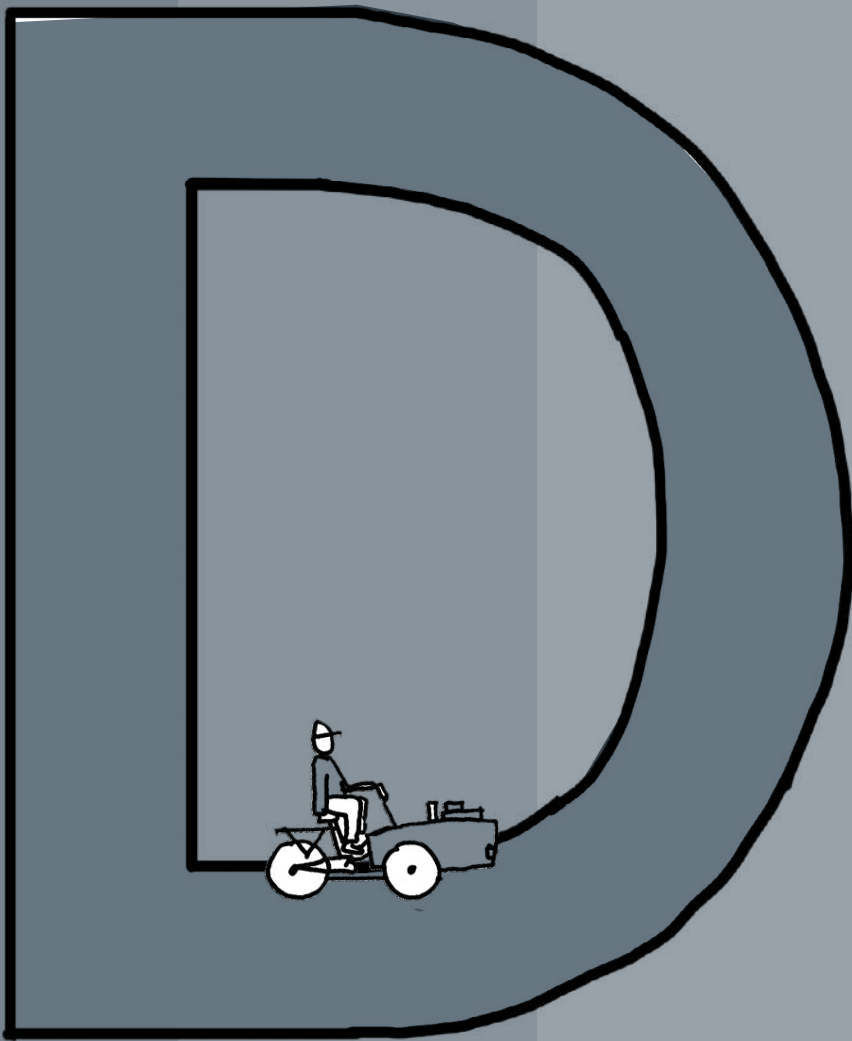
We are seeking your views on the projects outlined in the Action Plan. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions, with reference to Section C, Action Plan, as well as the projects outlined in the Projects & Places Appendix.

The city centre changes every day and a number of initiatives referred to in this consultation draft document are already underway. This means that, although up to date at the time of writing, some of the data, timings, issues and other information listed in these pages may have changed, and this needs be considered in your consultation feedback.

Are the projects identified under each workstream appropriate?

Please tell us if we should include any other delivery partners under any project?

Please tell us if there are additional progress and actions that should be included under any project?



IMPLEMENTATION

Part D sets out how change will be coordinated across stakeholders. Responsibility for leading on and supporting delivery will be shared by a range of different organisations.

GOVERNANCE

Delivery of this City Centre Action Plan will be co-ordinated by a multi-department team of Oxford City Council officers, which has been operating through the lockdown and emergence phases as the City Restart group. However, the responsibility for the delivery sits across several city centre stakeholders.

They will be guided in this role by the City Centre Taskforce, drawing on the experience, expertise and insights of its membership of city centre business owners and managers, including senior Oxfordshire County Council representatives.

In addition, the officer's delivery group will take into account feedback from businesses via the Council's Talk of the Town Forum, occasional surveys of the wider city centre business community, insights from the day-to-day business liaison work of its City Centre Management team, and input from the various civic, business and community groups in and around the city centre, including the Council's Inclusive Transport and Movement focus group.

For resourcing, the delivery group will draw on:

- + Council resources as available
- + Any emerging national government funding initiatives as applicable
- + Resources available via the local enterprise partnership and other local or regional agencies and organisations
- + Support for individual projects from businesses and partner organisations, including potential funding streams that they can access via their own channels.

Oxford does not have a Business Improvement District (BID), and discussion of a BID as a potential funding and delivery model for the city has been on hold for some time. Oxford City Council remains prepared to engage in conversations about this funding option and others like it including a Community Improvement District and Tourism BID, if initiated by the city's business community.

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European Union

European Regional
Development Fund

European Regional Development Fund

This project is receiving funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>.



**PRIOR
+PTNRS**



OXFORD CITY CENTRE ACTION PLAN

2021 - 2030

PROJECTS & PLACES APPENDIX

CONSULTATION DRAFT

A white line-art illustration of a busy street scene in Oxford City Centre. The drawing shows historic buildings with many windows, a church spire on the right, and a street sign in the foreground. The style is minimalist and modern.

PROJECTS

This section provides further detail on the catalyst initiatives and projects that will support Oxford in achieving the objectives of this Action Plan, grouped by workstream.

Throughout this section, the following names and acronyms are used to describe key actors who will be leading on delivering each action:

CCMT - Oxford City Council's City Centre Management Team

The City - Oxford City Council

DMO - Destination Management Organisation

OCC - Oxfordshire County Council

ODS - Oxford Direct Services

OxLEP - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

OxWED - Oxford West End Development Limited

TVP - Thames Valley Police

PROJECT TIMELINE

The interventions proposed in this Action Plan will need to be brought forward in phases. This section sets out the indicative timescales for the various projects. There are several key interdependencies between projects across workstreams. For example the connectivity and access workstream is critical to many of the other interventions, particularly the ability to deliver public realm changes. Achieving the objectives of this Action Plan will require partnership working across stakeholders in the city centre.

Where appropriate the interventions record both pre-implementation (business case development / design / consultation / pilot) as well as implementation.

There are three types of project.

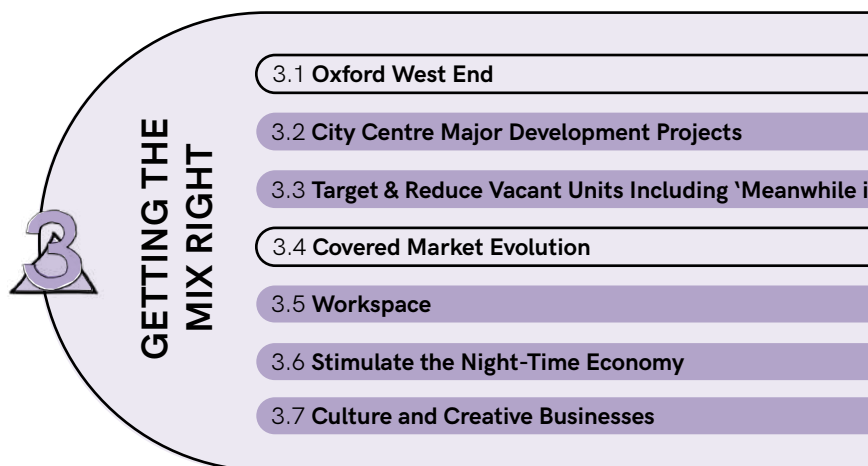
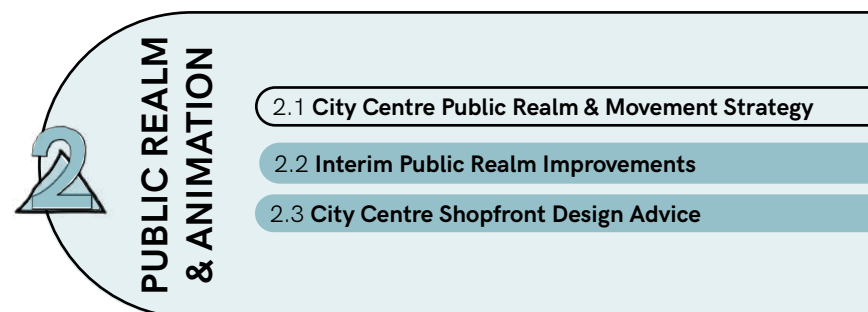
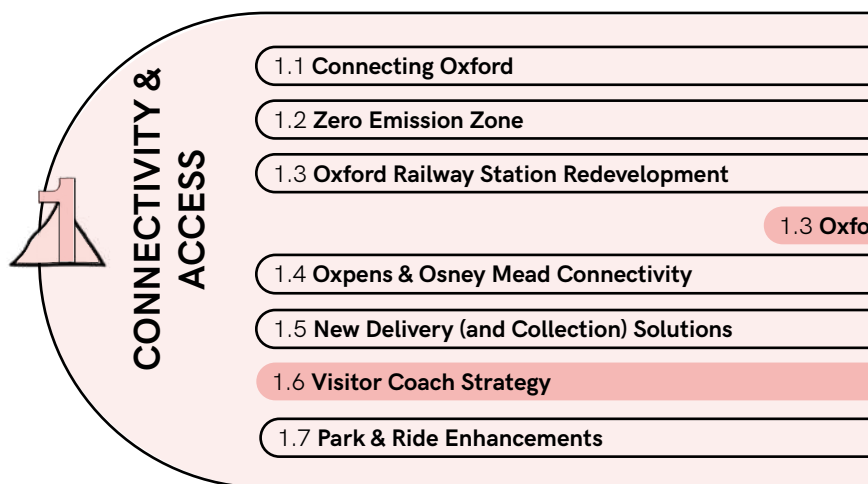
Some are ongoing, others are already underway and there are a number that are not started but could be initiated if agreed and viable once this Action Plan has finished its stakeholder engagement. To illustrate this, each project carries a marking to show their category:

- O** ongoing
- U** underway
- NS** not started

Pre Implementation

Implementation

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS



MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+YEARS

1.1 Connecting Oxford

1.2 Zero Emission Zone

1.3 Oxford Railway Station Redevelopment

1.5 New Delivery (and Collection) Solutions

1.7 Park & Ride Enhancements

1.3 Oxford Railway Station Redevelopment

1.4 Oxpens & Osney Mead Connectivity

2.1 City Centre Public Realm & Movement Strategy

3.1 Oxford West End

3.2 'In Oxfordshire...' Project

3.4 Covered Market Evolution

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.1 CONNECTING OXFORD

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Connecting Oxford is a critical project for the city centre and wider city to reduce congestion and enable the reprioritisation of roads for public transport, taxis, active travel, civic space and businesses. By reducing congestion it will also help deliver a less polluted city centre. The project has three key components:

- + A better, faster and more comprehensive public transport network.
- + A complete, high-quality walking and cycling network.
- + Reclaiming some of the road space currently used for private motor vehicles to provide more space for buses.

The proposed measures being considered include traffic filters, a workplace parking levy, new and improved bus, cycling and walking routes. Funding is in place via the Housing and Growth Deal for all work up to and including the Outline Business Case stage, which is intended to enable funding for implementation.

This will unlock other projects around public realm and movement in this Action Plan.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council jointly

Supporting: Bus companies, local businesses and residents alongside scheme development and appraisal consultants

NEW COLLEGE STREET



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + 68% of air pollution in Oxford is caused by traffic, and poor air quality affects everyone in the city, particularly the most vulnerable. By limiting the number of journeys through, not to, the city centre by private motor vehicles we expect to be able to significantly reduce congestion and improve air quality.
- + Implementing the Connecting Oxford proposals would enable a better, faster and more comprehensive public transport network and improved taxi mobility, alongside a high-quality, spacious walking and cycling network.
- + The project will enable a redesign of the bus movement network in the city centre, to unlock opportunities for improved public realm and pedestrianisation, both of which have proven economic benefits for businesses.
- + Tackling congestion and reprioritisation of roadspace through Connecting Oxford will have the additional benefit of reducing demand to park private motor vehicles in the city centre, and so create new opportunities to repurpose space that is currently allocated to that use.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Develop an outline business case**, comprising detailed scheme development and appraisal, modelling, legal and communications and engagement. Led by OCC and the City jointly.
- + **The Workplace Parking Levy Partnership**, formed in early 2021 to represent businesses likely to be affected by a workplace parking levy; and a Connecting Oxford Forum, a wide engagement programme on Connecting Oxford proposals.
- + **Oxford City Council is the first UK Local Authority to set tougher air quality standards than the current legal target** for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), through a citywide Air Quality Action Plan. The current legal annual mean limit value is 40 µg/m³, but several health studies have shown that there is no safe level of air pollution. Oxford's objective is to achieve a local annual mean NO₂ target of 30 µg/m³ by 2025, putting down a marker for what local authorities can achieve and providing the framework for partners and funders to support a journey to the cleanest possible air.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.1 Connecting Oxford

Business Case

Implementation

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.2 ZERO EMISSION ZONE

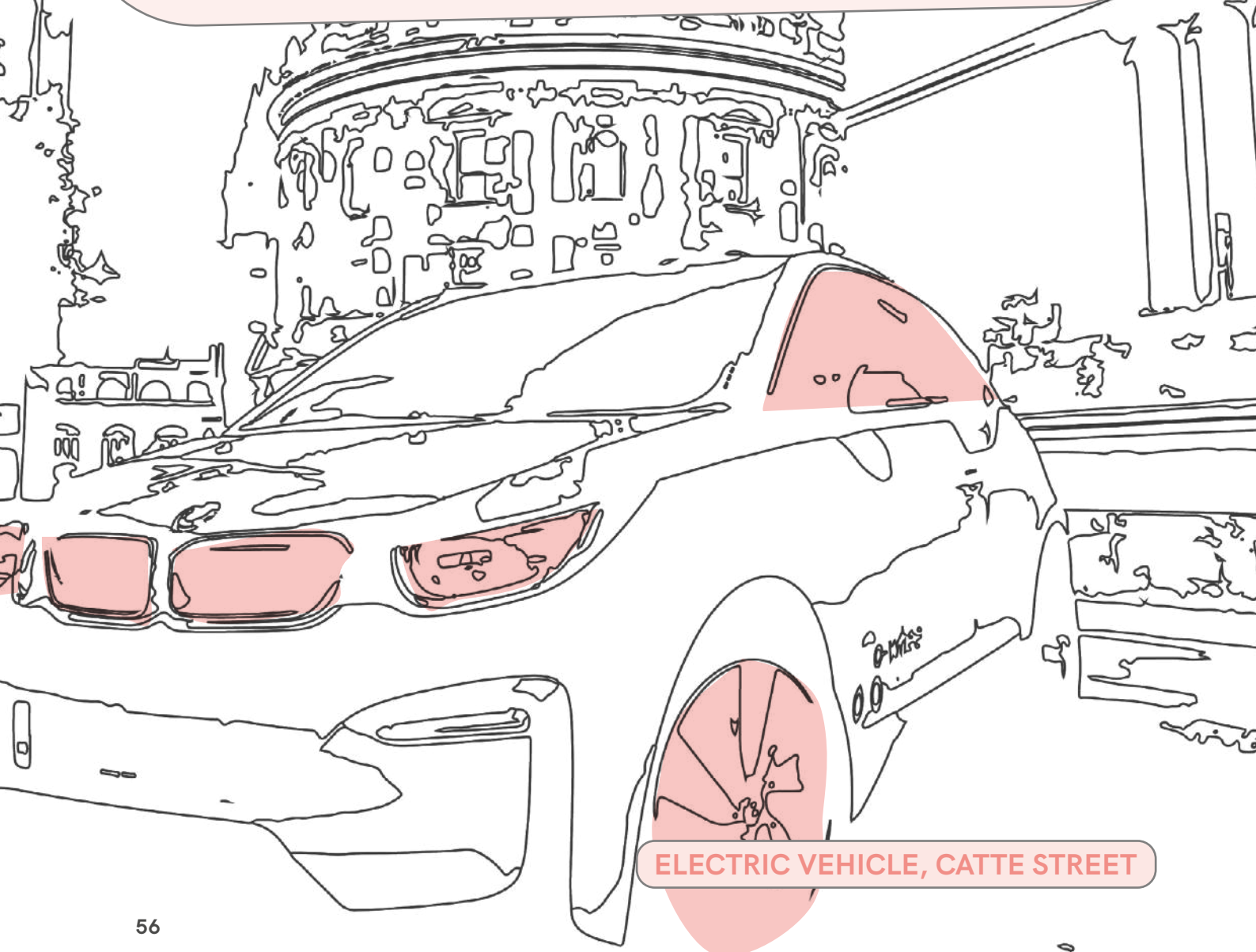
WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Oxford Zero Emission Zone aims to reduce air pollution levels, help tackle the climate emergency, improve the health of residents, workers and visitors in Oxford by introducing a charge for vehicles entering the zone, based on their emissions. Only 100% zero emission vehicles will be able to enter the zone free of charge. The Zero Emission Zone is being introduced as a pilot with plans to extend in 2022.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are jointly leading and funding the development of proposals

Supporting: It is expected that the scheme will be self-funding when in full operation



ELECTRIC VEHICLE, CATTE STREET



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Vehicle emissions cause significant harm to human health and contribute to climate change. In January 2020, a study from the Centre for Cities concluded that just under 6% of deaths in Oxford can be attributed to particulate air pollution.
- + The pollutant of most concern in Oxford city centre is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), 75% of which comes from transport. Road transport also accounts for 16% of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in Oxford.
- + During the national lockdown introduced in March 2021 to control COVID-19, people across the country enjoyed quieter streets and cleaner air; in Oxford city centre pollution dropped by 64% to a level not likely seen since the early 20th century - the ZEZ provides opportunity to retain some of these improvements.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **The ZEZ Pilot scheme** was approved in March 2021 for implementation in early 2022. Led by the City and OCC.
- + **Proposals for a wider ZEZ covering the whole city centre** are being developed. Pilot results will be reviewed to inform an extended scheme. Led by the City and OCC.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.2 Zero Emission Zone

Pilot

Wider Implementation

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.3 OXFORD RAILWAY STATION REDEVELOPMENT U

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Oxford Railway Station will be undergoing significant transformation over the time horizons of this Action Plan to facilitate an anticipated doubling of passengers.

£150-160m of investment to deliver two new railway lines and associated platforms, and a new western entrance with new station building on the Botley Road, will be delivered by 2024. This will allow the nationally-significant East-West rail timetable requirements to be achieved including more trains to London, faster services, four trains an hour direct to Cambridge, and potential direct connections to Bristol.

Masterplan options are being developed to inform proposals for an enhanced multi modal transport interchange to the east of the tracks, aiming for delivery by 2028 after the western side improvements.

Proposals are also progressing for delivery of a Cowley Branch line to allow improved accessibility from the south and east by rail.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Network Rail, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, GWR, OxLEP

Supporting: Specialist consultants, West End landowners, Rail operators, bus companies



FRIDESWIDE SQUARE



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Redevelopment of Oxford Station is a vital project to raise the quality of the city centre, catalyse the redevelopment of Oxford's West End, and deliver East-West Rail.
- + Our aspiration is that Oxford becomes a 'national rail hub', providing an increase in capacity to support housing and job growth required in the city and region.
- + The Oxford Station redevelopment is an important project to set an improved arrival experience for the city.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **The first funding instalment - £69m - was secured from DfT in May 2021**, of a total £162m available, to deliver Oxford Station Phase 2. With this investment Network Rail will develop a Phase 2 programme that is expected to target detailed station design by October 2022, Crossings approximately April 2022 to January 2023, and the Station area and Botley Road addressed in November 2022 to Nov 2024. Led by Network Rail.
- + **£250,000 has been invested to develop masterplan options**, which will be used to advance a strategic outline business case for the works required to redevelop the eastern side of the station. Further funding is needed to continue beyond this initial work to refine options and develop a business case by 2024. These would then follow on from the Phase 2 works that are predominantly focused on the western side of the station.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.3 Oxford Railway Station Redevelopment

Oxford Station Phase 2
Implementation

Business case/design development for Oxford Station
(East/Phase 3)

Oxford Station East /
Phase 3 Implementation

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.4 OXPENS AND OSNEY MEAD CONNECTIVITY

U

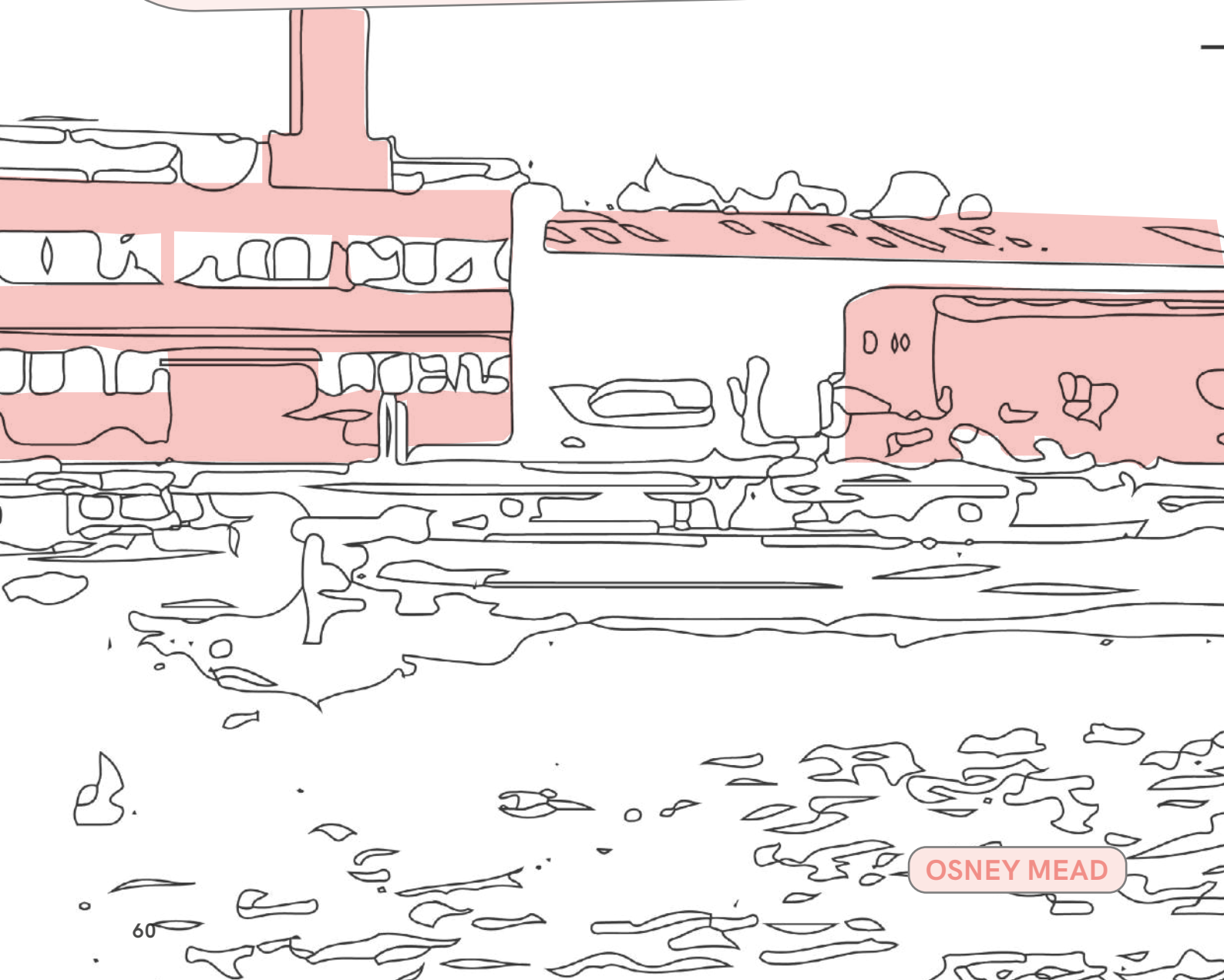
WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The delivery of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Thames between Oxpens and Grandpont as well as path improvements between the proposed bridge and Osney Mead will provide convenient, attractive and improved connectivity for walking and cycling between the city centre, Rail Station and Osney Mead.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council

Supporting: Oxfordshire County Council, Environment Agency, OxWED, Oxford University



OSNEY MEAD



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Osney Mead is identified for development within the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The Plan identifies the need for the bridge to facilitate walking and cycling connectivity between Osney Mead and the city centre. These proposals are part of the wider West End development area.
- + The proposed bridge and path works will connect new development at Oxpens and Osney Mead and encourage walking and cycling from Osney Mead to the city centre through creation of an attractive and convenient route and river crossing.
- + To provide a route that is safe to use in times of flood.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- **£6m in funding has been secured** from the Growth Deal for the Osney Mead bridge. Led by the City.
- **£1.738m in funding has been secured** from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for pedestrian and cycle routes linking Botley, Hinksey, Osney Mead and Oxpens. Led by the City.
- + **Work on the feasibility, design and delivery of the proposal** is being procured. Delivery of the bridge and path improvements are anticipated for 2023 and 2022 respectively. Led by the City.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.4 Oxpens & Osney Mead Connectivity

Business Case / Design Development

Implementation

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.5 NEW DELIVERY (AND COLLECTION) SOLUTIONS NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

To reduce the impact of freight trips by large and / or polluting vehicles in and around Oxford city centre, we will work with Oxfordshire County Council as they develop the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and revised Oxford Transport Strategy to explore options around freight consolidation, and develop proposals for new delivery and collection solutions that will also benefit Oxford's businesses.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxfordshire County Council with support from Oxford City Council

Supporting: University of Oxford, University colleges, CoHSAT, Oxford Brookes University, Delivery Operators, city centre businesses



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + The rate of “business to consumer” deliveries was already increasing before COVID-19, and the pandemic has clearly accelerated this trend. This contributes significantly to congestion on the Oxford ring road and approaches to the city centre.
- + Pollution levels are high in Oxford, and 75% of the city’s nitrogen dioxide pollution is caused by transport. More sustainable delivery and collection solutions would help reduce this.
- + Parking space required for deliveries has constrained city centre businesses’ abilities to enable “café culture” during the pandemic, hindering the economic survival of hospitality businesses.
- + Oxford residents and visitors would benefit from a safer and more attractive public realm; more reliable and efficient deliveries and journeys; and better air quality.
- + The popularity of takeaway options during lockdown, driven by huge marketing investment by delivery companies has significantly increased the number of delivery mopeds in Oxford city centre, and created issues of congestion, illegal parking, emissions, and noise concerns for residents and businesses, especially around new outside seating areas.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Explore options for freight consolidation and sustainable delivery and collection options in Oxford** - work with Oxfordshire County Council from 2022 to identify resources and budget to develop options alongside development of the Oxford Transport Strategy.
- + **Continue work to create a collective / collaborative, sustainable delivery service among Covered Market traders**, and draw on the lessons of this initiative to extend it to other clusters of city centre businesses. This should introduce digital solutions for ordering and delivery consolidation as well as scheduling. Led by the City.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.5 New Delivery Solutions

Options development

Implementation

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.6 VISITOR COACH STRATEGY

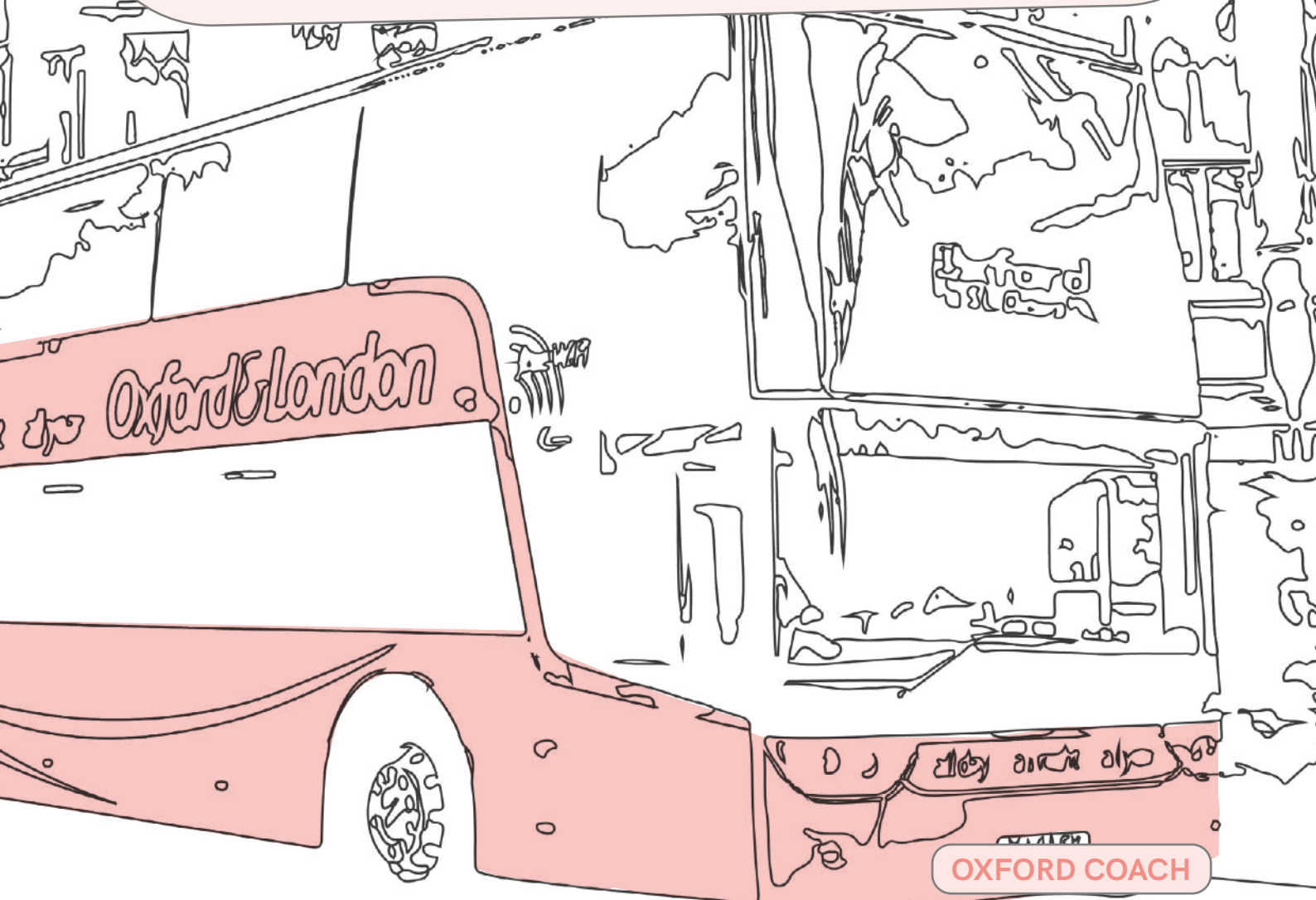
WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

A two-stage project to lessen the impact of visitor coaches on the city centre. Phase one will create additional temporary drop-off locations to ease the pressure on St Giles and work with coach operators and destinations to direct services to use the drop off nearest their destination and to then move on to agreed layover sites. Phase two, in the longer term, will reduce the number of city centre drop off locations, including exploring the potential to close the St Giles stop altogether, and replace them with edge of city facilities integrated with other transport options.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxfordshire County Council supported by Oxford City Council

Supporting: Destination Management Organisation, tour operators, Oxford Bus Company, Stagecoach, city centre destinations





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Current coach drop off points are inadequate and negatively impact residents, city centre businesses and the visitor arrival experience.
- + Coaches often park in residential side streets and resident bays, park over cycle lanes, carry out unsafe manoeuvres, idle, and drop off at unsafe or inappropriate locations.
- + There is a lack of adequate drop off and layover facilities for drivers. Creating welcoming and high standard facilities for coach arrivals will support a seamless arrival by coach, help improve the visitor experience and significantly reduce congestion.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Develop a visitor coach strategy.** As coach numbers return to pre-COVID-19 levels, work with the county council to survey coach drivers and passengers as they arrive in the city centre and use the resulting data to work with partners on improvement proposals.
- + **Identify additional new drop off locations** on Speedwell Street and close to Westgate to reduce pressure on St Giles, and promote these to the coach operators. Led jointly by the City, OCC and DMO.
- + **Work with Oxfordshire County Council to identify controls and enforcement measures** to relieve pressure in the city centre – especially in the Ashmolean / St Giles area.
- + **Target the accreditation of a 'Coach Friendly' City** in the medium term of this Action Plan.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.6 Visitor Coach Strategy

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS

1.7 PARK & RIDE ENHANCEMENTS

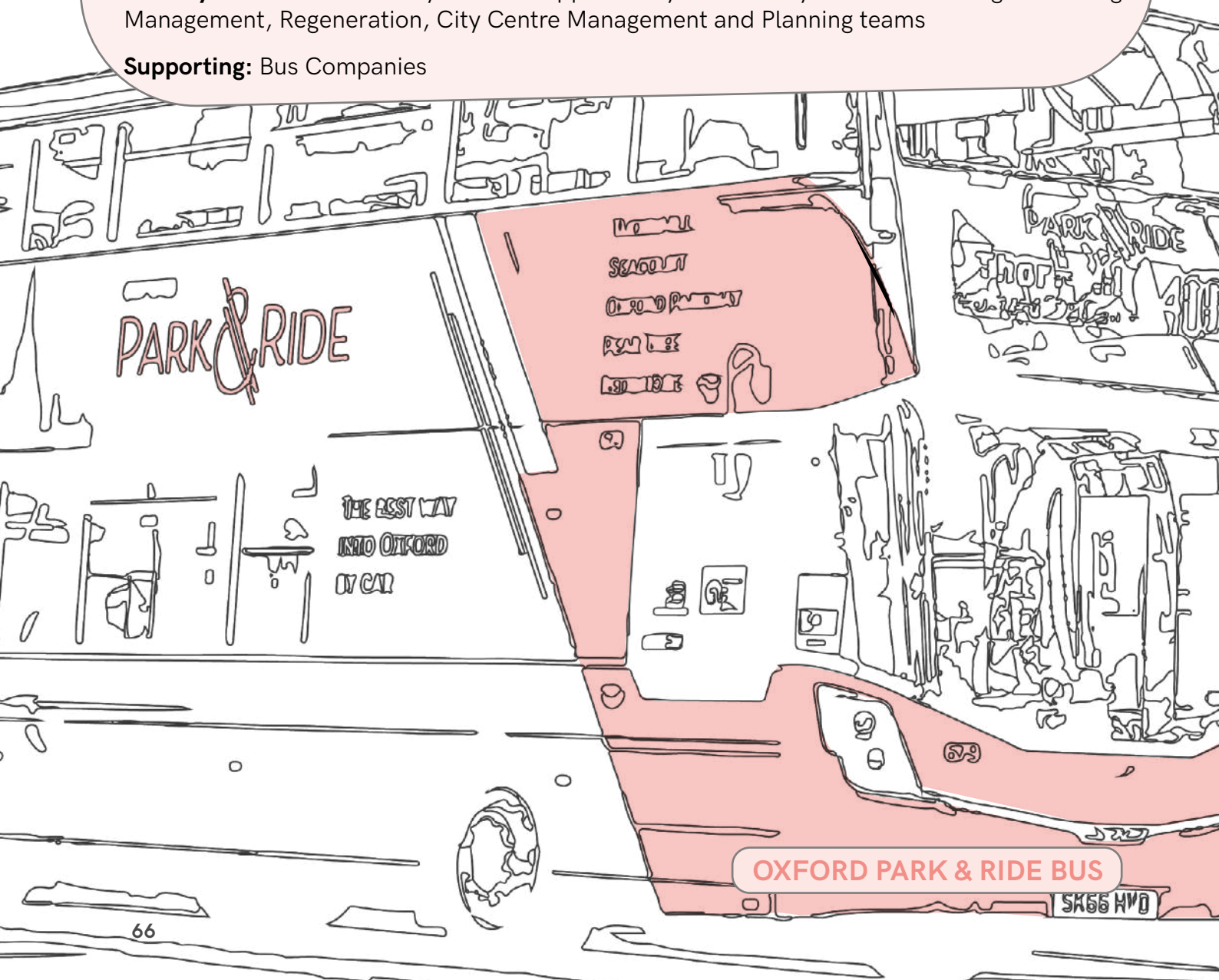
WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Oxford City Council seeks to work with Oxfordshire County Council to review the city's park & ride model as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and revised Oxford Transport Strategy to evolve and enhance the offer of the existing park and ride sites to increase capacity in the city's outer ring. Oxford's park and ride system won national acclaim when first introduced and has since become a vital element of the city centre's reliance on public transport. This project will seek to identify facility and service improvements that will adapt the model following the pandemic and ensure it remains as an option to facilitate sustainable access to the city centre.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxfordshire County Council supported by Oxford City Council including its Parking Management, Regeneration, City Centre Management and Planning teams

Supporting: Bus Companies





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Utilisation of the park and ride facilities have been hugely impacted by the pandemic, and further consideration of how this important infrastructure is supported in the future will be key, particularly in the context of Connecting Oxford and the Zero Emission Zone.
- + Enhancements will help us build on the initial success and to further reduce the number of private motor vehicle movements into the city centre.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Deliver a car park-bus fare joint-ticketing solution.**
- + **Review park & ride requirements** to inform a strategy that can be embedded in the Oxford Transport Strategy and the county Bus Service Improvement Plan Led by OCC. This will include:
 - + Reviewing current and future park & ride capacity, considering the wider contexts of growth, Connecting Oxford and changing travel patterns
 - + Consider approach to car parking and bus charges in the context of building on learning to extend cashless payment options
 - + Consider the role of park & rides alongside the Visitor Coach Strategy
 - + Improve Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure at park and ride sites building on the work to date in delivering the EV Superhub at Redbridge Park and Ride and taking learnings from this to inform options at the other facilities
 - + Improve facilities for those who would like to cycle and / or walk in from park & ride sites
 - + Improve facilities for waiting passengers where practical and viable
 - + Improve visitor welcome, signage and information available at park & ride sites
 - + Consider real-time and digital products that enhance the function and experience of park & rides across the city, including real-time capacity tracking, integration with other transport and mobility information including buses and cycle hires, payment etc.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

1.7 Park & Ride Enhancements

Strategy development

Implementation

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the projects under 'Workstream 1: Connectivity and Access'. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions.

Please tell us if we should include any other delivery partners under any project under Workstream 1?

Are there any additional actions you would suggest under any of the projects under Workstream 1?

[Return to Workstream Overview](#)

Would you suggest any additional projects under this workstream? If so, please outline your idea, its rationale, actions, and delivery partners.

PUBLIC REALM & ANIMATION

2.1 CITY CENTRE PUBLIC REALM & MOVEMENT STRATEGY NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

A strategy that revisits traffic management and road reprioritisation in the city centre in the context of reduced congestion from Connecting Oxford to support transition of more streets towards “café culture” and shared civic spaces, more segregated space for cyclists and buses on key routes, space for improved cycling infrastructure and additional on-street cycle parking in place of car parking and enabling deliveries and servicing to be better incorporated into road layouts. The public realm strategy will also set out wider public realm improvements including exploring improvement of the public green space and biodiversity of the city centre core. Street-specific opportunities are outlined in the Projects & Places Appendix to help define the scope for a public realm strategy.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council

Supporting: Bus companies, active travel advocacy groups, Inclusive Transport & Movement focus group, city centre landlords and businesses and consultancy support

The Projects & Places Appendix focuses on the 10 streets or groups of streets that make up the 'outdoor' city centre. These provide important context and briefing for the Public Realm strategy.



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Initiatives such as Connecting Oxford and the ZEZ are set to significantly reduce the amount of vehicle traffic in the city centre. This creates an opportunity to re-assign road space, shifting emphasis away from vehicles and towards pedestrians and cyclists.
- + Improving the public realm creates a more positive city centre experience for all those who use it. A growing body of evidence links active travel and an enhanced public realm with local high street benefits, increasing dwell times and, therefore, spend - thus supporting the vitality of the city centre.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Identify resources and budget** to commence work on this as proposals for Connecting Oxford are progressed, and alongside the Oxford Transport Strategy. Led jointly by the City and OCC.
- + **Include this study as a key section of the Oxford Transport Strategy refresh**, and explore potential funding streams. Led jointly by the City and OCC.
- + **Work with bus companies and active travel groups** to ensure good service and commercial viability, while also improving the city centre for walking and cycling and the creation of shared civic spaces. Led by the City.
- + **During summer and autumn of 2022, explore funding options and if available, develop the early phases of a public realm strategy.** The scope is to:
 - + Identify a movement framework that reprioritises road space to improve connections, manage traffic and create room for pedestrians, cyclists and buses to co-exist safely.
 - + Identify and provide design guidance for the implementation of new civic spaces facilitated by the reprioritisation of space.
 - + Identify opportunities to help integrate growth areas into the city centre.
 - + Audit city centre parking and bays to identify potential space reallocation opportunities.
 - + Provide public realm opportunities and guidelines that respond to the street strategies in this Action Plan and cover:
 - + Ground surfaces
 - + Street furniture
 - + Planting
 - + Signage
 - + Lighting
 - + Public Art

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

2.1 Public Realm & Movement Strategy

Strategy development

Implementation

PUBLIC REALM & ANIMATION

2.2 INTERIM PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

There are several interventions in the street-by-street focus set out in the Projects & Places Appendix that are not reliant on movement and, therefore, can be progressed alongside development of the wider public realm strategy. There will also be interim measures that can be undertaken in lieu of longer term solutions without undermining the longer term approach. We will initiate public realm improvements that support the city centre's unique identity and strengthen its economy that are not reliant on strategic interventions. This will require identifying necessary improvements and projects, establishing funding sources and, where funding is available, consulting on and delivering improvements.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council Regeneration, City Centre Management and planning teams; Oxfordshire County Council

Supporting: University of Oxford and its colleges, businesses focus group, Oxford City Inclusive Transport & Movement Focus Group, Cultural Partners, City Centre Taskforce, businesses, Thames Valley Police

The Projects & Places Appendix focuses on the 10 streets or groups of streets that make up the 'outdoor' city centre.

OUTDOOR SEATING



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Not all public realm improvements are reliant on changes in movement or more strategic interventions. Some are set out in the Street-by-Street section of the Projects & Places Appendix, and can - subject to funding - be progressed with key partners while the wider strategy is considered.
- + During the COVID-19 pandemic, City Council surveys found that pedestrianisation schemes saved businesses and jobs by increasing consumer spend and satisfaction.
- + Outdoor seating initiatives introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic were popular with hospitality businesses, customers and visitors alike. In the longer term, a café culture will add to the positive experience of visitors and to dwell times, as will a regular programme of events and performance activity.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Maintain, audit and extend where possible current outdoor seating initiatives.** Explore potential funding options and if available use this to support businesses to maintain the initiatives that are not reliant on a wider movement framework to continue beyond the current expiry, which for most is 2022. Led by the City, working with OCC.
- + **Audit not-yet-involved hospitality businesses for their interest in outside seating options,** such as wide pavements or loading & parking bays. Audit led by the City, with any jointly-agreed work to be undertaken with OCC highways teams.
- + **Explore potential funding options and if available, develop and deliver a programme of art and performance-based activity** in public spaces and suitable vacant units which do not affect the wider movement network. Led by the City, working with Cultural Partners, businesses and landlords / agents.
- + **Explore, with landlords, street specific frontage changes and design** which adhere to guidance provided in the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (Project 2.3), including opportunities to decorate hoardings and create window displays in vacant units while works are underway. Led by the City.
- + **Review all outside seating areas in light of the Vehicles As Weapons safety conversation,** and adjust road layouts and protection measures as required. Led jointly by the City and OCC
- + **Develop advisory briefings on low energy heating and lighting for outside seating areas.** Led by the City.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

2.2 Interim public realm improvements

PUBLIC REALM & ANIMATION

2.3 CITY CENTRE SHOPFRONT DESIGN ADVICE

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Oxford City Council has developed a Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, which takes the form of a planning Technical Advice Note (TAN) accompanying Oxford's Local Plan 2036. This has the aim of conserving and enhancing Oxford's architecture, public realm, heritage and image. The Design Guide seeks to assist owners and tenants of shops and other commercial premises in the design of shopfronts and advertisements, and will also assist planning officers in their assessment of shopfront and signage applications. Its objective is to enhance and improve the character and appearance of shopfronts and signage of buildings within the city by establishing a set of design principles and good practice examples. The current planning and enforcement regulations will still apply to unauthorised shopfronts and signage.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council Planning and Heritage, and City Centre Management teams

Supporting: City Centre Taskforce, Local Businesses and property owners





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Oxford city centre is famous for its world-class architecture and historic environment. In order to ensure that this architecture and unique setting is celebrated, it is essential that city centre shopfronts are well maintained, and that new signage is sensitive, well designed and well maintained.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **The TAN has been completed and published** on Oxford City Council's planning webpages: [link](#).
- + **Encourage building owners, landlords and incoming occupiers to draw on the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.** Led by the City.
- + **Explore the option of designating an Area of Special Control** within the city centre. This will have the aim of improving the centre's public amenity value and be informed by the design principles of the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide. Led by the City.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

2.3 Shopfront Design Advice

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the projects under 'Workstream 2: Public Realm & Animation'. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions.

Please tell us if we should include any other delivery partners under any project under Workstream 2?

Are there any additional actions you would suggest under any of the projects under Workstream 2?

[Return to Workstream Overview](#)

Would you suggest any additional projects under this workstream? If so, please outline your idea, its rationale, actions, and delivery partners.

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.1 OXFORD WEST END

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Oxford West End is the largest-scale mixed-use development Oxford city centre has seen and is one of the largest urban transformation opportunities in the UK. Building on initial phases at the Westgate Centre and The Jam Factory, a series of coordinated developments are being brought forward as part of an over-arching vision co-created by local landowners and stakeholders to deliver an innovation district. Together these have the scale to meet the urgent demand for start-ups, spin-outs, and HQs in the city centre, alongside much needed new homes.

Together, the partners will:

- + Transform the area by delivering a co-ordinated programme of low carbon developments and infrastructure to the west of Oxford's city centre, creating over 13,000 net additional jobs in Oxford and around 1,000 new homes by 2040.
- + Create a focal point for life sciences, energy, AI, and creative sector activities.
- + Deliver a national rail hub that facilitates east-west rail across the ARC to Cambridge, a range of new and enhanced city to city connections and strong local metropolitan transit and active transport mobility options.
- + Attract and retain academic and technical talent from the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, and City of Oxford College, and work with local partners including The Oxford Trust to nurture a networked, entrepreneurial environment.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: University of Oxford, OxLEP, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford West End Developments (OxWED), Network Rail, Nuffield College and Christ Church College

Supporting: Oxford Brookes University, Activate Learning (City of Oxford College) and the Oxford Trust



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

Over the last 15 years, Oxford's contribution to the UK economy has been impressive. Yet, the evidence shows that the city is facing barriers to its overall potential. Supply-side limitations are Oxford's biggest barrier to growth.

- + Demand exceeds supply for housing, employment space, (start-up, office, R&D and lab) and labour. Oxford West End provides a long awaited, much needed opportunity for a mixed-use expansion of Oxford city centre.
- + Oxford ranks 45th out of 63 cities in the UK for business start-up rates and 58th in terms of GDP per worker.
- + Certain sectors are under-represented in the city, particularly the city centre.
- + There is a high rate of leakage of both knowledge and capital from the city, showing that Oxford could still drive more value from its innovation capacity, both for local people and for the UK.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

2021

- + **Implemented new partnership arrangements** to bring oversight, align with on-going work, help shape the overall ambition for the area, support inward investment from both the public and private sectors, and ultimately help ensure delivery of the opportunity.
- + **Secured first tranche of £162m from DfT for Network Rail** to deliver Station Phase 2 and submit prior approval. Led by Network Rail.
- + **Launched a vision, place branding and investment prospectus** to support case for investment. Led by the City.

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.1 OXFORD WEST END - CONTINUED



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS - CONTINUED

2022

- + **Submit Oxpens planning application.** Led by OxWed.
- + **Promote the Oxford West End** and pursue inward investment opportunities with Government agencies and the private sector. Led by City Council working with West End Partners.
- + **Adopt the West End Spatial Framework** Supplementary Planning Document by the end of 2022. Led by the City working with partners.
- + **Facilitate a major development programme** to come forward in a coordinated way. Planning applications are expected on Nuffield Ltd. development sites at Frideswide Square and the Island site between Hythe Bridge Street and Park End Street. Led by the City and landowners working with partners.

2023

- + **Deliver rail enhancements** and new western entrance (phase 2) by 2024. Led by Network Rail.
- + **Deliver major development sites and supporting infrastructure.** Led by landowners.
- + **Deliver further Rail Station enhancements** including the redevelopment of the eastern side of the Station (phase 3) by 2028.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.1 Oxford West End

Strategy development

Implementation

[Return to Workstream Overview](#)

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GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.2 CITY CENTRE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

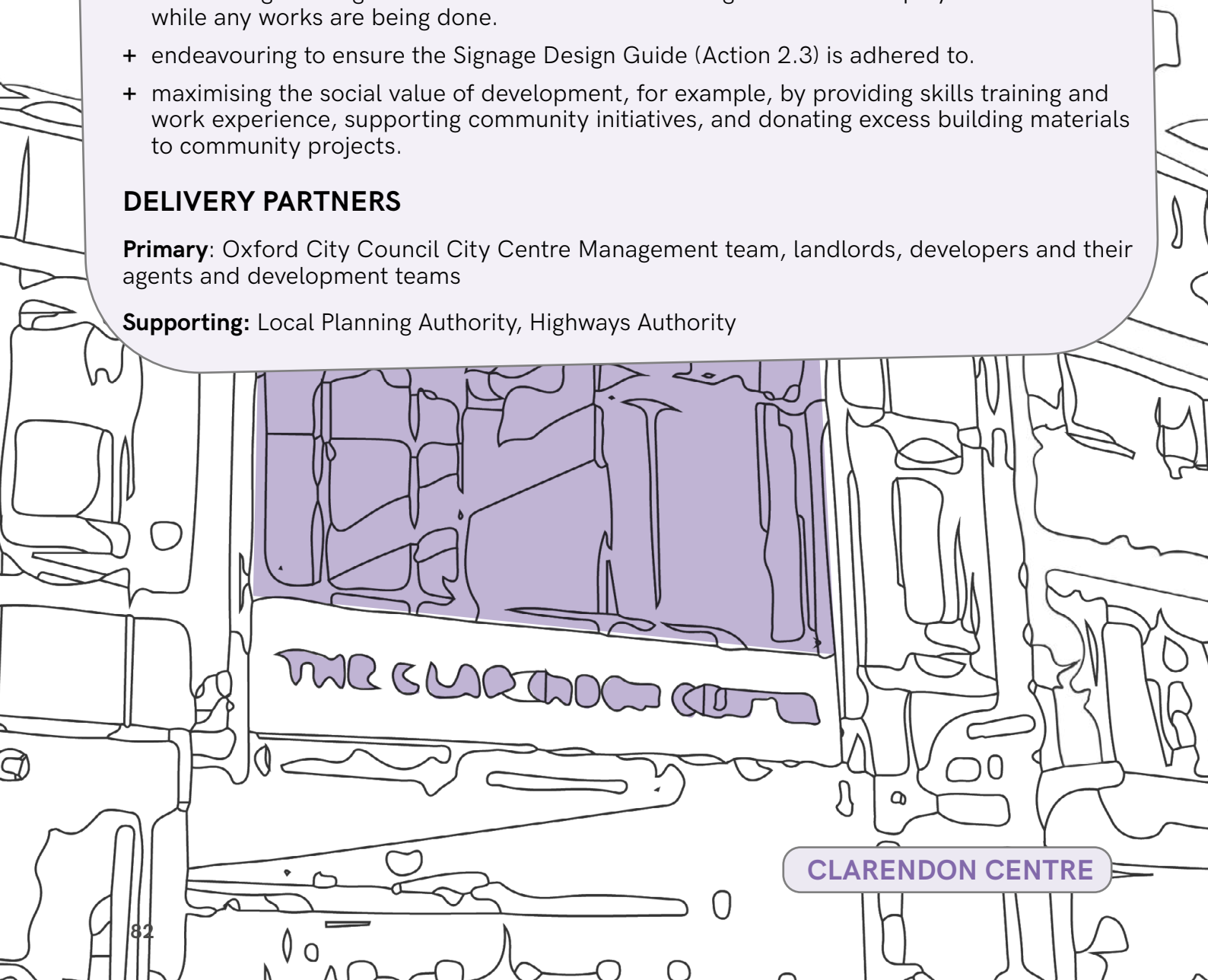
Major development projects and sites will be advanced in a holistic manner that reflects the objectives of this Action Plan. Proposed major developments are highlighted on the following page. Coordination with these major development projects will include:

- + making sustainable travel options a key element of the proposal.
- + committing to agreed, unified approaches to public realm improvements, including adding to the city centre public green space and street furniture portfolio where possible.
- + being mindful of the approach to 'curating the mix' as set out in this Action Plan.
- + encouraging meanwhile use of vacant space and units while longer term development work takes place.
- + committing to using attractive or informative hoardings or window displays on vacant units while any works are being done.
- + endeavouring to ensure the Signage Design Guide (Action 2.3) is adhered to.
- + maximising the social value of development, for example, by providing skills training and work experience, supporting community initiatives, and donating excess building materials to community projects.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council City Centre Management team, landlords, developers and their agents and development teams

Supporting: Local Planning Authority, Highways Authority





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + To ensure that current and upcoming major developments are part of a collective approach to improving a city centre where all stakeholders are working together to achieve the best, most sustainable outcomes.
- + To minimise the impact of construction activity on businesses, residents and visitors for both day-to-day operations and enjoyment of the city. This could involve restricting permissions for construction traffic or scaffolding, where possible, to avoid conflict with major dates and events in the city centre, or agreeing the installation of attractive and informative hoardings around works.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Continue to build working relationships** with landlords and development teams for all major city centre projects. Led by the City.
- + **Develop and share a working protocol** to cover approaches to key issues. Led by the City.
- + **Seek for the City Centre Management team to be embedded as a stakeholder** in the planning process. Led by the City.

Continued on next page.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.2 City Centre Major Development Projects

3.2

CITY CENTRE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - CONTINUED

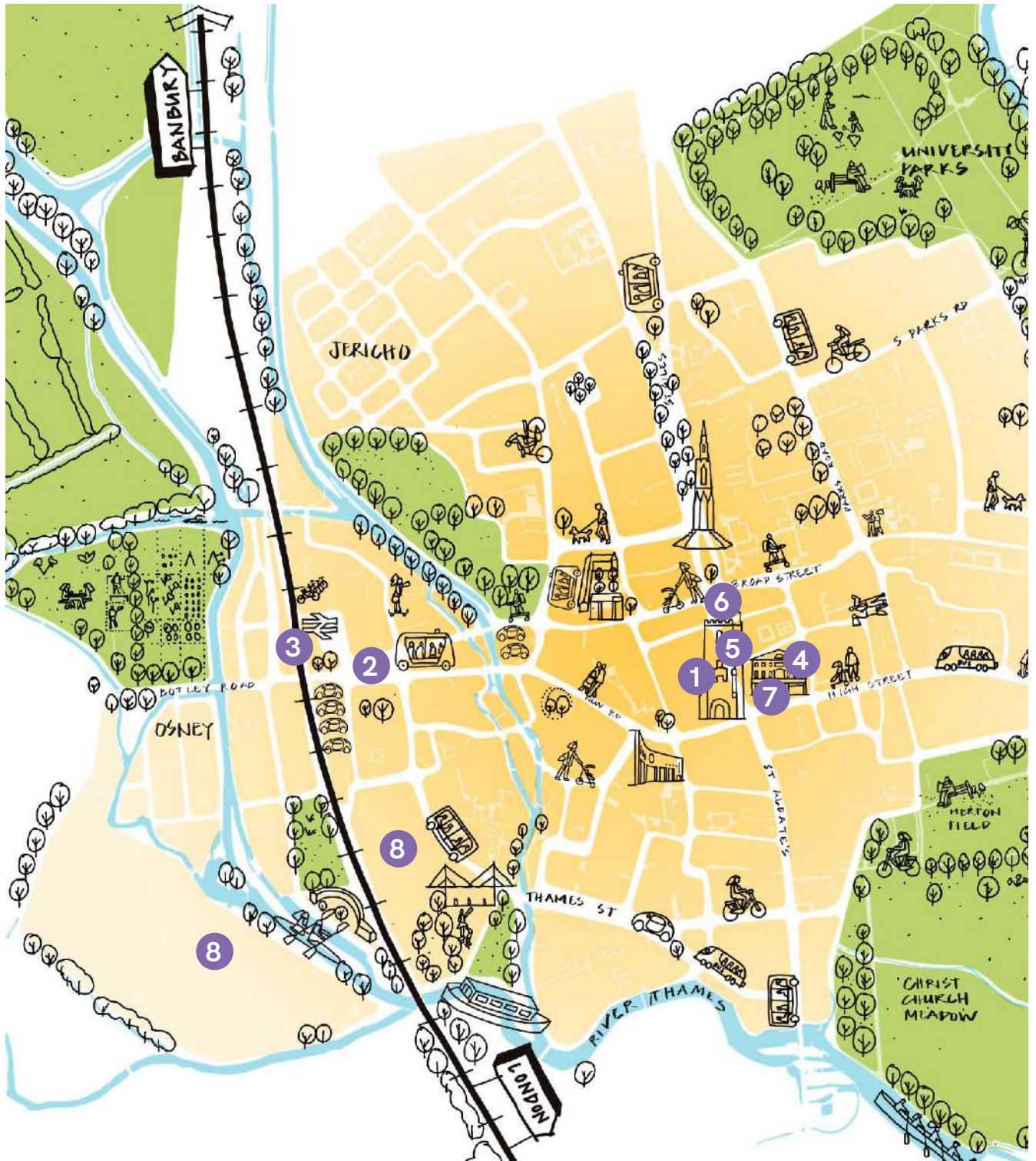


FIGURE 10 Oxford city centre key development sites

- 1 **Clarendon Shopping Centre** - proposed as a mixed-use redevelopment including new open air public space and pedestrian routes.
- 2 **Frideswide Square** - Action 3.1
- 3 **Oxford Railway Station** - Action 1.3
- 4 **The Covered Market** - Action 3.4
- 5 **Northgate development in Cornmarket** - completing in 2021.
- 6 **Boswells redevelopment on Cornmarket / Broad Street** - to create a new boutique hotel.
- 7 **College plans for 9-15 High Street** - to be announced.
- 8 **West End developments** (Action 3.1)

Note: depending on the outcome of viewings in 2021 the future of the ex-Debenhams store may be added to this list.

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.3 TARGET & REDUCE VACANT UNITS INCLUDING 'MEANWHILE IN OXFORDSHIRE...' PROJECT

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Work with landlords and agents to reduce the number of vacant city centre units to 'churn' (under 5%) level, including the reduction of underutilised upper floor space. In addition to seeking long-term occupancy, this will target the temporary use of vacant buildings to stimulate the economy, partly via the 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' project, which began in early 2021. Agree and deliver on a city centre-wide approach to securing a vibrant and sustainable mix of uses across retail, hospitality, services, commerce, leisure, residential and community / social enterprise uses that is inclusive, vibrant, sustainable, and increases resilience to withstand future economic shocks, where price is not necessarily the deciding factor in letting decisions and consideration is given to the balance of sectors represented, with the flexibility to accommodate changing customer demand. A specific opportunity might be a 'curation' strategy to help tackle the cluster of vacant units on High Street, and inform future letting decisions there.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council City Centre Management team leads on the audit, drawing information from agents and landlords (including the City's property team as the Council is a major city centre landlord). 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' lead is the Makespace Consortium (appointed operator) funded by the Government's Getting Building Fund (£1.875m for the countywide scheme), facilitated by OxLEP.

Supporting: Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' works with Oxfordshire district councils, Landlords, Agents





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Vacant units are a key indicator of a city centre's economic health. They represent a loss of income to landlords and the public purse, and often diminish the environment for nearby businesses. Filling them will improve appearance, attracting more visitors and businesses; increasing footfall, prosperity and experience.
- + Un- or under-used space on upper floors is also a lost opportunity for business, office or residential uses.
- + National trends in high street retail indicate a shift towards an experience-based economy, meaning Oxford city centre needs more opportunities for small businesses and start-ups in sectors that will improve its mix.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Maintain an audit of vacant ground floor city centre units.** This could be hosted digitally and integrated with leasing services. Led by the City.
- + **Conduct a city centre-wide audit of upper space,** including opportunities to promote city living opportunities, and develop a joint strategy to reduce the amount of un- or under-used space. Led by the City, working with landlords and agents.
- + **Continue to deliver the county-wide 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' project.** This will encourage meanwhile use where longer term lettings take time to deliver and focuses on vacant units where capital investment to re-purpose units would overcome barriers to letting. Led by the City, facilitated by OxLEP.
- + **Encourage all vacant unit hoarding or windows to be attractive and/or informative.** This includes developing protocols with the Council's planning and business rates teams to make this a commonly agreed principle and as easy to deliver as is possible within national regulations. Led by the City.
- + **Continue to develop a database of city centre ownership.** This will enable a collective approach to curating city centre units. Led by the City.
- + **Encourage all vacant city centre units to be actively and realistically marketed.** Led by landlords and agents, supported by the City.
- + **Work with landlords to curate an appropriate mix of uses** on each street based on the ambition and opportunities identified in the Projects & Places Appendix.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS : MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS : LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.3 Target & Reduce Vacant Units Including
'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' Project

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.4 COVERED MARKET EVOLUTION

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

There are a number of strategies being developed to support the successful long-term viability of the Covered Market and its businesses.

This includes a leasing and operating strategy that will set the Council's ambitions in terms of tenant mix, leasing terms and supporting independent businesses in light of trends in retail and the impact of COVID-19.

A masterplan will seek to improve the experience of all those who use the Covered Market and explore options to maximise commercial income and investment opportunities that will help the leasing strategy. It will also seek to improve the public realm in and around the market, for example, at the entrance on Market Street, as well as explore facilities such as public toilet provision in the Covered Market.

As part of the commission a heritage-led asset management & maintenance plan for the Covered Market will be developed as well as an 'Activation and animation strategy', 'A Branding & marketing strategy', and an 'Environmental sustainability strategy'.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council

Supporting: Covered Market occupiers



COVERED MARKET



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + The Covered Market is the Grade 2-listed “jewel in the crown” of City Council assets. Its unique social, historical and economic significance in Oxford means its success is critical to that of the city centre. If the leasing and operating strategy and the masterplan are successful, they will drive more footfall to the Covered Market and the city centre more widely.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **The City is leading on the production of all strategies.** They have appointed a multidisciplinary team, including the Retail Group, Gort Scott Architects, Inner Circle Consultants, Transition by Design, to develop the Covered Market design concept and outline business case. A further £1.5m is anticipated in ongoing capital investment in the Covered Market.
- + **The leasing and operating strategy**, including stakeholder engagement, was approved by Oxford City Council's Cabinet in June 2021. Led by the City.
- + **Engage with stakeholders and the public** on the masterplan until October 2021. Led by the City.
- + **Undertake design and financial feasibility work** throughout 2021, targeting an approved masterplan and outline business case by October 2021. Led by the City, in collaboration with its multidisciplinary consultants.
- + **Current and imminent workstreams include:** introducing late evening opening with an associated events programme; bringing a new bar operator to the market to help attract a wider and more diverse audience; improved daytime events and promotional activities to strengthen the customer experience, supported by a new and improved website, and an audio tour, "The Un-Covered Market".

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.4 Covered Market Evolution

Strategy development

Implementation

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.5 WORKSPACE U

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

In order to deliver on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy vision which positions Oxford as one of the world's top three innovation ecosystems, the city needs to provide much needed space for high-value priority sectors to grow and expand while also providing more affordable space for small businesses, social enterprise, and the third sector, including Oxford's growing co-operatives movement.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council

Supporting: OxLEP, workspace operators, and education sector partners





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Oxford's Economic Strategy has identified the need for a greater quantity and quality of flexible and affordable entrepreneurial workspace as part of its Workspace Strategy. This is a priority to support a more productive, sustainable and inclusive economy.
- + Creating and refurbishing workspace in the city centre will deliver a range of economic and place-based benefits, including a more diverse mix of city centre uses, sustainable regeneration and re-use, development of a community of new and growing businesses, improved workspace affordability, and new employment and training opportunities.
- + A number of workspace projects are being explored, including as part of the 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' project. The refurbishment of 1-3 George Street is the first city centre project to deliver on the Oxford Economic Strategy in 2021 and will provide approx. 7,286 sqft. (677 sqm) of workspace.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **1-3 George Street is undergoing a £1.921m refurbishment.** £800,000 of grant funding has been secured from OxLEP Local Growth Funds and the council investing the remainder. Led by the City.
- + **Appointing an operator to manage 1-3 George St** and deliver against a range of economic, social, and environmental objectives, and KPIs that support entrepreneurship and jobs. Led by the City.
- + **Explore further workspace opportunities** including re-purposing of under-used upper floors. Led by the City.
- + **Examine whether any of the buildings in the city centre vacant unit clusters can be re-purposed** for workspace uses, without negatively impacting on stock levels required for sustainable retail and hospitality sectors.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.5 Workspace

1-3 George Street

Other Actions

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.6 STIMULATE THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Work with business owners and managers to develop a programme of recovery and rebuild measures for the night-time economy, including exploring the potential for new and / or diversified uses in buildings alongside their primary uses.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council Safer Oxford, City Centre Management and Licensing teams, businesses, Pubwatch

Supporting: Landlords / agents, theatre and cinema management



TAP SOCIAL



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + The city centre night-time economy is among those hardest hit by COVID-19, with a number of its businesses remaining closed or only able to re-open using an adjusted business model.
- + Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, night-time industries were a growing part of the UK economy, and a strong offer will continue to play an important role in increasing the number of overnight stay visitors, which will help to boost the overall spend of visitors to Oxford.
- + An enhanced night-time economy will increase the range of leisure and cultural activities available in the city centre as well as enhance prosperity and opportunity for new business and operators.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Undertake a comprehensive audit of the sector** in Oxford city centre to assess current provision, status, challenges and opportunities, and to identify measures that could support our night-time economy. Led by the City.
- + **Identify and support opportunities to retain, enhance and extend the night time economy offer** including provision for live music and performances in the city centre. Led by the City, working with local landlords and planning teams.
- + **Ensure collaborative, joint-working** amongst all those in the sector is embedded within all initiatives that emerge from this project. Led by the City.
- + **Develop and deliver, a "getting home safely" strategy** to add confidence in the safety and security perceptions of Oxford city centre in the evenings and at night. Oxford has been granted up to £426,000 to introduce measures which aim to prevent violence against women and girls travelling in and out of Oxford at night. The funding aims to introduce new measures, including nightclub 'Safe Zones', Safe Walk routes, outdoor phone charging stations, upgrades to CCTV and more. Led by the City with night-time economy businesses, the police, bus companies and taxi operators.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.6 Stimulate the Night-Time Economy

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

3.7 CULTURE AND CREATIVE BUSINESSES NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Provide the right spaces and leases in the city centre for independent, cultural and creative businesses, and find and develop opportunities to widen and strengthen the role and presence of these communities. Oxford city centre already provides an important location for creativity and the arts, benefiting the population of the city and its wider hinterland, as well as a basis for attracting tourists to the city.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council

Supporting: Cultural Partners



MODERN ART
OXFORD
FREE ADMISSION

MODERN ART OXFORD



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + There is a comparative under-representation of creative and innovative business activity within the city centre. The Creative sector makes up a relatively small proportion of total employment in the city centre (10%), and has declined over the last five years in terms of total employment (-40%).
- + There is a lack of suitable workspace to meet the needs of creative businesses in order for it to regrow.
- + While Oxford is already a global tourist destination more needs to be done to capture longer stays and offer greater diversity to aid recovery and long-term visitor growth. Boosting the level of creative and cultural industries has significant potential to both increase local job opportunities and diversify the visitor offer.
- + Oxford City Council delivers and supports a range of arts and cultural activities including dance, music, theatre, literature, film, digital art, the Museum of Oxford and the city's archives, and these organisations would like to, and can, play a bigger day-to-day role in the city centre.

PROGRESS AND ACTIONS



- + **Promote independent entrepreneurs in the leisure and culture sectors** by encouraging landlords and agents to recognise the wider benefits of these business types as an addition to the city centre mix, especially for under-used upper floors and long-time vacant units. Led by the City.
- + **Identify opportunities to host and/or fund new internationally significant creative and culture events.** Led by the City.
- + **Explore funding opportunities to support creation of a new cultural quarter** as part of the public realm and movement strategy along with opportunities to make culture and creativity a part of the new offer in emerging city centre development.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

3.7 Culture and Creative Businesses

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the projects under 'Workstream 3: Getting the Mix Right'. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions.

Please tell us if we should include any other delivery partners under any project under Workstream 3?

Are there any additional actions you would suggest under any of the projects under Workstream 3?

[Return to Workstream Overview](#)

Would you suggest any additional projects under this workstream? If so, please outline your idea, its rationale, actions, and delivery partners.

4.1 HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Everybody deserves a home and Oxford City Council and its partners are committed to ending rough sleeping and homelessness. Delivering on this commitment will involve working with people who present as homeless or are sleeping rough on the streets of Oxford, and with a range of partner organisations in the public sector, community, charity and social enterprise sectors to reduce instances of homelessness and rough sleeping.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council, with ongoing national Government funding and officer time, working in collaboration with a range of public and voluntary sector partners

Supporting: City centre businesses



MATILDA HOUSE



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Oxford City Council believes that nobody should have to sleep rough in Oxford, but homelessness is a multi-dimensional problem which requires close partnership working to prevent it.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on people who are homeless as well as the sector itself. The call to arms of “Everyone In” at the start of Lockdown 1 saw the City provide accommodation for all the people who were at that point rough sleeping. This saw a shift in relationships and partnerships, with hotels, local businesses and Brookes University providing much of the accommodation and food. In December 2020, this work was ongoing with more than a 100 people still housed in interim accommodation which is now the cornerstone of a county-wide transformation programme towards a housing-led approach.
- + Strengthen existing partnerships and initiatives, and explore and introduce innovative new solutions where they present to help establish Oxford as a national leader in tackling this issue.
- + Oxfordshire County Council, the City and District Councils are working together to commission new services for single homeless people and those experiencing rough sleeping. The new services will focus on early prevention of homelessness and the provision of a rapid re-housing response that seek to provide long-term independent accommodation with support where needed. New services will start to deliver in 2022.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

4.1 Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

4.2 STREET SCENE MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Continue to work with Oxford Direct Services and other stakeholders to audit and develop the most effective and responsive street scene management, cleaning and waste services. Encourage businesses and city centre customers and visitors to play their part.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council, ODS Ltd, City Centre Ambassadors, City Centre Management team, and Destination Management Organisation

Supporting: City centre businesses, waste services suppliers





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Oxford is world-renowned for its heritage architecture and picturesque streets. The perception should be matched by the lived and user experience so as to maintain positive visitor feedback and word-of-mouth / social media reflections on their time in Oxford city centre, and promote return visits.
- + To overcome barriers of fragmented responsibility, with multiple stakeholders responsible for management of different elements of the street scene.
- + Maintaining adequate public toilet provision helps to ensure that the city centre remains inclusive for all those who use it.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Develop a community toilet scheme**, exploring existing obstacles and drawing on best practice from other cities. Led by the City in consultation with ODS.
- + **Develop and deliver a new waste collection protocol**. This will focus on reducing vehicle congestion, street clutter, new street furniture, and works with businesses to encourage recycling and better street scene management. Led by the City in partnership with waste service suppliers.
- + **Review delivery and service management arrangements**. This will aim to minimise impact on scenic (and often narrow) city centre streets, align with Zero Emission and Last Mile Delivery actions, and encourage the use of electric vehicles where practical and affordable. Led by ODS and the City.
- + **Review the street furniture estate**. Ensure we are providing the right furniture for the right places and uses, phase out and replace items - as budget allows - beyond their practical and visual lifespan, reduce clutter, and introduce street art where practical and affordable. Led by the City and the CCMT.
- + **Review the signage and wayfinding estate** and explore funding opportunities to develop a new approach. This will take into account layout changes, key attractions, and preferred means of communicating for different nationalities, ages and abilities, as part of an integrated physical-digital visitor experience. Led by the City, in liaison with the CCMT and DMO.
- + **Review and update protocols on peddling, busking and A-Boards**. Led by the City and CCMT in consultation with stakeholders.
- + **Minimise the impact of highways works on city centre operations**, including agreeing a new approach to works signage, as well as an adjustment to the 'no works beyond the essential at Christmas' protocol date from December 5th to November 5th. Led by OCC.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS : MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS : LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

4.2 Street Scene Management

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

4.3 TOURISM & VISITOR MANAGEMENT

NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Tourism and visitor management is critical to providing a quality and memorable experience for our visitors, driving footfall into the city centre and balancing the impact on businesses and residents. We will, therefore, work with the destination management organisation and individual attractions and businesses to encourage more overnight stays, manage the influx of visitors, and create a memorable experience such that visitors encourage others to come and make return visits themselves.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council City Centre Management Team; Destination Management Organisation

Supporting: Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford University and its Colleges, Hotels, visitor attractions

Pitt Rivers M

Sheldonian T

Bodleian L

RADCLIFFE CAMERA



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Before COVID-19, about 17,000 jobs in Oxford were related to tourism – 14% of all jobs in the city. Tourism generated about £988m for the city's economy in 2019. The visitor economy has a huge impact on jobs and spend for many city centre businesses.
- + Visitors bring many benefits to the city centre and its businesses but high numbers at peak times can result in congestion that diminishes their experience and can result in conflicts with residents and businesses.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Explore options for a new model of visitor information centre**, including options for an improved digital welcome. This could include enhanced digital apps and other visitor services, so as to streamline and integrate the visitor experience across all activities such as accommodation, leisure, attractions, travel, and information. Led by the City.
- + **Seek funding** to continue the development and promotional work to switch focus from day and part-day visits to overnight stays. Led by City, DMO and hotels.
- + **Conduct a survey of coach drivers and passengers** on arrival in the city centre – when visitor numbers return to more typical levels – to provide data to guide future policy. Led by OCC with the City.
- + **Work with local partners to create and embed a guide protocol into language school operations.** Led by the City in partnership with DMO and language schools.
- + **Explore funding to allow a review of existing city centre signage and recommend a cohesive, updated approach** in keeping with the city's heritage, and taking into account favoured means of absorbing information of different age groups and nationalities, including people with disabilities and accessibility issues, taking app-based and other options into account, including the lessons learned in developing and operating the Oxford City Accessibility Guide. Led by the City.
- + **Explore funding opportunities to enhance destination management and promote the Oxford offer.** This could include coordinated apps and services for tourism-related businesses. Led by the City, DMO, and local businesses.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

4.3 Tourism and Visitor Management

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

4.4 REDUCING CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

DESCRIPTION

Collaborative joint working on a combined, strategic, responsive approach to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Oxford city centre.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Thames Valley Police officers supported by Oxford City Council's Community Safety Team, and Oxford City Crime Partnership

Supporting: City Centre Management Team, Oxfordshire County Council Highways, city businesses, the universities





WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + To create a safe city, and one that is perceived to be safe to all those who live, work, shop, eat & drink or are customers of the entertainment and leisure economy here, study, and visit, in every part of the city centre, and at all times of the day and night, and through the year, is fundamental to its economic success.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

Maintain collaborative action against crime and anti-social behaviour in the city centre, and specifically:

- + **Progress the ongoing joint county-city work** on developing new interventions on Hostile Vehicle Mitigation.
- + **Develop a strategy to tackle bike theft** with an emphasis on supporting bike owners to employ suitable safety equipment and park their bike securely, for example, by providing additional, secure, cycle parking and hosting safety workshops. Led by the City and TVP.
- + **Provide suitable information sharing facilities** e.g. noticeboards to provide alternatives to flyposting and graffiti, but otherwise take action against instances that appear. Led by the City.
- + **Develop the concept of 'responsible guardianship'** to encourage city centre businesses to take all actions within their powers to reduce instances of shoplifting, but provide ongoing support in terms of training and advice sharing in keeping with a partnership approach. Led by TVP.
- + **Source funding for and commission an update of the city centre's CCTV** camera facilities and strengthen joint working between The Westgate, the university and the TVP-City Council facility operations. Led by the TVP and City.
- + **Engage local partners in developing and delivering actions against anti-social behaviour** in sectors of the city where it is currently or becomes a significant issue. Led by the City.
- + **Develop and run regular anti-litter campaigns** with enforcement as required. Led by the City, working with street scene teams and communications and community interest group colleagues.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

4.4 Reducing Crime and Antisocial Behaviour

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

4.5 MARKETING AND PROMOTION NS

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Work with city centre businesses and partners to achieve a strong collective approach to marketing and promoting the city centre's brand and messaging, and establish it at the heart of all communications activity as far as resources allow. This will celebrate its unique place qualities including its history, world-class architectural heritage and university institutions; as well as its strengths in retail, hospitality and leisure, and in culture, community and social enterprise.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Primary: Oxford City Council, City Centre Taskforce Marketing sub-group

Supporting: Destination Management Organisation, Independent Oxford, Oxford Mail & Times

ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD UNIVERSITY



WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

- + Promoting Oxford's commercial offer collectively will deliver a result far greater (in terms of ideas, resourcing and impact) than the current model in which individual sectors and organisations largely promote themselves.



PROGRESS AND ACTIONS

- + **Continue to strengthen the range of membership, partnership working and role of the City Centre Taskforce Marketing Group.**
- + **Explore funding opportunities to develop new brands and marketing / promotions campaigns.**
- + **Explore funding opportunities to develop collaborative marketing / promotion apps,** where they are supported by businesses and add to this project.
- + **Strengthen the city centre's presence on social media** by encouraging (with training opportunities where needed) more businesses to engage in social media, and work together to boost their output and impact there.

SHORT TERM 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM TERM 3-5 YEARS

LONG TERM 5+ YEARS

4.5 Marketing and Promotion

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the projects under 'Workstream 4: Getting the Basics Right'. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions.

Are there any additional actions you would suggest under any of the projects under Workstream 4?

[Return to Workstream Overview](#)

Would you suggest any additional projects under this workstream? If so, please outline your idea, its rationale, actions, and delivery partners.

STREET-BY-STREET

This section explores some potential location-specific opportunities and considerations for an improved public realm across Oxford city centre, to help define the scope for a public realm strategy.

OVERVIEW

This section divides the 'outdoor' city centre into 10 locations and describes a series of opportunities for each street or cluster of streets, with the challenges that delivering them might involve.

Oxford city centre has a high concentration of heritage assets and historic environments, and this context will be a primary consideration for any proposals. Suggested interventions here (developed via formal and informal engagement with city centre businesses and organisations) as well as any added in the consultation, will need to acknowledge the wider planning policy context in the form of the [Local Plan](#), [Conservation Area Assessment](#), [Local Transport Plan](#) and other key policy documents.

The role of a number of streets also needs to be considered as part of the wider City Centre Public Realm & Movement Strategy to ensure long-term solutions balance competing needs.

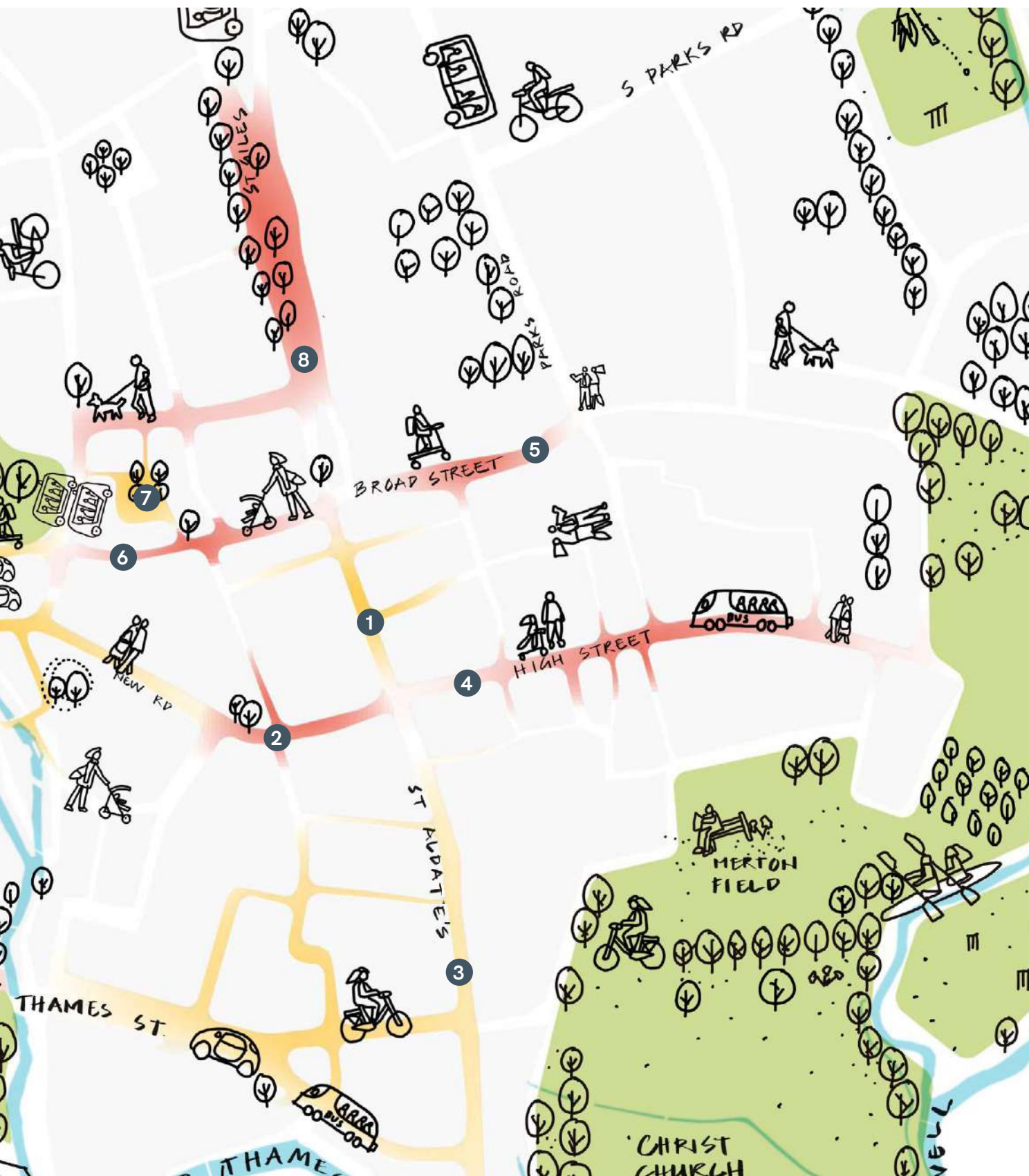
Opportunities listed throughout this section have been identified to progress the objectives of the four Action Plan workstreams:

- Workstream 1: Connectivity and Access
- Workstream 2: Public Realm and Animation
- Workstream 3: Getting the Mix Right
- Workstream 4: Getting the Basics Right

With their central location and connections to others, a number of streets have more detailed analysis in this consultation draft. This may change as the consultation process continues.



FIGURE 11 City Centre streets



CORNMARKET STREET AND SURROUNDINGS

POTENTIAL

Cornmarket Street's role as a key destination, as described in the Local Plan, can be elevated with an increased diversity and intensity of uses to animate the area in varying locations and at different times of day. An enhanced public realm will encourage and enable that activity. Build on the success of St Michael's Street as an attractive pedestrianised hospitality destination, and on plans for an attractive public space in Market Street as part of the Northgate development and the Covered Market masterplan

CONTEXT

- + The current configuration of bus stops and coach drop offs to the north means Cornmarket is, at certain times, a busy footfall thoroughfare, though much of that is passing through rather than stopping.
- + The quality of street materials in this area are poor and inconsistent with lots of patching up with inappropriate and inferior materials. Street furniture design, including benches and bins, is inconsistent.
- + There is a lack of green.
- + Neither Market Street nor Golden Cross maximise their role as a connection between Cornmarket Street and The Covered Market.
- + Magdalen Street is one of the locations where competition for space between bus operations and the business / pedestrian / cyclists environment is an issue.
- + The quality and appearance of shopfronts and signage on Cornmarket is mixed.
- + The successful COVID-19 additions of outside seating for hospitality businesses has made a significant difference to their viability but requires ongoing balancing to accommodate other uses.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A revitalised public realm, consistent along Cornmarket and its side streets, including level surface paving, seating options and planting, would reinforce the idea of a pedestrian, connected retail and hospitality destination.
- The Northgate development, and Clarendon Centre and Boswells repurposing will make a significant difference to the look, layout and variety of uses on this street.
- Improve street lighting and usability of these pedestrian environments after dark.
- Continue to introduce outside seating zones (where there is space and mindful of the impact on pedestrians and people with disabilities).
- Ensure hostile vehicle mitigation and efficient bollard-controlled vehicle access to Cornmarket is in place.
- Work with the county council and businesses here to better manage delivery, servicing, and waste collection services, and to remove or consolidate excess signage.
- Strengthen partnership working to tackle ASB issues here.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Various development proposals need to be taken into account when considering this area.
- + Servicing and cycle movement along Cornmarket are permitted from 6pm to 10am, limiting the street's pedestrian friendliness in the morning and evenings.
- + Cornmarket is a significant attraction to the peddling and busking community which can add to congestion at the busiest times.
- + Public realm planning for Market Street needs co-ordinating with development plans for the frontage of The Covered Market.
- + Improvements in lighting to support hospitality businesses needs to be done in a way that is sensitive to the historic buildings and their setting.
- + Any impact on views from Magdalen Street up to St Aldate's / Christ Church, and of the Saxon Tower of St Michael at the North Gate must be a consideration.



FIGURE 12 Cornmarket Street



FIGURE 14 A modern public realm in a historic setting provides seating, retail, planting and pedestrian priority. Copenhagen, Denmark.



FIGURE 13 St Michael's Street



FIGURE 15 Golden Cross

QUEEN STREET, BONN SQUARE & CONNECTING STREETS

POTENTIAL

To build on the public realm improvements made as part of the Westgate development in order to improve the pedestrian and business environment along the whole length of Queen Street, enhance the use of Bonn Square, and increase daytime activity on St Ebbes and New Inn Hall Street.

CONTEXT

- + Significant public realm improvements have been made as part of the Westgate development at western Queen Street, but the remainder needs priority action.
- + COVID-19 impacts and the ongoing challenges facing national brand retail meant a number of new vacant units appeared on these streets in 2020/21.
- + Bonn Square is underutilised in terms of its role as a performance space and has a history of requiring interventions against anti-social behaviour.
- + Cyclists have to dismount on Queen Street during daytime hours at present, reducing its attractiveness to sustainable transport modes across the city centre.
- + St Ebbes (south) and New Inn Hall Street (north) adjoin Queen Street with a mix of retail and hospitality businesses, and college frontages. These streets also have a national cycle route and significant disabled parking and cycle rack presence.
- + Proposals for the future of The Clarendon Centre will change its Queen Street and Shoe Lane, New Inn Hall Street frontages.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Significant investment in Queen Street's public realm as well as in New Inn Hall Street South will have a transformative effect on a key shopping street.
- There is also opportunity to redesign connective streets, such as St Ebbes and New Inn Hall Street South to improve the pedestrian experience in and around Queen Street and Bonn Square.
- Develop an events strategy for Bonn Square that creates a cultural offering, especially if tied to a similar strategy for George Street / Gloucester Green.
- Strengthen the involvement of the Westgate management team in the area around its main entrance, and especially on projects to enhance the use of Bonn Square.
- Explore options for cycle pathways and review the daytime cycling restrictions on Queen Street-and / or explore use of camera technology to trigger 'No Cycling' signs when pedestrian counts are high.
- Create a collective grouping of businesses in this sector of the city to help drive and resource initiatives to enhance its appeal.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Disparate ownership making a collective plan for this location harder to achieve.
 - + The national cycle route running along New Inn Hall Street and St Ebbes limits re-purposing options.
 - + Development plans for Clarendon Shopping centre need to be taken into consideration on any re-thinking of New Inn Hall Street.
- + The tendency for Bonn Square to attract anti-social behaviour is a consideration in any plans for that area, as is the need to manage impacts on neighbour businesses of events and performance there.



FIGURE 16 Bonn Square and Queen Street



FIGURE 18 Seamless and flexible public realm outside a shopping centre. Southgate Centre, Bath.



FIGURE 17 New Inn Hall Street



FIGURE 19 A greened and pedestrianised through street, with places to walk, sit and play. Van Gogh Walk, London.

ST ALDATE'S, SPEEDWELL STREET & CONNECTING STREETS

POTENTIAL

St Aldate's is a major entrance into the city centre. Reviewing the scale of its use by buses as part of the city centre-wide strategy, better strategic use of its connective streets, and by better separating vehicular and cycle traffic to make the street safer and more environmentally friendly would be a significant plus. Speedwell Street could be a valuable bus and coach hub with provision of suitable facilities subject to a review of its layout and the uses of its buildings.

CONTEXT

- + Featuring Folly Bridge and Christ Church at one end and the Town Hall and the Museum of Oxford at the other, this sector is a popular tourist / visitor destination. It is also a significant bus drop off and pickup point, for tourist coaches at the southern end, and for city and county bus services at the north.
- + St. Aldate's experiences heavy footfall (especially from Christ Church tourists) yet its pavement spaces are narrow in places, traffic count is high and crossing points are limited. In addition, it is used heavily by cyclists but there are no cycle lanes, creating conflict with vehicles.
- + There is opportunity to reconsider important connective streets, such as Blue Boar Street and Pembroke Street, which would help to better connect St. Aldate's from east to west across the city centre.
- + Speedwell Street is already a bus hub and there are aspirations to increase its use by visitor coaches to alleviate pressure elsewhere.
- + Folly Bridge is under-utilised.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore options to reprioritise use by pedestrians and cyclists.
- Consider redesign at the Blue Boar Street and Pembroke Street junctions, focusing on how the pedestrian and cyclist experience can be improved for those going across the city centre – including better pedestrian signposting and legibility.
- Explore the creation of a new bus and coach hub on Speedwell Street with matching improvements in stopping, toilet and welcome facilities.
- Conduct a strategic review and develop a project plan for re-purposing of the unused / under-used buildings along Speedwell Street.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Impact on bus users, especially those with limited mobility of any re-allocation of bus stops away from this central and popular location.
- + The potential for capacity issues if local and visitor bus services both use Speedwell Street.
- + Potential impact of anti-social behaviour on other uses, especially the visitor welcome.
- + Long term leases on the Speedwell Street buildings hamper re-purposing efforts.
- + Work is required on the look and the facilities to create a fitting 'Welcome to Oxford' at this location.



FIGURE 20 Speedwell Street



FIGURE 22 Mobility hub providing a modal interchange and an improved public realm. Lambeth, London



FIGURE 21 St Aldate's



FIGURE 23 Safe segregation and priority for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. Seattle, USA.

HIGH STREET & CONNECTING STREETS

POTENTIAL

This is one of our most significant streets in terms of heritage. A revitalised High Street would retain all of the famous character and history of the street while aiming to improve pedestrian experience, reconcile traffic conflict and enhance the offer of the street, and those adjoining it, through the extension of new uses such as outdoor cafés and pedestrian seating, and collective promotion of the businesses it has now and in the future.

CONTEXT

- + The High Street currently offers a relatively poor pedestrian experience, where a wide road and in some places narrow pavements prioritise vehicles, including for loading, bus waiting etc. over pedestrian space.
- + There is a lack of green.
- + There is significant competition for space between cyclists and vehicle traffic, and the very limited number of cycle parking facilities, especially in the stretch east of King Edward Street which discourages cyclists from supporting its businesses.
- + Vehicular congestion (particularly buses) visually obstruct the beauty and impact of the street's architecture, detracting from its character and attractiveness.
- + Although High Street and its connecting streets have a strong mix of businesses there is no collective brand or promotion so this part of the city centre is less well promoted than others.
- + This is one of the areas of the city centre that has a cluster of vacant units, a number of them long-time empty.
- + Street lighting is limited on the south side of High Street (from Turl Street to Carfax), and on side streets, impacting the perception of safety for those using the area, especially in winter months.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Assess existing traffic uses and consider full redesign of High Street and its connecting streets.
- Audit High Street cycle parking and explore ways to increase capacity.
- Accepting that traffic issues are complex, explore a range of short-term enhancements including reducing traffic flow on side streets to increase the quality of the pedestrian experience, allow more landscaping of, and signposting on, side streets and to The Covered Market.
- Work with landlords, agents and businesses on a 'curation' strategy (as described in Project 3.3) to tackle the cluster of vacant units here, and inform future letting decisions.
- Strengthen connections with The Covered Market as an independent led 'market quarter' including the possibility that businesses could start up and grow in the Market and ultimately expand into neighbouring streets.
- Work with landlords and tenants to develop a brand and marketing strategy for this part of the city centre.
- Consult on and develop a lighting / street furniture / greening review and strategy in keeping with both the areas historic setting and its current business uses.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + High Street is a major public transport connector for the residential communities in East Oxford, so limiting space for buses would significantly impact on service provision.
- + The need to strike a balance between conservation of the historic setting and measures to support the business community, for example, on installation of additional lighting on High Street and King Edward Street.
- + Loss of income to Oxfordshire County Council and loss of facility for drivers in reducing / removing on-street parking at King Edward Street.
- + Mixed ownership of property in this area creating the potential for difficulties in agreeing a joined-up approach.



FIGURE 24 High Street



FIGURE 26 Safe segregation and priority for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. Berlin, Germany.



FIGURE 25 Turl Street



FIGURE 27 King Edward Street

BROAD STREET







POTENTIAL

With its history and concentration of attractive heritage buildings, Broad Street could be reconfigured to become a people-friendly civic space of international stature, and a destination for important city events.

CONTEXT

- + This is an area of heritage significance with a number of key assets, but these strengths are not wholly maximised, and car and motor cycle parking intrudes on the setting of a number of its historic buildings.
- + The lack of authorised through traffic means that, prior to the 2021 temporary trial project, Broad Street largely functioned as an informal public space but the wide areas of carriageway, occupied by on-street parking / loading severely limits its potential.
- + Servicing, delivery and access needs compete with the potential to reduce traffic and vehicular movements.
- + Broad Street hosts a number of major events, including the Christmas Market, and there is a protocol in place to take consideration of their impact on residents, students and businesses.
- + It is a major east-west cycle route, with significant loading and disabled, motorcycle and cycle parking allocations, and also a sightseeing and campus-serving bus route.

OPPORTUNITIES

-  Build on the lessons of the 2021
-  temporary trial part-pedestrianisation to create a more regular or permanent civic space at the western end of Broad Street, and extend the concept to the eastern end.
-  Add, where possible, more street seating, canopies, greening, etc., and increase diversity in daytime use, including creating new performance and / or busking sites at times that don't conflict with the resident community.
-  Add new, quality, weekday street trading
-  pitches to tie in with the outside seating, while mindful of potential impact on the city's established markets, street trading offer and existing Broad Street businesses.
-  Minimise street clutter, such as, redundant street furniture, disused phone boxes, signage and over-sized or misplaced A-boards.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Protecting the Street's heritage assets and their setting must be a priority.
- + Removing on-street car parking will mean revenue loss for Oxfordshire County Council and loss of facility for drivers.
- + Residential accommodation / study rooms on both sides of the street are a consideration when planning uses, particularly, but not only, into the evening.
- + Access to Turl and Market Streets is key to retain, or establish alternative route(s).
- + Loading bays, disabled, motorcycle and cycle parking, and bus routes will need consideration in any re-purposing.
- + Programming of events here will need resourcing, and the implications of pedestrianisation on existing event income streams will need be factored in.



FIGURE 28 Broad Street as Broad Meadow, summer 2021



FIGURE 30 Broad Street: Artist's Impression



FIGURE 29 Broad Street



FIGURE 31 Regeneration of a historic square, preserving transit priority. Bigg Market, Newcastle.

GEORGE STREET

POTENTIAL

George Street has the mix of business types to be a key hospitality hub and, with Gloucester Green, part of a vibrant creative and cultural quarter for the city centre, linking via a re-thought New Inn Hall Street to Bonn Square. This could include encouraging food & beverage uses, night-time economy, leisure, festivals, performance and events, and markets. It is also possible that part of the street, especially the western end, could be re-purposed with a different use-cluster considered.

CONTEXT

- + Hospitality and leisure businesses are the dominant types on George Street, but in recent years it has had a number of vacant units, and by Summer 2020 this reached concerning numbers, especially at the western end.
- + As a major bus and taxi route, with particularly narrow pavements in places, George Street is one of the city centre places with significant competition for space between its pedestrians, business and transport uses.
- + Sections of narrow pavements also limit scope for activation without re-purposing highway space.
- + The demise of Debenhams and landlord plans for that building's future need be factored in.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Support development of a creative and cultural quarter along with Gloucester Green and Bonn Square.
- Consider shared space surfacing on George Street to widen the effective pavement space.
- Explore, with bus companies and the highways authority, part-pedestrianisation options for George Street, to allow creation of further outside seating for businesses initiatives here.
- Explore options for a cycle pathway along George Street as part of a cross-city network.
- Find appropriate solutions for servicing and deliveries in keeping with proposals for creative, cultural and hospitality uses.
- Work with landlords to consider longer term re-imagining of uses for the vacant units cluster at George Street's western end, including re-purposing under used upper floors and encouraging meanwhile use while longer term plans come to fruition.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Long term development proposals for some of the street's key buildings need be taken into consideration when considering proposed improvement initiatives.
- + The role of George Street needs to be considered as part of the wider City Centre Public Realm & Movement Strategy to ensure a long term solution balances competing needs.
- + Re-routing buses and taxis to allow for outside seating for businesses impacts on service timings for buses, proximity to shopping streets for bus users, and journey times for taxis.
- + The highways intervention to prevent right turns out of George Street heading north / west, and the drop bollard in Gloucester Green on the route north both limit alternative travel options for buses and taxis when George Street is closed.



FIGURE 32 George Street



FIGURE 34 Visitor and night time offer on a shared pedestrian and cyclist priority street. New Road, Brighton.



FIGURE 33 George Street part-pedestrianised, summer 2020



FIGURE 35 Temporary parklets seasonally animate the street. Waltham Forest, London.

GLOUCESTER GREEN

POTENTIAL

Gloucester Green has the potential to be at the heart of an attractive and vibrant creative and cultural quarter for the city centre.

CONTEXT

- + The presence in this sector of three theatres and a cinema plus its proximity to the other main public space, Bonn Square, has created momentum behind the idea of it being developed as a creative or cultural quarter.
- + Gloucester Green is one of the city centre's biggest public spaces and hosts Oxford's outdoor market as well as range of retail and hospitality businesses plus a sizeable and active resident community.
- + The market and the businesses that have premises around the square could work in a more co-ordinated way to the benefit of both.
- + This continues to be an area of city centre public realm that is underutilised.
- + The increase in delivery moped numbers in this area creating access and noise issues and impacting on other businesses and residents.
- + Waste storage from businesses and residential properties remains an issue that needs resolving in the interests of both the area's look and its environment.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Support development of a creative and cultural quarter with a unified 'brand' that would enhance the identity of Gloucester Green and support efforts to promote its businesses and activation projects.
- Work with landlords to develop a letting / leasing strategy for the Gloucester Green commercial units that connects and complements neighbouring George Street, the outdoor market and cultural quarter ethos.
- Develop a co-ordinated activation programme outside market times, tying in with a similar initiative for Bonn Square.
- Better engage the market with the local theatres group to enhance its offer with more arts & culture-based activity.
- Rationalise the bins and other street furniture to create a consistent look.
- Explore options for additional street seating, canopies and planting, and increase diversity in daytime use in and around Gloucester Green and the area adjacent to the bus and coach station.
- Connect the Gloucester Green market with the sustainability initiatives being led by The Covered Market to share the benefits of the funding and learning there.
- Work with partners to improve the Gloucester Green underground car park, and develop a strategic approach to making best use of this space.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + The prospect of long-term development proposals for some key buildings here have acted as a barrier to proposed improvement initiatives.
- + The presence of a busy taxi rank and the importance of Gloucester Street as a north-south cycle route are considerations for any initiatives here.
- + A balance needs to be struck between activation and the impact on the resident population here, especially when it comes to evenings.
- + This is an area where anti-social behaviour is an issue outside of the busiest times.



FIGURE 36 Gloucester Green



FIGURE 38 Gloucester Green: Artist's Impression



FIGURE 37 Gloucester Green market



FIGURE 39 Formal and flexible market spaces create a lasting and dynamic square. Torvehallerne, Copenhagen.

ST GILES' & BEAUMONT STREET

POTENTIAL

A reimagined and redesigned St Giles' as a world class public space while protecting its heritage assets and their setting, and retaining its important role as an access point to the city centre and the home of major events, but with reduced parking and drop off / pick up use and improved pedestrian and cyclists experience.

CONTEXT

- + Both St Giles' and Beaumont Street are home to some of the city's most famous and important heritage buildings, and are a popular destination for museum, theatre, hotel and college visitors.
- + Large amounts of space are currently allocated to highway and on-street parking which is widely felt to be an unattractive and inefficient use of one of the city's most notable streetscapes.
- + The lower end of St. Giles' and Beaumont Street have congestion issues with visitor coaches, particularly in the summer months, and there is a significant conflict between pedestrians / cycles and large vehicles.
- + As a much-used route to the west of the city for those coming in from the north, the Beaumont Street junction and the street itself often experience traffic congestion.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider a full redesign that improves pedestrian and cyclist experience and creates new public space, e.g. by significantly reducing carriageway width and reallocating that space.
- Reduce on-street parking capacity in St Giles'.
- Continue the work being done to reduce the demands on St Giles' as a coach drop off / pick up location, initially by adding capacity elsewhere and longer term phasing out the facility here.
- Explore options for clear cycle pathways.
- Better connect the businesses along the western side of St Giles' to the city centre business community and / or with the cluster in Little Clarendon Street.
- Explore options for Beaumont Street to be part of the solution to bus / pedestrian conflict in other streets, especially George Street and Magdalen Street as part of the city centre movement and public realm framework.
- The city centre's only Shopmobility service is currently at the Westgate, severely limiting use of its facilities in the eastern part of the city centre. The space in the St Giles' / Beaumont Street area offers the potential to create an additional facility here.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Delivering the vision for St Giles' would require a major consultation initiative with likely varying views on the best outcome and significant costs if a major re-purposing is required.
- + Any changes need to take into consideration the requirement to host St Giles' Fair there every year.
- + Removing on-street parking has an impact on county council budgets and on facility for car users.
- + There are a number of disabled parking spaces in St Giles' and Beaumont Street that need to be retained.
- + Closing the St Giles' coach drop off zone has the potential to generate fly-use of Beaumont Street and resident streets and cause significant loss of amenity for the businesses there and for residents – this needs to be considered as part of Visitor Coach Strategy.



FIGURE 40 St Giles'



FIGURE 42 A world-class new public space. Place de la République, Paris.



FIGURE 41 The Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street



FIGURE 43 A wide boulevard with designated spaces for pedestrians, seating and planting, transit and cars. Passieg Sant Joan, Barcelona.

PARK END STREET / HYTHE BRIDGE STREET / FRIDESWIDE SQUARE / NEW ROAD / OXFORD CASTLE QUARTER

POTENTIAL

Frideswide Square, Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street to work efficiently as an attractive arrival point and gateway into the city centre, with new uses attracted to the vacant buildings that fit with that aspiration and complement those there currently. This sector needs to be integrated into the West End regeneration work, and become a place where the pedestrian and cyclist experience is enhanced and the waterway is better utilised.

CONTEXT

- + This area is a major arrival point by rail, bus, car, bike and walking. It has had significant investment in the highway and public realm at Frideswide Square but that has not yet been carried on along routes beyond it into the city centre.
- + Frideswide Square, Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street experience significant daily footfall and cycle traffic to and from the rail station.
- + It currently has a significant number of vacant units, the majority of which present in a less than positive way.
- + The area is home to many of the city centre's night-time venues, the majority of which have been under pressure due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is also home to a sizeable office worker community.
- + A number of university and college buildings are located here, and there are ongoing conversations about making further use of both the vacant units and under-used space to add to that holding.
- + The waterway access is under-utilised.
- + Views of Oxford Castle Quarter are limited from the heart of the city centre by the county council building, which acts as a physical and perception barrier to footfall from that direction. The Castle Quarter has also, for some time, suffered from vacancies in many of its buildings.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Redesign Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street, building on pedestrian / cyclist improvements already achieved at Frideswide Square potentially including reducing the space allocated to vehicle traffic, and creating new cycle pathways linking up to George Street and New Road, as part of a key route from Oxford rail station.
- Improve waterway access.
- Further explore options to increase street level activation in Frideswide Square and along Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street, increase activity in daytime uses, including new busking spots, better managed planting on the south side, and minimising street clutter, and improve visitor information and signage.
- Work with night-time venues as part of a wider strategy to enhance their role.
- Build on the masterplanning work for the area to tackle its vacant units cluster, as part of the 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire...' project initially.
- For Oxford Castle Quarter, the landlord strategy is to provide a broader mixed use site. The aim is to bring in competitive socialising concepts, tourist attractions and (in those spaces more suited to it) office space solutions alongside the existing hotel, bar and restaurant offer.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + The West End, Rail Station, Oxpens / Osney Mead and Nuffield plans all impact here. Co-ordinating the various major projects via a number of stakeholders with differing objectives is a key focus for this location.
- + The long timelines of developments here are delaying focus on getting the vacant units back into use or at least improving how they look to the very significant numbers of people, many of them visitors to the city, who pass by every day.
- + The area is still subject to frequent traffic congestion with negative impacts on air quality, journey times and use by cyclists and pedestrians.
- + The heritage status, associated conservation issues and planning use allocations for Oxford Castle may impact on re-purposing of some of its building to alternative uses.



FIGURE 44 Frideswide Square



FIGURE 46 Generous space for pedestrians and spill outs meet a shared road surface for cars, buses and cyclists. Slovenska Boulevard, Ljubljana.



FIGURE 45 New Road



FIGURE 47 Formal zones for spill out, planting, and movement zones in the historic Marais district. Rue du Tresor, Paris.

EXPENS ROAD

POTENTIAL

This is a key street within the West End that will be delivering 12,400 new jobs by 2040 and around 1,000 homes to form a world-class mixed-use urban innovation district. Two key development sites (Expens and Osney Mead) will need to cross Expens Road to access the city centre. Developments here will need to be well connected by foot and bike. Investment in a street redesign and public realm improvements has the potential to help attract investment and enable successful integration with the city centre.

CONTEXT

- + Currently a wide vehicle dominated internal distributor road with minimal crossing points, poor public realm for pedestrians and cyclists and lack of active frontage.
- + It is a major bus, car and taxi route currently but increased pedestrian numbers over time will require better access to the city centre.
- + The area is home to Oxford's popular but ageing ice rink and a major city centre car park. The ice rink requires considerable investment to continue to be fit for purpose.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Work with landowners, the county council and key stakeholders to develop a proposal as part of the public realm strategy within the West End Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that seeks to address these issues and allow better integration with the city centre.

CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY

- + Long term development proposals for some of the area's key buildings and city movement projects e.g. Connecting Oxford need be taken into consideration when considering proposed improvement initiatives.
- + The sheer number of vehicles, especially at key times, and access requirements make this challenging to solve.
- + At a time of budget challenges for both public and private sectors, aspirations for this area may be harder to achieve, especially with reference to the future of the ice rink.



FIGURE 48 Oxpens Road



FIGURE 49 Oxpens Road



FIGURE 50 Transport, cars, cyclists and pedestrians and ecology share space. Grey to Green Street, Sheffield.



FIGURE 51 Designated planting and cycle spaces green a wide boulevard. Malop Street, Australia.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

We are seeking your views on the street-by-street opportunities and challenges in the Action Plan. Please let us know your thoughts on the below questions:

Are there additional areas of the city centre you consider should be included?

For those currently included would you identify any additional context, opportunities or challenges to delivery?

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