

Divinity Road Area Residents Association (DRARA)

Response to the Oxford Local Plan 2036 – Preferred Options consultation August 2017

Housing

Housing must be prioritised over employment, given the imbalance of homes to jobs and the large number of workers needing to commute to Oxford. Increased employment will exacerbate the demand for housing and increase traffic to the detriment of our community. There is not an employment problem in Oxford; the creation of more jobs only exacerbates the already considerable pressures on the city's infrastructure. We therefore do not support the preferred options for **Options 1, 2 and 3**. Furthermore, provision of staff accommodation on employment sites should be encouraged and we support the preferred option of **Option 12**.

Option 7 – We support the preferred option.

Option 19 – We support with the preferred options A+B subject to a clear statement of criteria and definitions, which should include limiting purpose-built HMOs well away from currently saturated areas. The current approach to areas of ‘over-concentration’ of HMOs is inadequate. Streets where one part of the street is well over the 20% concentration currently see HMOs permitted in other parts of the street, exacerbating the overall effect on the whole street of a high proportion of transient student residents, while houses converted to university-managed student accommodation are not taken into account in the saturation policy. Ideally it would be possible to distinguish between HMOs for students and non-students, though we appreciate this may be beyond the Council's control.

Option 20 – We would cautiously support the preferred option if it is demonstrated that excluding students on non-taught post-graduate courses will not lead to increased demand for student housing at the expense of family homes and HMO accommodation for non-students.

Options 43 & 44 – Given Oxford's poor record in air quality, the most robust measures to improve air quality should be adopted.

Option 50, 51 & 52 – We support the preferred options. Provision of pedestrian/cycling routes through such spaces should be sought where practicable to encourage walking and provide alternative routes away from built up areas.

Option 72 – DRARA contributed to the Heritage Assessment exercise and supports the preferred option.

Option 81 – We support the preferred option, which needs to be sufficiently robust to reduce car usage, with employment sites not provided with more than essential minimum car parking provision; ‘travel choices’ for employment sites within Oxford and served by public transport (e.g. university and NHS sites in Headington which

have a particular impact on traffic in the DRARA area) should not include the option of travel by private car—traffic levels are unacceptably high and much of the impact of private car use is not mitigate with the use of electric vehicles.

Options 91 to 94 – The preferred options seem appropriate but it is important that the setting of the district centres in residential areas (including residential accommodation with in the centre) is taken into account.

Options 96 District Centres Map 6 – The Cowley Road district centre boundary includes the western side of some a substantial part of Divinity Road. The boundary (if drawn to include the non residential sites on Manzil way should be set at the rear boundary of Divinity Road back gardens. Consideration should be given to extending the boundary along Cowley Road to Magdalen Road junction (which would include to major places of worship, a community hall, restaurants and other commercial premises currently excluded and more clearly part of the district centre than Manzil Way, which is included).

Site Allocations

The attached submission from the Bartlemas Action Group (BAG), formed of DRARA residents with a particular interest in the Bartlemas Conservation Area deals with the sites closest to the DRARA area and DRARA supports the BAG assessments with only the following additional comment:

032 Lincoln College Sports Ground – If, policies and other considerations notwithstanding, this site were to be considered suitable for development it should only be included on condition that a substantial buffer area of green space with enhanced planting be provided at the Bartlemas end of the site and green space be retained along the Barracks Lane footpath.