

City centre development: strategic context

Place Overview & Scrutiny

September 2025



Image source: Savills County Hall brochure

Contents

- Introduction – *Slide 3*
- Location & Context – *Slide 4-5*
- Planning & Policy Context – *Slide 6-8*
- County Hall – *Slide 9*
- Speedwell House – *Slide 10*
- Key Developments – *Slide 11-12*
- Infrastructure – *Slide 13*
- Movement & Connectivity – *Slide 14*
- COMPF – *Slide 15*
- Joined-Up Working – *Slide 16*
- Oxford West End Landowners Group – *Slide 17*
- Southern Quarter – One Public Estate – *Slide 18*
- Ongoing Actions & Next Steps – *Slide 19*



Image source: Oxford City Council/Oxford West End Spatial Framework

Introduction

- Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee have asked Property OCC ("the Council") to “*set out its strategy for the City centre’s redevelopment and regeneration*”
- This request forms part of ongoing discussions around the Council's City Centre Accommodation Strategy. Accordingly, this presentation focusses on the area of the City centre known as Oxford West End which includes assets owned by OCC, namely County Hall and Speedwell House
- The sale of County Hall, and the proposed refurbishment of Speedwell House are catalysts for regeneration and provide OCC with influence over future change in Oxford West End
- This presentation sets out the relevant planning & policy context, existing and proposed developments and infrastructure within the West End, alongside Council and related workstreams and next steps that are relevant to the area’s regeneration
- Broader work is ongoing on the development of the City centre in conjunction with the City Council and other partners as outlined in this presentation

Location & Context

- Oxford West End is located to the west of the City centre, extending westwards from County Hall to the railway station and beyond. The area includes key development sites such as Oxpens, the Island Site and Osney Mead
- A further area which forms part of the wider West End located to the south of the City centre, comprising the southern end of St Aldate's Street, Thames Street and Speedwell Street, is referred to in this presentation as Southern Quarter
- Southern Quarter has a concentration of public sector owned administrative buildings including Speedwell House owned by OCC
- Oxford West End and Southern Quarter comprise a mix of uses including office, retail, and leisure, private, social and student housing, and educational and administrative facilities

Oxford West End

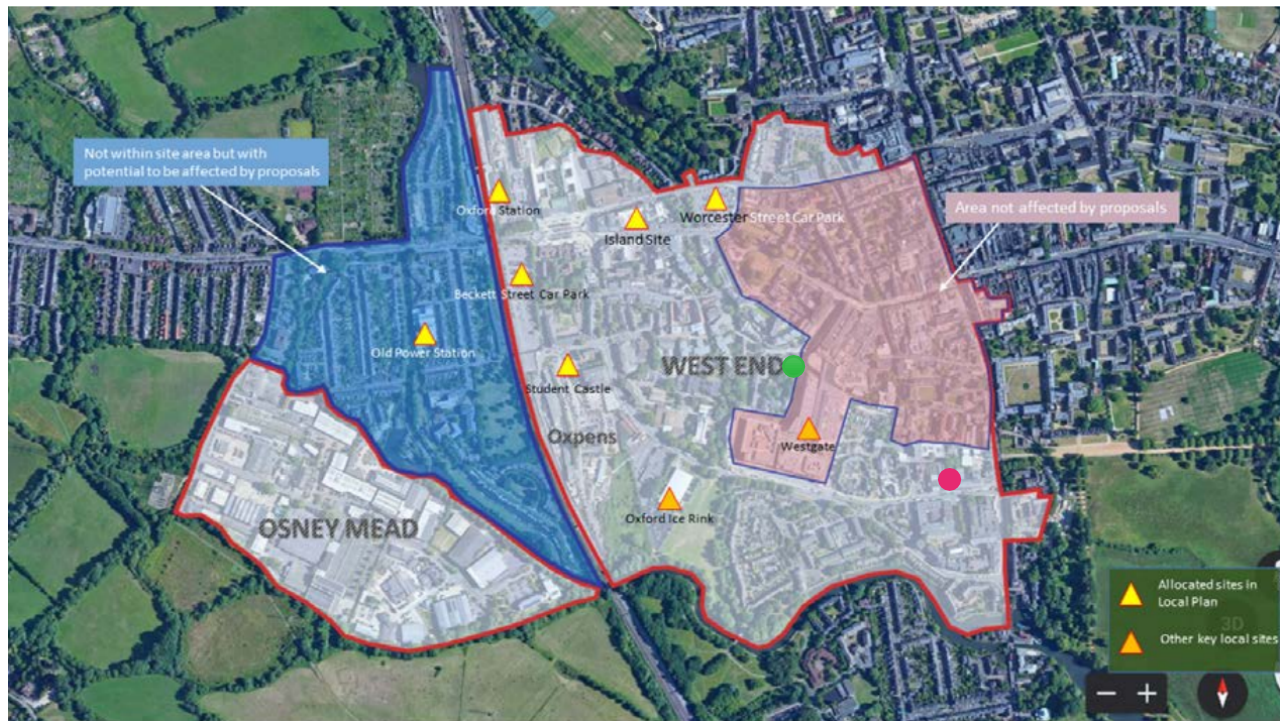


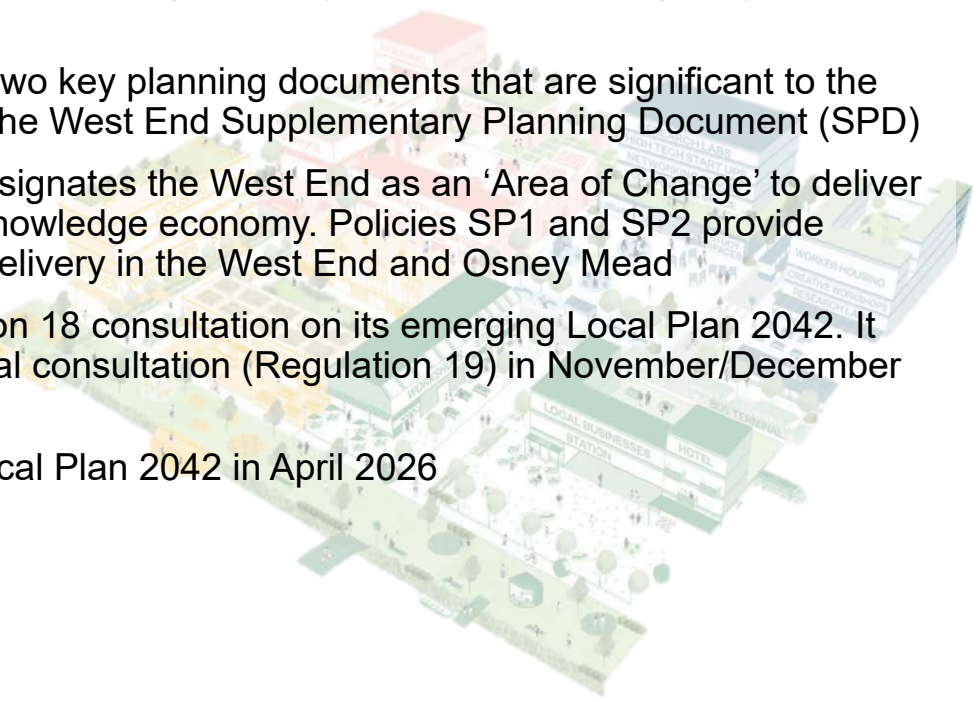
Image source: Oxford City Council West End SPD (2022)

● County Hall

● Speedwell House

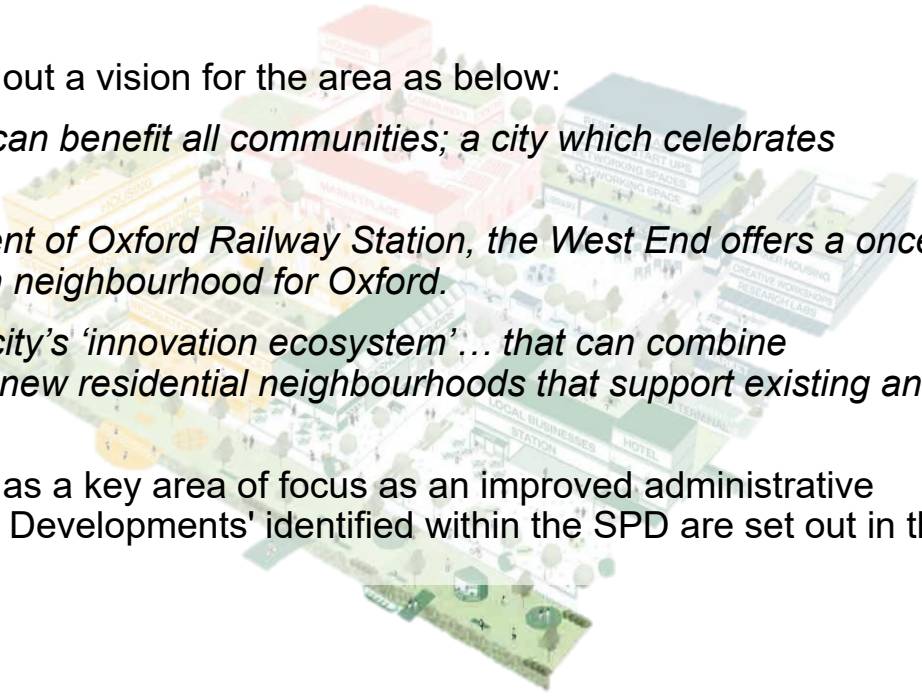
Planning & Policy Context (1)

- Oxford City Council ("Oxford City") is the Local Planning Authority and OCC is the Highways and Transport Authority
- From a local planning perspective there are two key planning documents that are significant to the area. These are the Oxford Local Plan and the West End Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- The Oxford Local Plan 2036 Policy AOC1 designates the West End as an 'Area of Change' to deliver mix land uses which contribute to Oxford's knowledge economy. Policies SP1 and SP2 provide further details on housing and employment delivery in the West End and Osney Mead
- Oxford City has recently concluded Regulation 18 consultation on its emerging Local Plan 2042. It plans to undertake the second round of formal consultation (Regulation 19) in November/December 2025
- Oxford City are aiming for adoption of the Local Plan 2042 in April 2026



Planning & Policy Context (2)

- The West End SPD dates from 2022 and although non-statutory is considered a material consideration providing detailed advice and guidance in helping to inform planning applications and decisions
- The SPD and supporting documents sets out a vision for the area as below:
- *“Create a liveable and equitable city that can benefit all communities; a city which celebrates innovation and creativity...”*
- *Underpinned by the upcoming development of Oxford Railway Station, the West End offers a once in a lifetime chance to create a new urban neighbourhood for Oxford.*
- *The area can expand and showcase the city’s ‘innovation ecosystem’... that can combine workspaces and fantastic amenities, with new residential neighbourhoods that support existing and new communities alike.”*
- The SPD also identifies Speedwell Street as a key area of focus as an improved administrative quarter for the city centre. The 'Emerging Developments' identified within the SPD are set out in the following slide



EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS

Spatial Framework Strategies

With lots of sites coming up for development in the short, medium and long term - there lies a real opportunity here to enhance existing neighbourhoods, their activity hubs and create complementary new hubs and destinations that connect well within the existing setting, both spatially and in terms of the mix of opportunities they offer.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Osney Mead regeneration Site | 12 City of Oxford College, Employment and Homes |
| 2 Gibbs Crescent | 13 1-17 Botley Road |
| 3 Oxpens | 14 Abbey Road and Cripsey Place |
| 4 Becket Street Car Park | 15 Oxford Railway Station Depot |
| 5 Oxford Station | 16 Rewley Road Fire Station |
| 6 Frideswide Square and Castle Mill Stream Quarter (Nuffield College Sites) | 17 Botley Road Retail Park |
| 7 Beaver House | 18 Oxfordshire County Hall |
| 8 Osney Lane | 19 Magistrates' Court, County Court and Telephone Exchange |
| 9 SAID Business School | 20 Speedwell House |
| 10 Richard Gray Court and Royal Mail Delivery Office | 21 Faculty of Music |
| 11 Ice Rink | 22 Odeon Cinema |
| | 23 New Theatre |
| | 24 Police Station |

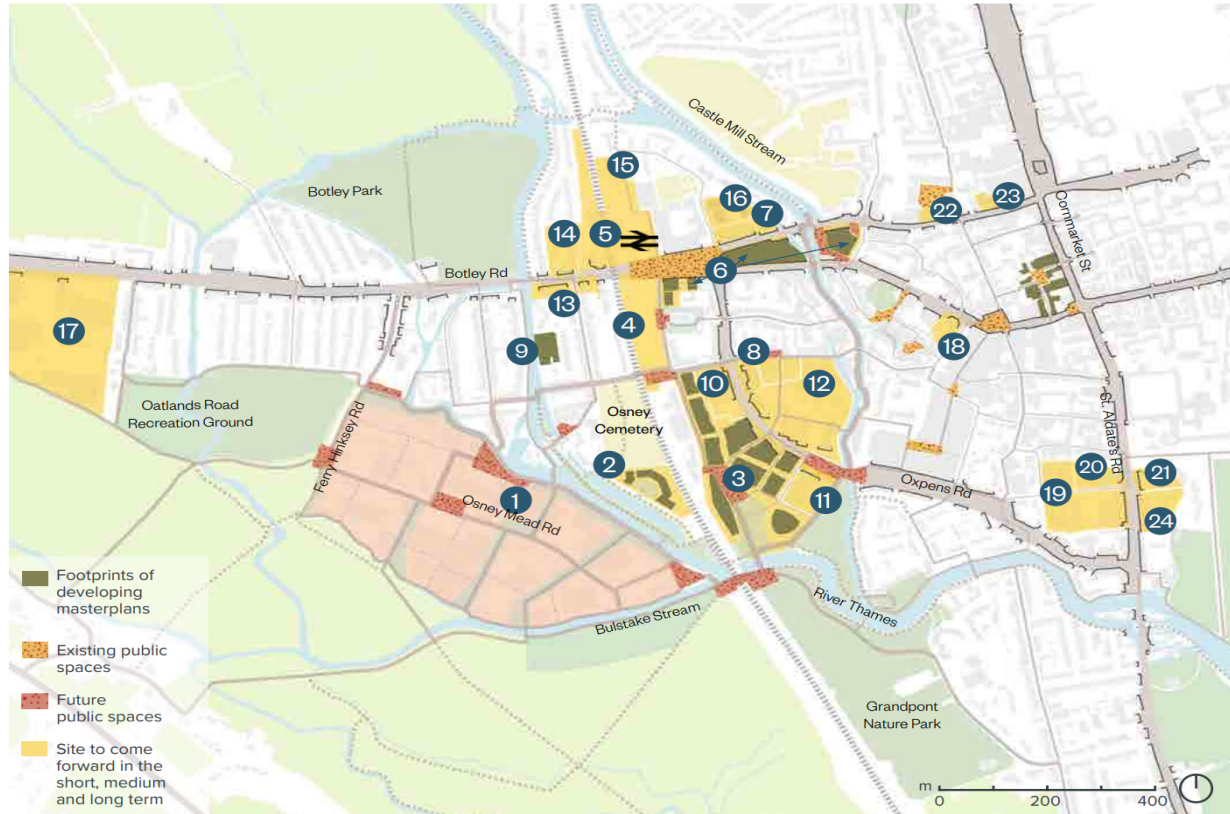


Image source: Oxford City Council/Oxford West End Spatial Framework SPD

County Hall

- As approved by Cabinet in February 2025, contracts have been exchanged for the sale of County Hall, subject to planning, with completion in March 2027
- OCC's disposal of County Hall presents the opportunity to re-imagine the site through redevelopment and refurbishment that will assist the regeneration of the West End
- The emerging proposals will comprise an extensive retrofit and conversion of New County Hall, and refurbishment and restoration of Old County Hall as a high-quality hotel with improved public realm



Current images of County Hall

Image source: Savills County Hall brochure

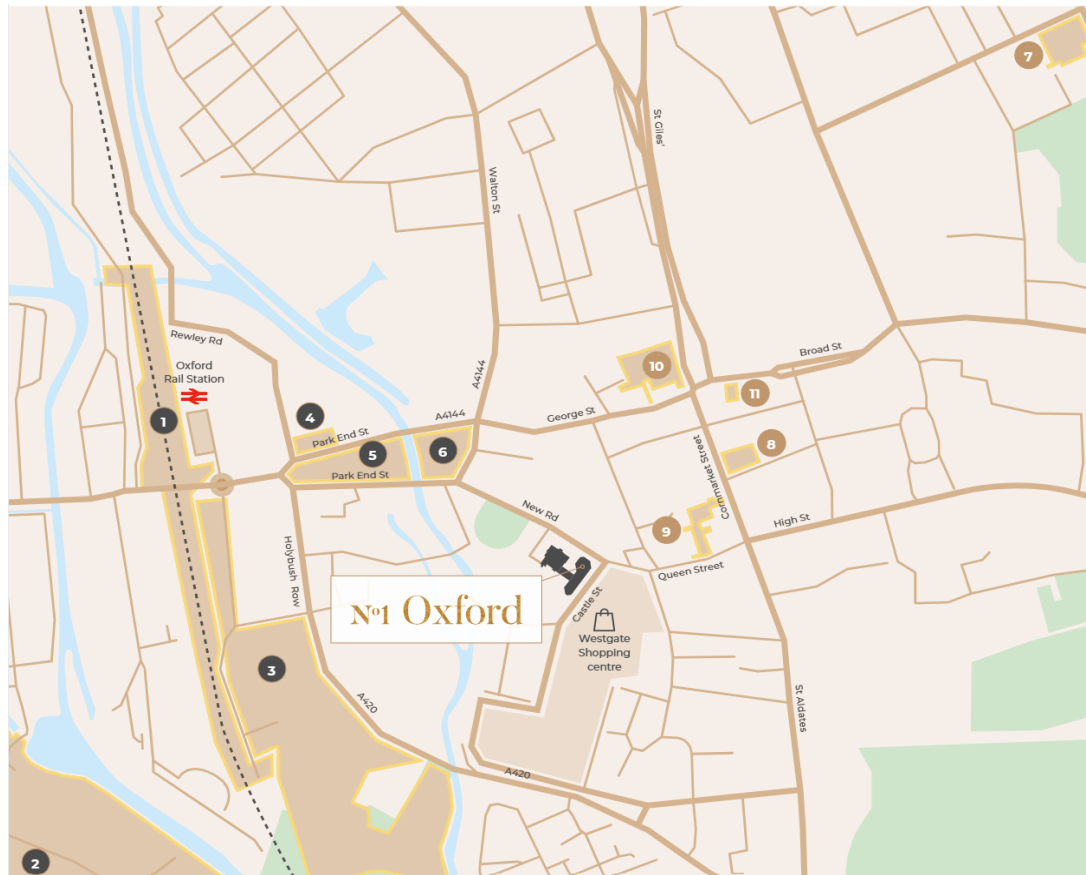
Speedwell House

- Options for the redevelopment and regeneration of the existing footprint of Speedwell House are currently being reviewed
- **Option 1 – City Centre Hub:** Full refurbishment and fit out to provide a flagship city centre hub with conference facilities, Council Chambers, Coroner's Service and office accommodation
- **Option 2 – Residential:** Conversion to residential use
- **Option 3 – Consideration of other market opportunities:** Refurbishment to create engaging space for lease or sale and/or full fit out by others
- As part of any proposed project there will be opportunities to improve the building's setting and its relationship with Speedwell Street and the wider Southern Quarter area



CGI of the proposed design for Speedwell House from the rear

Oxford West End - Key Developments (1)



No.1 Oxford

Development Context

No.1 Oxford is uniquely positioned between 'Oxford West End' and the core city centre. Oxford West End is a partnership programme made up of key landowners and developers, supported by the City Council.

Oxford Rail station is undergoing **substantial regeneration** to improve the western entrance and ticket hall area to **increase capacity**.

The Budget delivered in March 2023 confirmed government funding for the East West Rail Link, providing increased services between Oxford and Cambridge and boosting the connectivity across the Ox-Cam Arc region.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WEST END

- 1 Oxford Railway Station
- 2 Osney Mead
- 3 Oxpens
- 4 Beaver House
- 5 Island Site
- 6 Worcester Street Car Park

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CITY CENTRE

- 7 Life & Mind Building
- 8 Northgate
- 9 Clarendon Centre
- 10 1-12 Magdalen Street
- 11 The Store

Oxford West End - Key Developments (2)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WEST END



New Western Entrance to Railway Station

Owner: Network Rail.

Status: In progress.

Uses/Quantum: Improvement to the western entrance and ticket hall area to increase capacity. The wider site including Becket Street car park is being master-planned to provide circa 60,000 sq ft of commercial space.

Delivery Partner: Network Rail.



Osney Mead

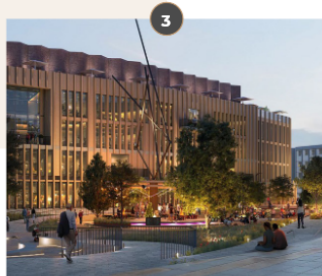
Owner: Oxford University Development (JV between Oxford University and Legal & General).

Status: Vision and masterplan undertaken.

Uses/Quantum: Mixed use 44 acre site including housing for University staff and students, teaching space as well as research and development.

Delivery Partner: OUD.

Delivery Timescales: 2030 plus.



OXPENS

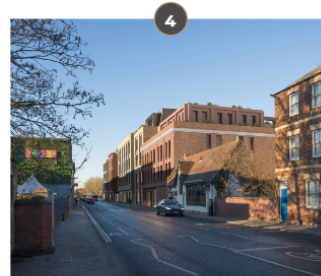
Owner: OXWED (JV between Nuffield College and Oxford City Council).

Planning Status: Planning submitted for a new mixed use development.

Uses/Quantum: 600,000 sq ft of mixed use including offices, laboratories, hotel and residential.

Delivery Partner: TBC.

Delivery Timescales: 2027/2028.



Beaver House (Bridge Labs)

Owner/Developer: UBS / Reef Group.

Planning Status: Planning permission granted.

Uses/Quantum: Primarily office and laboratory uses totalling c.140,000 sq ft.

Delivery Partner: UBS / Reef.

Delivery Timescales: 2027.



Island Site/Worcester Street Car Park

Owner/Developer: Nuffield College.

Planning Status: Identified in Local Plan as a development opportunity. Masterplanning exercise undertaken.

Uses/Quantum: 270,000 sq ft of mixed use including ground floor activation, office, teaching and laboratory space.

Delivery Partner: TBC.

Delivery Timescales: 2028 plus.

Source: Savills County Hall brochure

Infrastructure - Oxford Railway Station

- Oxford Railway Station is undergoing an upgrade to increase capacity and improve services. The project includes a new platform (platform 5), and a new western entrance
- Current works at the station also include a new northern/pedestrian cycle path
- In addition, an Interim Improvement Plan has been prepared which aims to develop and deliver short-term improvements to enhance the existing infrastructure and its immediate surroundings
- This is moving forward since it is now public information, as Network Rail has initiated a tender process for master planning and design at Oxford Station



Above: Oxford Railway Station (current)

Image source: UK Aerial Imagery/Google Images

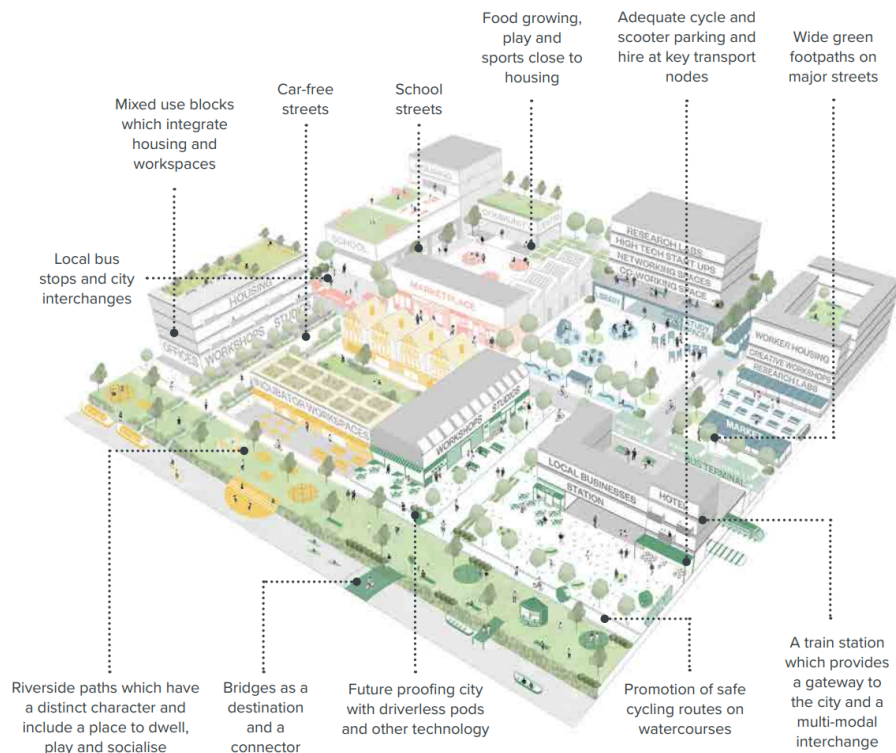
Below: CGI of proposed station

Image source: IDOM/Google Images



Movement and Connectivity

- Movement and connectivity are central to the vision for the W End. The aim to create a place where walking, cycling, and public transport are prioritised, and where new and existing communities are seamlessly linked
- Key movement and connectivity strategies for the area include
- Prioritising Active and Low Carbon lifestyles, with walking and cycling at the heart of the movement strategy for the area
- New and improved connections, including east-west links / routes to overcome severance caused by the river and railway, connecting Osney Mead, Oxpens, and the City centre
- Public Transport Integration
- River and Waterway connectivity, including opening-up the riverside and developing blue and green routes
- These improvements are designed to support sustainable growth, enhance quality of life, and ensure the West End becomes a vibrant, accessible, and well-connected part of Oxford



Source: Oxford City Council/Oxford West End Spatial Framework SPD

COMPF - A Vision for Movement & Place

Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework (COMPF)

- A project jointly developed by Oxford City and OCC to re-imagine Oxford's public realm:
- building on adopted policies and plans
- with less traffic and congestion
- targeting specific priorities

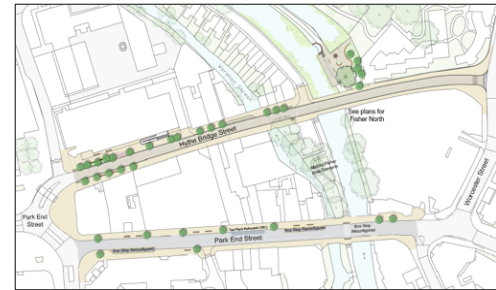
... and start conversations about

- the future of the Oxford's streets
- an ambitious, vision-led set of options and opportunities
- ideas to be taken forward through further design and engagement over coming years
- In relation to the West End, early ideas include a pedestrian priority Hythe Bridge Street and public realm improvements



*Above: Artist Impression of Hythe Bridge St
from Hythe Bridge (looking west)*

*Below: Pedestrian-priority Hythe Bridge St
Hythe Bridge St: widened pavements and level surface;
Park End St: widened pavements, added greenery, improved bus stops and loading bays*



Joined-up Working

OCC is collaborating with several partners to take a more coordinated and strategic approach to regenerating Oxford West End, but further engagement is still required

Oxford City
Council

One Public
Estate

Oxford Growth
Commission

Oxford West
End
Landowners
Group

Homes England

Public Sector
Partners

Oxford
Strategic Rail
Promoters
Group

Oxford West End - Oxford West End Landowners Group

- The Oxford West End Landowners Group is a partnership programme administered by Oxford City
- The group – comprising the landowners and developers opposite, including OCC - aims to revitalise and regenerate the West End
- The group's vision for the West End is closely connected to the policies in the Oxford Local Plan and in the West End SPD



N.B. Landowners Group also includes British Land and UBS/Reef Origin

Source: Oxford West End

Southern Quarter - One Public Estate

- The proposed options appraisal refurbishment of Speedwell House will act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of Southern Quarter
- A collaboration project between public sector owners including OCC, under One Public Estate, has been commissioned to look at the area
- The project will provide the opportunity to re-think and rationalise public sector assets to deliver benefits for residents, service users, owners, and occupiers
- The project will also provide opportunities to explore improvements to the public realm, streetscape, transport and traffic movement



Aerial view of the Southern Quarter

Image source: Google Maps

Oxford West End and Southern Quarter - Next Steps

- Involvement from OCC as member of West End Landowners Group working on a joined-up vision for the area
- Ongoing role as Highways Authority in the evolution and delivery of an improved Oxford Railway Station working with Oxford City, Network Rail and DfT
- As a member of the Oxford Strategic Rail Promoters Group ensure that short and long-term improvements to Oxford Railway Station allow for and are integrated with EWR and the Cowley Branch Line
- Through COMPF, undertake further engagement with residents and stakeholders in order to progress movement and placemaking options for the West End
- As Highways Authority, ensure that traffic interventions, such as Traffic Filters, Zero Emissions Zone and Temporary Congestion Charge, support improved placemaking and regeneration of Oxford West End
- Through OCC's involvement in One Public Estate, ensure that the Southern Quarter project looks at the area's potential for regeneration and is joined up with the wider West End