

**Comments from:** Oxford Green Belt Network

**Section B**

Oppose  
Chap 22(3)

**Section C**

We are strongly opposed to the blank cheque represented by the phrase “Oxford itself will be allowed to grow physically and economically in order to accommodate its own needs, contribute to those in the wider region and help maintain its world-class status.”

**Section D1**

We support the references in 22(1) to the need to protect Oxford’s historic character and setting, and in 22(2) to the wish to protect the setting and character of Oxford, but we do not believe that these aspirations can be achieved without limits being placed on the physical and economic growth of Oxford.

Over the years, government ministers have supported plans for Oxford that have sought to restrain growth and to distribute it more evenly within the county, notably in favour of the “country towns”. It has been stated in inspectors’ reports that there must be limits to Oxford’s growth in order to preserve both the city’s historic built environment and its green setting. This policy of restraint has not damaged Oxford’s economy, which continues to possess great potential for innovation in science and knowledge based industries. But equally there is no evidence to suggest that businesses spawned in Oxford do not thrive if encouraged to locate in other parts of the county.

Including this phrase, “Oxford itself will be allowed to grow physically and economically ...status”, is to reject half a century of planning for Oxford. It overthrows policies that have both protected the environment of Oxford itself and have achieved balance between the city and towns elsewhere in the county. Retaining the phrase will simply encourage those who wish to expand the city, using allocated housing totals to draw in more workers and so create a cycle of expansion that will perpetuate problems of jobs/housing imbalance, inward commuting, traffic congestion, and housing needs.

Oxford’s architectural heritage and green setting are recognized worldwide and we believe that it is impossible to reconcile the desire to protect this environment with the free-for-all policy on growth which the phrase referred to above implies.

**Section D2**

Delete “Oxford itself ...world-class status”. Substitute: “Oxford’s growth will continue to be restrained by the need to protect its historic environment and setting and by the need to achieve a balance of economic opportunities within the sub-region.”