



Energising Cowley with the Temple Cowley Pools Community Development

Proposal to Oxford City Council
from
SaveTCP community interest company
October 2014



Executive Summary

The communities in Temple Cowley and surrounding neighbourhoods are asking Oxford City Council to work with us to explore how we can operate Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre for the benefit of all. Our proposal is both financially viable and sustainable, requiring only minimal initial investment and targeting continuing profitable operation within six months. New facilities such as the café, community space and therapy rooms will enhance and complement the existing competition swimming and diving pools, delivering a multi-purpose venue supporting health and fitness, a focus to energise an area of Oxford whose rapidly increasing population demands more services and activities. Complementing these opportunities for increased exercise is residential accommodation, built around and integrating with the centre, including 50% social housing as well as exclusive new build private flats.

Fundamental to this proposal is that the Council must be willing to co-operate with the communities in Oxford who want to keep Temple Cowley Pools open, communities who have elected the Council, and for whom the Council exists to deliver services that communities want and need, where they want and need them.

In working with us to achieve these aims, Oxford City Council will enable increased social cohesion, enhance the area and energise the community.

Background

Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre was built in the late 1930s as a 25 yard swimming pool, and totally rebuilt in 1986. It now comprises

- a 25m competition pool
- a diving pool (the only public diving pool in the whole of the county)
- a steam and sauna suite
- an exercise studio
- a gymnasium that paid for itself inside a year when totally rebuilt with s106 money from a local development several years ago.

In 2011 the City Executive Board voted to close Temple Cowley Pools (and also the existing community pool at Blackbird Leys) and construct another 25m pool adjacent to the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre. The implementation of this decision was delayed through continuous campaigning by communities in both Temple Cowley and Blackbird Leys. Currently closure of Temple Cowley Pools is planned by the Council for early 2015.

The Community Needs Health, Fitness and Exercise Facilities

The need for a health and fitness centre, and for Temple Cowley Pools to stay open, has been continually demonstrated over the last four years through a series of eight petitions, the largest at over 12,000 signatures, and recognised by the Council in agreeing to list the site as an Asset of Community Value.

The Council view has been that the distance between the two centres is short (under two miles), and it is easy to get from one to the other. What is forgotten is that the users don't actually live on the Temple Cowley Pools site, and travel from many different places to exercise at the centre. Research shows that if travel time to a leisure centre is more than 15 minutes then people go less frequently or not at all, and this will be the case for the many people who do not live on the only bus route into

Blackbird Leys which traverses the Cowley Road from the City Centre. Temple Cowley is designated a Primary District Centre, and also a transport hub with over 20 bus services from all over the city and beyond. Most people using Temple Cowley Pools either walk or cycle – this will not be possible or as easy if they are forced to travel across the ring road.

Put simply, the consistent feedback to the Campaign is that Temple Cowley Pools provides the most convenient place for people to go for their exercise.

Providing health, fitness and leisure facilities is not a ‘zero sum’ game. A major aim of central government is to reduce the trend in obesity and increase the health and fitness of the nation. There is a huge, currently untapped, reservoir of inactive people; with the new pool at Blackbird Leys serving principally the estate (with 10,000 people within walking distance), Temple Cowley Pools can continue to offer exercise to a different area and group of communities.

And there has been a massive increase in population in the Cowley Marsh area over the last ten years that was not taken into account by the Council (they used the 2001 census figures) when they voted for closure, and the population in the area is forecast to continue to increase over the next fifteen years. Services in the area need to be kept and developed rather than removed.

Key Drivers for Success

Many factors contribute to the success of a community run leisure centre, and they form a compelling argument for keeping Temple Cowley Pools open:

Building Condition

The actual condition of the building has been a subject of much ‘discussion’ over recent years. The Council commissioned two condition surveys that concluded that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with Temple Cowley Pools, and this was confirmed earlier this summer by a structural engineer working with the Campaign. Key to continued operation is that the pool tanks are sound; there is nothing wrong with them, no sign anywhere that they are leaking. There are areas that could be improved, updated and replaced, but nothing of critical concern that could justify the public statements such as ‘risk of catastrophic failure’ or ‘beyond repair’ that would immediately put at risk any continued operation at the site.

Health in the Community

There is much research that demonstrates how removing health and fitness facilities from an area, particularly a deprived one, not only has an adverse impact on health and fitness, but also results in an increase in crime.

Keeping people self-sufficient, independent and in the community as long as possible as they grow older is vital; swimming is a way of doing this. Many older people use Temple Cowley Pools not because they necessarily enjoy swimming; but it is a way of them keeping as fit as they can, and also socialising. Research shows that £1 spent in the community saves £7-12 in the NHS.

Risk to the Council

If sold to private developers the site will be a city asset that is gone for ever. With a healthy cash reserve of £28m, the Council clearly has no immediate need for revenue from such a sale at present. The CIC proposal to lease the site from the Council means that the land will be held by the

community for longer. If operation by the community proves unsuccessful, then the Council can still sell the site for more than it is worth at present. The proposal presents zero risk to the Council.

Profitability

There is no point in the community running a health and fitness centre unless it is financially viable and able to operate free from grants. The Council has claimed for many years how expensive it is to run Temple Cowley Pools, and Fusion (the outsource partner) is apparently only able to do so with charity tax breaks. However, in our research over recent months in preparing our bid, we have found significant numbers of independent leisure centres operated profitably by their communities. Temple Cowley Pools can become one of these.

Fundamental to this proposal is that the Council must be willing to co-operate with the communities in Oxford who want to keep Temple Cowley Pools open, communities who have elected the Council, and for whom the Council exists to deliver services that communities want and need, where they want and need them.

Facilities People Want

Our exciting and innovative plans that we are asking people to endorse have been developed with input from and approval by the community – these facilities are what they want. The revitalised centre will comprise:

- The 25m competition swimming pool in the retained pool hall
- The diving pool brought back into use
- Two flumes
- A Jacuzzi
- Redeveloped/positioned sauna and steam room suite
- Café
- Community floor incorporating catering facilities and a crèche
- Therapy rooms for a variety of uses, but principally enabling an integrated link with NHS provision.
- Residential flats (50% social housing), the surplus from which will underpin the viability of the proposal.
- Community gardens

These facilities, welcomed by the community, will be complemented through integration with local health services by the introduction of a community health hub.

Temple Cowley Pools – Energising the Community

This proposal to operate Temple Cowley Pools has complete community support, recognised as a low-risk way in which Oxford City Council can help enhance the lives of the people of East Oxford. We look forward to discussing our proposal in more detail with the Council to develop and agree a way forward that maximises benefit for the city.

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Introduction

Oxford City Council has decided to dispose of the site in Temple Road, Cowley, known as Temple Cowley Pools. This document is an outline proposal from SaveTCP community interest company to take over the operation of Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre, to continue to provide and also develop the much-needed health, fitness and exercise facilities for the community, and construct housing to complement the provision and help alleviate the acknowledged housing shortage in Oxford.

The proposal has been developed in conjunction with the Oxford City Council's Disposal team, who have provided input on requirements for a community bid. Our understanding is that subject to further discussion with the Disposal team, a report without recommendation will be presented to the City Executive Board to decide whether to progress with this community initiative.

In this document we present a preferred option for operation of the health and fitness centre based on our current understanding of the Council's requirements; there are a range of other options which we can also viably pursue depending on how the Council wishes to proceed, and we would welcome further discussion to explore the optimum outcome for both the Council and the community which has so clearly stated over the last five years that it wants health and fitness facilities retained on the Temple Cowley site.

All proposed concept plans and designs included or referenced in this document and the associated appendices are subject to a full measured survey of the site, detailed brief confirmation from partnering housing organisations and planning approvals.

For all correspondence in relation to this proposal, please contact:

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Our Proposal – a “Plan on a Page”

Timeline

19th Nov 2014: City Executive Board approves proposal refinement

20th Nov – 12th Dec:

- Options review and agreement with Council – partners, operating models, funding, acceptance criteria, commercials
- Due diligence – building physical condition, feasibility checks
- Development – partner confirmation, design refinement

Jan 2015: Transfer – from Fusion operation to SaveTCP cic

Initial operation –

- immediate cost savings – air conditioning, pool covers, power matching
- immediate improvement – diving pool back in use
- marketing to drive uptake – events, offers

mid-2015: Planning permission granted

2015/2016: Site development

- Centre business as usual
- Market housing for off-plan sales
- Redevelop site

Apr 2016: Re-launch whole site, continue to drive revenue

What we will do

- Run health/fitness centre with leisure operator partner
- Redevelop dryside facilities
- Construct approx. 17 flats (1,2,3 bedroom) with housing association

Funding

- Initial Feasibility grants
- Startup funding – private donations/investment
- Rebuild funding – housing association/off-plan sales
- Profitable revenue generation for sustainability

Facilities we will deliver

25m competition swimming pool	Diving pool with springboard, 1m & 3m boards
Learner pool	Jacuzzi
Flumes	Café
Community room/catering/creche	2 x Therapy rooms
Exercise studio	Gymnasium
Sauna/steam room suite	Community garden

Complementary Services

- Community Health Hub
- Drop-off delivery point
- Community internet provision – wifi, computer access

Background

History

The Temple Cowley site is historic in terms of swimming provision. There is a record of a covered bathing pool on the site in the 1840s, one of the first to be constructed outside London. Photographs of the area held by the East Oxford Archaeological Society (ArchEOx) show no sign of a building just after the First World War. However, the predecessor to the current centre was constructed in the late 1930s and opened in 1938 as the Temple Cowley Swimming Baths.

The Baths provided a focus for children learning to swim as the only 25 yard swimming pool in the area, and for many years Mrs Molly Bateson is well remembered as the indomitable instructor who taught several generations and many thousands of children in Oxford to swim; and there is a photograph and plaque in memory of her in the current building, and also in Oxford Town Hall.



January 1987 – between its opening in November 1986 and when this picture was taken 42,000 people flocked to the new Temple Cowley Pools (photograph courtesy of Oxford Mail)

In 1985-6 the swimming pool was completely rebuilt as a 25m competition swimming pool, with the addition of a competition diving pool and a learner pool. The 1930s building was reused to some extent, and tiling from that pool can still be seen in the plant room. One outside wall of the original building was reused, but the pool hall was reoriented 90° and built as a completely new construction out across the adjacent allotments. Although constructed as a highly functional building, with little

thought of aesthetics on the outside, the pool hall interior was themed nautically innovatively by the architect Vim Rodrigo. Mr Rodrigo has long since retired, and is at the time of writing a resident of Rose Hill, but remembers clearly the challenges he was presented with to get his design accepted within financial constraints imposed even then by the Council.



*Temple Cowley Pools late 1980s
(courtesy Oxford Mail)*

The current building was designed with a lifespan of over 50 years, and remains structurally sound despite the lack of maintenance and upkeep over recent years.

The new swimming pool, named Temple Cowley Pools, was used enthusiastically by both the public and the City of Oxford Swimming Club, who have used it for Galas and competitive swimming up to the present day. There was also a diving club, which found itself without a home when the diving pool went out of use for diving in 2004.

The addition of a gym resulted in a rebranding as “Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre”, and this facility was so well used that a rebuild with S106 financing from a local development paid for itself inside 12 months.

The centre currently comprises:

- a 25m competition pool
- a diving pool (the only public diving pool in the whole of the county)
- a steam and sauna suite
- an exercise studio
- a 25 station gym

All the facilities at Temple Cowley Pools remain popular up to this day, despite the obvious lack of maintenance and Oxford City Council’s decision to close it.

City Council Leisure Strategy

At the turn of the century, Oxford City Council started to review its leisure provision across the city, for both adequacy and profitability. Over a period of several years the matter was much discussed and a number of external and internal reports commissioned. The initial Deloitte review highlighted outsourcing as a way of containing costs, and this resulted in a ten year outsource contract to operate all the city’s leisure centres to Fusion Lifestyle.

The council also concluded that the previous strategy of community leisure provision needed revision, resulting in the engagement of the MACE managing consultants to oversee the concentration of leisure in the east and south east of the city at Blackbird Leys.

As a consequence, it was determined, without initial public consultation, that Blackbird Leys leisure centre would provide the focus for all leisure facilities in the area, leading to the construction of

another 25m competition pool there and the closure of both Temple Cowley Pools and the Blackbird Leys leisure centre.

Despite acknowledging the massive public opposition to these proposals, the City Council view was and remains that they are unable to operate leisure provision profitably, and that a combination of closures and outsource provide the most economically expedient way of delivering leisure for the city.

The Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools

The City Council's strategy and plans to close the community leisure centres came to public attention at the end of 2009, and in November of that year the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign was formed by members of the public, concerned that the community's view was not being heard or properly considered in the Council's deliberations.

The issue was reflected by the Council Scrutiny Committee, who made representation to the City Executive Board early in 2010. The CEB put closure plans on hold, and authorised MACE, recently commissioned to plan the construction of the new Blackbird Leys pool, to include a review of how Temple Cowley Pools could be refurbished.

In parallel, the Campaign started a petition, presented to Council for debate in October 2010, with over 12,000 signatures the largest ever petition in the history of Oxford.

The MACE report was presented at a public meeting in Oxford Town Hall in August 2010; the meeting asked to hear the alternative Campaign proposals for refurbishment, and it was clear at the end of the meeting that the public view was to retain Temple Cowley Pools.

The Campaign continued with this and massive support across the city and beyond, supported by all political groups except the ruling Labour party. Through a series of challenges, including a judicial review (that was dropped through lack of funding) and opposition to the new pool from Blackbird Leys residents, the Campaign has kept the Temple Cowley Pools centre open for three years' longer than planned, and it has continued to operate for the benefit of the people in the Cowley communities during that time.

The Campaign has continued to gather, maintain and develop support through constant consultation with the public, offering alternative solutions to the Council, and a continued series of petitions highlighting the concerns of the communities that would lose health and fitness facilities in their area.

City Council recognises the Value of Temple Cowley Pools to the Community

On 21st January 2014 the Council announced it was putting the site up for sale to private developers. The Temple Cowley Pools building was to be demolished, and the site made available for up to 26 dwellings, in line with the Council planning strategy described in the DPD (<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/sitesandhousingadoption>).

Initially a group of private individuals (many of whom were Campaign members) came together with various organisations to form a consortium to compete with the developers. It rapidly became clear that they had insufficient resource within the timescale for the required response, but that the solution being developed provided a financially viable way of continuing to operate Temple Cowley Pools for the community.

As a consequence the Campaign sought to have the City Council recognise the need for Temple Cowley Pools in the area, and submitted an application for the site to be registered as an Asset of Community Value. The City Council accepted the application and the site was duly registered (See Appendix B). In doing so the Council acknowledged three key criteria:

- that the increase in population in the area means there is likely to be an increase in demand for such facilities
- that the facility furthers the social wellbeing and social interests of the community
- that there is a clear expectation of the future viability for the centre

All these points were accepted unequivocally by the Council officer making the recommendation to list Temple Cowley Pools as an asset of community value.

As a consequence, the Campaign continued to operate, but a community interest company, limited by guarantee, was formed to invoke the Community Right to Bid enshrined in the Localism Act that came into force in September 2012. The rest of this document presents the detail of the bid from the SaveTCP community interest company, validated with and supported by the whole community.

The Community Needs Health, Fitness and Exercise Facilities

The need for a health and fitness centre, and for Temple Cowley Pools to stay open, has been continually demonstrated over the last four years through a series of eight petitions, the largest at over 12,000 signatures.

The Council view has been that the distance between the two is short (under two miles), and it is easy to get from one to the other. What is forgotten is that the users don't actually live on the Temple Cowley Pools site, and travel from many different places to exercise at the centre. Research shows that if travel time to a leisure centre is more than 15 minutes then people go less frequently or not at all, and this will be the case for the many people who do not live on the only bus route into Blackbird Leys which traverses the Cowley Road from the City Centre. Temple Cowley is designated a Primary District Centre, and also a transport hub with over 20 bus services from all over the city and beyond. Most people using Temple Cowley Pools either walk or cycle – this will not be possible or as easy if they are forced to travel across the ring road.

Appendix C contains letters and emails of support from both individuals and organisations. Put simply, the consistent feedback to the Campaign is that Temple Cowley Pools provides the most convenient place for people to go for their exercise.

Providing health, fitness and leisure facilities is not a 'zero sum' game. A major aim of central government is to reduce the trend in obesity and increase the health and fitness of the nation. There is a huge, currently untapped, reservoir of inactive people; with the new pool at Blackbird Leys serving principally the estate (with 10,000 people within walking distance), Temple Cowley Pools can continue to offer exercise to a different area and group of communities.

And there has been a massive increase in population in the Cowley Marsh area over the last ten years that was not taken into account by the Council (they used the 2001 census figures) when they voted for closure, and the population in the area is forecast to continue to increase over the next fifteen years. Services in the area need to be kept and developed rather than removed.

Key Drivers for Success

Many factors contribute to the success of a community run leisure centre, and they form a compelling argument for keeping Temple Cowley Pools open:

- Building Condition
- Health in the Community
- Risk to the Council
- Profitability

Each of these points is considered in more detail below, and in subsequent sections of this document.

Fundamental to this proposal is that the Council must be willing to co-operate with the communities in Oxford who want to keep Temple Cowley Pools open, communities who have elected the Council,

and for whom the Council exists to deliver services that communities want and need, where they want and need them.

Building Condition

The actual condition of the building has been a subject of much 'discussion' over recent years. The Council commissioned two condition surveys in 2008/9. One was carried out by Treloar, and included in the subsequent MACE report. The other was by an independent structural engineer. Both these surveys concluded that there is nothing fundamentally structurally wrong with Temple Cowley Pools, (Treloar et al. 2008, included in MACE Study, August 2010). This position was confirmed earlier this summer by a structural engineer working with the community interest company who visited the site.

In February 2010 the City Executive Board extended the remit of MACE, managing consultants for the new swimming pool in Blackbird Leys, who at the time were producing an outline implementation plan. In a revised document presented to a public meeting in August 2010, MACE included costs for a complete rebuild of Temple Cowley Pools, concluding that the costs would be much higher than the new Blackbird Leys pool. The report included the Treloar survey as an appendix but ignored its findings.

In April 2010 the City Council held two consultation meetings, one in Temple Cowley and the other in Blackbird Leys. The presentation format was the same in each case, and focused on the £2.3m backlog maintenance and repairs that the Council said were vital; the costs were not itemised, but there was an implication that one of the pool hall columns, surrounded by scaffolding, would cost most of the £2.3m to repair. A Freedom of Information request obtained the breakdown of the £2.3m backlog; the cost of repairing the pool hall column was shown to be £35,000, and there were no other structural cost elements.

Each year the Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools has sought to determine the operational and maintenance costs from the Council, and they appear to be modest in comparison to the size of the facility - £85,000 for all maintenance costs in FY 2013/14 does not seem unreasonable and would imply no major ongoing cost issue in regard to this area.

However key to continued future operation for the expected and designed in life of the centre is that the pool tanks are sound; there is nothing to indicate anything wrong with them, and certainly no sign anywhere that any of them are leaking. There are areas that could be improved, updated and replaced, but nothing of critical concern that could justify the public statements such as 'risk of catastrophic failure' or 'beyond repair' that would immediately put at risk any continued operation at the site. Up to this point, we have seen no substantiated evidence of a serious building condition issue. This provides us with confidence, subject to due diligence investigations should the Council decide to proceed and work with the community, that the pool hall can maintain its structural integrity for its full expected and designed-in lifespan of more than fifty years.

Health in the Community

There is much research that demonstrates how removing health and fitness facilities from an area, particularly a deprived one, not only has an adverse impact on health and fitness, but also results in an increase in crime.

Keeping people self-sufficient, independent and in the community as long as possible as they grow older is vital; swimming is a way of doing this. Many older people use Temple Cowley Pools not because they necessarily enjoy swimming; but it is a way of them keeping as fit as they can, and also socialising. Research shows that £1 spent in the community saves anything between £10 and £76 spent on health and police services. Even at the conservative end of this range, this is a huge saving from an extremely modest investment in the community.



The East Oxford Community comprises Cowley, Cowley Marsh, Rose Hill, Lye Valley, Quarry and the bordering areas of Iffley and Headington. These areas, particularly Cowley, Cowley Marsh and especially Rose Hill are recognised as some of most deprived areas in England. These areas of deprivation experience poorer general health and a significantly lower life expectancy () than the least deprived areas of Oxford. This difference is significant, and demands an improvement in health and fitness - 8.3 years less for men and 6.6 years less for women. Additionally, the population here is less likely on average to have access to a car than the rest of Oxford, with potentially greater limitations on access to leisure and care facilities outside their immediate community compared to the rest of the city. The effects of access to health and fitness facilities on general population health, and the implications for the East Oxford area, are discussed in detail in Appendix E.

These research findings are mirrored by the Campaign's experience when consulting with the public (Campaign Consultation submitted to City Council Scrutiny Committee 2010), where we found that 70% of the Temple Cowley Pools users either walk or cycle.

When people have to travel more than about 15 minutes to their place of exercise, they go either less frequently or not at all. This has significant implications for the withdrawal of health and fitness facilities, particularly in an area of deprivation where the cost of private facilities is seen as prohibitive.

The time to access exercise facilities is shown in the following table and maps, which demonstrate clearly the positive effect the presence of Temple Cowley Pools has on accessibility:

The table shows the estimated travel time in minutes as a function of distance from a leisure centre for different modes of travel. The 'rings' referred to are shown on the maps below.

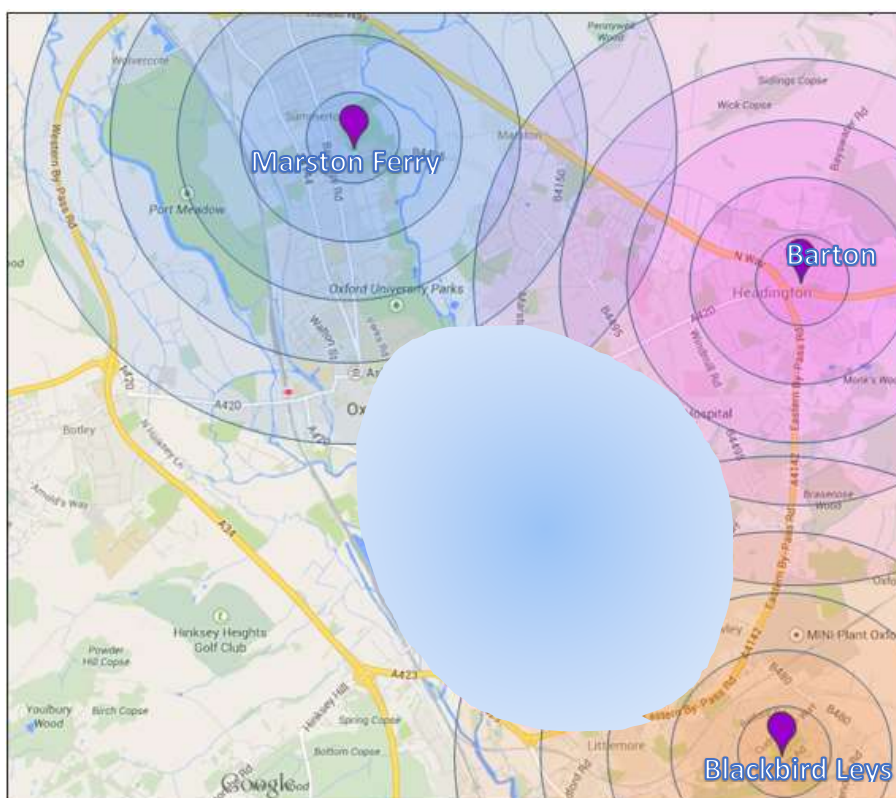
				
Outer Ring (5 th)	45	15-20	10-12	30-35
4 th Ring	35	10-15	8-10	25-30
Middle Ring (3 rd)	25	7-10	6-8	16-22
2 nd Ring	12	3-5	2-4	8-12

Source: Google Maps Estimated Travel Times

With Temple Cowley Pools operational, the majority of the population in the area is demonstrably within easy access of exercise facilities:



In comparison, if Temple Cowley is closed then an accessibility gap opens up between the remaining centres:



The key drop-off is for people who walk and cycle, where the time they would take accessing exercise in the same way would become significantly longer, and over the 15 minute barrier.

This clearly contravenes the Oxford City Council policy (Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool Planning Application, 2011) whereby walking is the preferred method of getting to exercise facilities.

The alternative to walking or cycling is public transport, but that can also be a significant barrier.

CASE STUDY: FOR EXAMPLE, A PARENT WITH TWO YOUNG CHILDREN, ONE IN A PUSHCHAIR, WHO LIVES IN HOLLOW WAY, CAN CURRENTLY WALK TO TEMPLE COWLEY POOLS AND PAY A CONCESSION ADMISSION OF £1.20.

THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO GO TO BLACKBIRD LEYS LEISURE CENTRE AND THE NEW SWIMMING POOL. THIS IS BEYOND THE WALKING CAPABILITY OF THE OLDER CHILD, AS IS WALKING TO THE ONLY BUS ROUTE INTO BLACKBIRD LEYS. SO THE PARENT WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE TWO BUSES, TRUSTING THAT BOTH WOULD HAVE A VACANT SPOT FOR THE PUSHCHAIR. THE COST WOULD BE OVER £8 JUST FOR TRANSPORT. COMBINED WITH THE EXTENDED TIME TAKEN, THE 'EXPERIENCE' IS TRANSFORMED FROM A HAPPY FAMILY OUTING TO AN EXPENSIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING EXPEDITION.

FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY INDICATES THAT THIS IS NOT UNCOMMON, AS MOST USERS OF TEMPLE COWLEY POOLS DO NOT LIVE ON THE BUS ROUTE THAT GOES DIRECTLY TO BLACKBIRD LEYS.

The proposed changes to Temple Cowley Pool will create a space for community integration and cohesion in addition to accessible health support, education and treatment. Partnerships in similar spaces between fitness and leisure facilities have been identified to contribute towards:

- Improvements in individual's physical and mental health
- Promotion and enhancement of education and life-long learning
- Improved community cohesion and wider social networks
- Promotion of active citizenship
- Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour
- Local economic development

In addition, the introduction of a community health hub will deliver an integrated continuum of health services to the area (see later Partners section)

Risk to the Council

The Council's expectation, in putting the Temple Cowley site up for sale, is clearly to make a provision for the housing that is so much in demand across the city, as well as generate a one-off revenue opportunity. The need was originally driven by the requirement to achieve £1.5m from the sale in order to fund the business case for the new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys (see Leisure Department report and recommendation to City Executive Board, February 2010). At the Oxford City Full Council meeting on September 29th 2014, a healthy cash reserve of £28m was declared – clearly there is no immediate need for revenue.

And the site is a city asset, that once sold is gone for ever. This leaves the Council liable to the following potential risks:

The housing development being proposed does not go ahead. Planning permission may not be granted, the site may be sold on before any construction takes place, or a private owner decides to keep the site derelict for their own purposes. Once sold, the council has no control over what happens next on the site.

The population in the Temple Cowley area grew by 31% between the 2001 and the 2011 Census, significantly more than any other part of Oxford, and is forecast to grow by at least the same amount over the next 10-15 years:

Population at 2001 and 2011 Censuses, Blackbird Leys and Temple Cowley areas			
Area	2001	2011	Percentage growth
Temple Cowley	13,346	17,429	31%
Blackbird Leys	12,196	13,068	7%

Sources: Table KS01, 2001 Census, Office for National Statistics

Table KS101EW, 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

(Courtesy of Oxford City Council Statistician, Mark Fransham)

This will put increasing pressure on services, including the need to provide additional health, fitness and exercise. No other site is available in the area designated by the Council's DPD. As previously discussed, this will severely affect the Council's duty for the provision of public health services.

In contrast, we are proposing a solution that presents zero risk to the Council. The SaveTCP cic proposal is to operate the centre with a 25 year rolling lease at a peppercorn rent with an option to buy. If successful, the Temple Cowley Pools will continue to operate for the benefit of the community, with any surplus from annual income returned to the City Council. If the option to buy is exercised, then the Council will obtain revenue as the asset is transferred. If unsuccessful, the Council can take the land back and dispose of it to developers at a price significantly in excess of the current value.

The SaveTCP proposal thus presents zero risk to the Council.

Profitability

There is no value to either the community or Oxford City Council for Temple Cowley Pools to operate at a loss. However, it has been clearly demonstrated that community groups can successfully and profitably operate leisure centres independently from their local authorities. Bramley Baths in Leeds (<http://bramleybaths.com/>) and the Tyldesley Pelican Baths in Manchester (<http://www.pelicantyldelesley.co.uk/>) are two current examples of successful and profitable operation. As will be seen from the business plan presented later, Temple Cowley Pools can become one of these.

Fundamental to this proposal is that the Council must be willing to co-operate with the communities in Oxford who want to keep Temple Cowley Pools open, communities who have elected the Council, and for whom the Council exists to deliver services that communities want and need, where they want and need them.

Facilities People Want

Clear, Unequivocal Support from the Community

There is no point in providing facilities that nobody wants to use. Since the start of the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign, community involvement has been an integral component. The longevity of the Campaign itself is simply as a result of the continuing and continuous massive community support. Developing the plans and working out how Temple Cowley Pools could viably operate in future has been no different.

We first consulted formally with the public with an online survey in Mar/Apr/May 2010, and the results of which we reported to the City Council Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 6th July 2010:

- 95% of respondents wanted Temple Cowley Pools to remain open
- 70% of current users of Temple Cowley Pools either walk or cycle
- Just over 50% of respondents would like the diving pool retained
- 7,000 of the existing users would not be able to travel to a new facility at Blackbird Leys, mostly either because of the additional cost involved (car, multiple bus journeys, and even taxis) or the additional time (for example, people who swim during their lunch hour could no longer do so, similarly for people using the centre either to or from their place of work)

One of the conditions of formation of a community interest company focused on executing a Right to Bid under the Locality Act is that the community must be consulted throughout the process, so that plans, designs and options are openly and transparently developed with the communities the facilities are destined to serve. SaveTCP has done exactly that since its formation in April. We have been present at the following public events:

3rd April 2014 Templars Square, Cowley – exhibition stand, draft drawings, feedback forms, petition

21st June 2014 Florence Park Festival

28th June 2014 Templars Square, Cowley

6th July 2014 Cowley Road Carnival

12th July 2014 Templars Square & Barns Road, Cowley

16th August 2014 Elder Stubbs Festival

17th August 2014 Big Splash! Temple Cowley Pools

14th September 2014 Big Splash2! Temple Cowley Pools

2nd October 2014 Older People/Over 50's Day, Oxford Town Hall

We have support from numerous community organisations, including the Old Temple Cowley Residents Association, Oxford Civic Society, Middle Cowley Residents Association, Network of Oxford Women for Justice and Peace, Horspath Area Residents and Tenants' Association, East Oxford Conservative Association, Templars Square Tenants and Residents Association and Oxford Co-Housing.

We have also attracted full support from a variety of local businesses.

We have gathered over 1,800 signatures gathered since April 2014 on a petition that was submitted to debate in Full Council on September 29th.

We have appeared numerous times in local media, including the Oxford Mail, Oxford Times, Oxfordshire Guardian, BBC Radio Oxford and BBC TV South Today.

In addition, we have advertised our plans on our website

www.savetemplecowleypools.webs.com/cic

And gathered feedback on what people want elsewhere on the website homepage

www.savetemplecowleypools.webs.com

During this time, we have asked the community to publicly express their support through letters and emails to the Council. The many that we are aware of are included in Appendix C, and the individual statements of support from each are a collective testament to the huge value that the community places on keeping Temple Cowley Pools operational.

Plans Developed with Community Input

The outline plans, to scale, for the Temple Cowley Pools Community Development is shown in Appendix A, along with street scene and suggested materials. Our proposal is to:

- retain and enhance the pool hall area
- redevelop the ground floor entrance, changing rooms and sauna/steam room suite
- redevelop the gym and exercise studio on the first floor, and include a community space and therapy rooms
- complementing the community facilities will be sympathetic housing in the form of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats
- back of house operations will be environmentally re-engineered to reduce the already efficient energy emissions
- outside, the revamped car parking area will be enhanced with a community garden

Pool Hall

The pool area comprises the 25m swimming pool, learner pool and diving pool. As an internal space it has a unique nautical design, visible in this picture of the learner pool area:



Timeless innovative design elements such as the oval windows, tiled graphics and arched wooden ceiling enhance the user experience inside the pool hall

The diving pool, out of use for many years, will be repaired and brought back into use as soon as practicable. With a depth of 3.4m, this will accommodate 1m/3m springboards and 5m platform; the current boards may need to be replaced or refurbished as they have been out of use for so long.

Between the diving pool and the learner pool we are looking at putting in two flumes – one specifically for younger children.

We will also install a Jacuzzi located between the diving pool and the 25m pool.

Ground Floor Dryside



The completely remodelled ground floor is shown in the plan above. The main entrance will feature a café – this is for use by the general public and will be outside the turnstiles. There will be high speed wifi throughout, and we will also put several public use computers in the area to enable self-teach of general use – they will particularly be available outside library opening hours, to complement the facilities available in the adjacent library.

The remodelled changing rooms will include the same features as the existing layout:

- Disabled and family changing areas
- Heated floors
- Open single sex changing areas for both men and women

We will also introduce limited village changing.

Set in between the changing areas and poolside will be a remodelled sauna and steam suite, incorporating a relaxation area. This positioning will be much more energy efficient than at present using inner rather than outer walls, and with a much shorter distance for the hot water to travel to the suite.

First Floor – Gym, Exercise, Therapy and Community Spaces



The elements on this floor focus on different aspects of health and well-being, all vital to a vibrant community.

Health, fitness and exercise is promoted through a new gym, disability accessible through a lift as well as stairs.

A multi-purpose community space can be adapted to a variety of needs. As a single area with catering facilities it offers a significant area for meetings and general community activities. It can be divided into a smaller area and a purposed fitness/exercise studio, although both areas once divided can be used for separate activities. The crèche would also be operated from here.

The inclusion of treatment/therapy rooms provides a focus for the Temple Cowley Community Health Hub (see later section, Partners), which can additionally use the studio/community space for a variety of treatments and classes.

Back of House Re-engineering

A number of improvements will be made for efficiency and maintenance reasons.

The following can be carried out immediately and at minimal cost:

- **Power matching** – the MACE report identified a power matching issue, which meant that up to 20% of electrical energy was being lost. As well as the cost, this waste of energy contributes to the energy emissions. This can be rectified through a short visit from an electrician.
- **Air conditioning** – this was reported as not operational in August 2011, requiring a replacement refrigeration unit (FOI request 3405). Rectifying this issue will immediately and significantly improve the conditions in the existing gymnasium (subject to continual complaints from users), as well as ameliorating the conditions in the pool hall (where there have been complaints from staff) and the existing entrance area. This enhanced environment will enable us to immediately target users that have stopped coming to the centre for these reasons.

In due course the following changes will also make a significant difference:

- **Rigid pool covers** – these have been requested by users since the centre was opened in late 1986. The current use of a liquid pool cover will be discontinued. The result will be an immediate and significant reduction in evaporation of warm water, reducing heating costs.
- **Plant Room** – as part of the rebuild, the current plant will be removed and replaced with a uv treatment system – these systems are low-maintenance, highly effective and take up much less space than the current provision.

Outside

The site area includes all parking provision for both the centre and the adjacent library. As required by the amended terms of sale, we will make provision for three car park spaces for the library. The area is currently split-level, and will be remodelled to provide a more integrated aspect.

Car parking on the site is currently free, and we have no intention of changing this. The consequence is that there may be increased pressure on availability with the introduction of accommodation on the site. This may mean that we need to examine how the spaces are used by non-users – typically

visiting the nearby health centre, church, school or police station. We are also aware of the use as a 'park and ride'.

We have an in principle arrangement with the Silver Band hall to make use of their car parking area; centre residents will be able to have a dedicated space reserved for them (using lockable poles).

Overall we believe, given that the current users mostly walk or cycle to the centre, that the provision will be adequate, but a more detailed assessment will be carried out during the due diligence period.

Accommodation

Indicative plans are included as Appendix A for residential housing split across four levels, comprising the following mix:

<i>Floor</i>	<i>1 bed</i>	<i>2 bed</i>	<i>3 bed</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Ground</i>	1		1	2
<i>1st</i>	3	1		4
<i>2nd</i>	4	3		7
<i>3rd</i>	1	1	2	4
<i>Totals</i>	9	5	3	17

The plans are conservative, and there is scope for additional housing that can be explored during the due diligence period to finalise the commercial arrangements

50% of this accommodation will be for social housing, the remainder will be sold as private dwellings. We understand from our discussions with estate agents that housing of this type, particularly new build, is very scarce in the Temple Cowley area and will attract a premium, particularly given the location and the views across to Oxford. Added benefits that affect the price are the car parking availability and the colocation with health and fitness facilities.

Second floor is residential housing, including a roof garden:



The third floor is also residential accommodation with a roof garden:



Commercial Approach

We have undertaken a number of discussions with the City Council Disposals team (email exchange with David Ashworth, meetings with David Ashworth and Jane Winfield) regarding the evaluation criteria and the specific requirements for a community bid seeking to undertake a community asset transfer. It has been confirmed by the team that there are no evaluation criteria (although the expected content of this bid document has been explained) specific to a community proposal such as ours, and the Council is unable to provide any guideline on expectations over sale price.

Whilst this approach may be appropriate when there is a sale to commercial developers who work to specific cost models and will limit their offer to a bounded and anticipated profitability, for a community group this presents a challenge; we could make a cash offer, but this would not represent the real value that our proposal will deliver, and without an agreed price we do not know what funding we need to secure – every potential funding option (grants, loans, investment and so on) requires a target so at this point we are working within the funding we believe we can sensibly access, with an offer that we feel is reasonable.

We have requested several valuations of the site. Whilst it attracts a range of potential values if sold for residential housing development, for the existing and our planned future purpose the site has zero value. We firmly believe, based on our discussions with the community, that our intended purpose represents much more value to Oxford City Council, the communities which you serve in this area and Oxford and its surrounding areas as a whole than the income that would be accrued by simply disposing of it for housing.

We have also made repeated requests for detailed information concerning existing running costs, including sources of income from different demographics, entitlements and locations. This is currently unavailable. While we understand them broadly, the level of detail we would require to derive a detailed cost analysis, and thereby a detailed cost and income forecast is in sufficient at this time. We have explained what we can and our rationale for the great level of confidence we have that a community led and run Temple Cowley Pools can be a financially viable and sustainable operation.

The offer presented here is our preferred option, presenting least risk to the City Council and maximum benefit to the community.

We propose that Oxford City Council leases the site and building to SaveTCP cic – this lease will have a 30 year term for an annual rent of £100, with an option to purchase the freehold at a later date and for a sum to be negotiated at the time.

We would take over the operation of the centre as a going concern, with as little disruption to normal services as possible. We understand that Fusion has made alternative arrangements for its permanent employees, and we do not anticipate TUPE being required or applicable. We would seek to make appropriate arrangements with individual class instructors. Transition arrangements would be the subject of detailed discussions, to include handover timing

For the avoidance of doubt, this proposal has been developed within our current constraints, and is not necessarily our final and only option, and we need a constructive and positive discussion with the Council to agree the best way forward.

The rest of this section explains how our proposal could work: what we will do over what period, how we will fund any development/maintenance work and our expected income over the 30 year period (at current prices). This is summarised at the end of the section in a financial forecast.

Timeline

We have looked at how the site would be developed over a period to get to a 'business as usual' operation. We have made assumptions based on the information we currently have available; this starts with the decision point which we understand will be at the Council's City Executive Board Meeting on 19th November 2014:

19th Nov 2014: City Executive Board approves proposal in principle

20th Nov – 12th Dec: There will immediately need to be a number of parallel workstreams to validate and agree the commercial arrangement, secure a Housing Association partner, carry out appropriate due diligence and agree how/when operation will transfer from Fusion

- Options review and agreement with Council – partners, operating models, funding, acceptance criteria, commercials
- Due diligence – building physical condition, feasibility checks
- Development – partner confirmation, design refinement

Jan 2015: Transfer – from Fusion operation to SaveTCP cic. Our options at this point may be to introduce our leisure operator partner to take over running the centre, or to engage Fusion to continue operating as previously. This is likely to be dependent on whether we close the site for building works, or keep it operating throughout. We will also be developing detailed plans for planning permission.

Initial operation –

- immediate cost savings – air conditioning, pool covers, power matching
- immediate improvement – diving pool back in use
- marketing to drive uptake – events, offers

mid-2015: Planning permission granted. Once permission is granted, we can begin work on the Dryside refurbishment and housing development. The objective is to keep any closure to an absolute minimum, and if possible have some continuous opportunity for exercise throughout the period.

2015/2016: Site development

- Centre business as usual
- Market housing for off-plan sales
- Redevelop site

Apr 2016: Re-launch whole site, continue to drive revenue

The timings presented here allow for reasonable contingency on the elapsed time of 25%, with a realistic expectation around the time required to gain planning permission, and assuming that Fusion will work co-operatively in transitioning to a new provider – we are assuming that the Council has appropriate contractually binding exit provisions with Fusion that will enable and support this.

Funding and Capital/Startup Costs

The key principle for a viable business case to operate the health and fitness centre is that it should return an annual profit/surplus from revenue, and not need supplementary funding to break even. Initial setup funding can come from grants, loans or investment.

For our current proposal we see the following routes to funding:

Initial setup funding – we have in principle funding from private donations covering all anticipated initial costs. If we receive CEB conditional approval to proceed, then the precise amount can be established and validated under due diligence. We have allowed £500k for professional services,

Housing/Dryside development – modelling the proposed solution and using the 50% social housing split, we would then have 8 flats for social housing and 9 for private sale. We will work with a Housing Association in conjunction with the City Council, to establish best value. There is in principle agreement, but no firm commitment is possible while Housing Associations are participating in private developer bids. The Housing Association will bring their own funding for the social housing component, and also a construction capability. Funding for the cost of building the private flats and the Dryside/community space will be achieved through off-plan sales.

Other commercial options would attract a different balance of funding sources, and these could be extended to include Sport England and/or Lottery grants, loans (private investors, crowd-funding, financial institutions, City/County Council), increased housing capacity, private donations. These can all be explored, validated and agreed as viable once there is agreement on the best mutually acceptable option.

Assuming an average build cost of £120k for each private dwelling, and assuming that a Housing Association partner would cover their own build costs, we can expect a total housing cost of £1.1m.

Sale price, based on current valuations from local estate agents, would be approximately £250k per flat averaged across all types, returning a total of approximately £2.5m. We would expect, based on latest data, all these flats to be sold off-plan.

The surplus of £1.4m would cover the cost of the dry-side development, provide contingency for any shortfall in the initial setup funding (for example if an expected grant was not forthcoming, or a private investment became a loan) and provide a contingency fund if the initial operation (migrating from current use to forecast Business As Usual) user takeup was flatter than forecast.

Business As Usual

Income

We have validated our income projection in two ways:

- Driver-based, making assumptions on average spend and footfall
- Activity based, using knowledge of how leisure centres operate

Driver-based Income

We do not have available to us detailed information on current usage. For a full driver-based model we would expect to understand what age groups are currently using the centre, how frequently, from what location in Oxford, how they are getting there, their method of payment (Slice Card membership, occasional user, concessionary scheme) and so on.

We are aware that the concessionary scheme offers £1.20 entrance, and the monthly payments would mean a user would visit the centre twice a week as a minimum to equate to that figure. Casual use of the centre is £4.40.

We believe that the following facilities will significantly increase the attractiveness, and therefore how frequently users will visit Temple Cowley Pools:

- Diving Pool
- Jacuzzi
- Café
- New/enhanced Gym
- Community Centre

Increased programming for exercise classes will also drive up attendance.

When Temple Cowley Pools was operating with current facilities (with the diving pool out of use) before usage dropped from lack of maintenance, we are aware of an annual footfall of approximately 250,000 visits a year.

It is reasonable to expect that this rate can be re-attained with a revitalised pool hall, new dry-side facilities and improved programming alone provided there is complementary marketing. The additional features give confidence of a conservative upside of 350,000 visits a year.

Pricing is critical, and ideally we would want to adopt the City Council leisure membership scheme, offering the same concessions and free access to members registered in other centres. Assuming this is possible, we firmly believe that an average minimum spend per visit of £2.25 is possible.

Projected annual income is then 350,000 x £2.25, £787,500 pa.

Evidently if we drive up footfall, or increase average income per visit (this could be a change in price, or improved profiling of user type, or more attractive programming) then the figure will be higher.

Activity-Based Income

The additional revenue possibilities become evident when consideration is given to what could be added into the facility mix from a leisure operator perspective.

To provide an aspirational revenue, we examined what facilities in addition to those already envisaged might drive further usage. Given the nature and density of population that Temple Cowley Pools could serve, and the emphasis on community and family use as our target market (complemented with the high student proportion) we could include:

- Extended Gym space
- An additional Group Exercise Studio
- Indoor Cycling Studio
- Increased shallow water/teaching space through the introduction of a moveable floor into the diving pool

Combining this with the current pool offering, and assuming a café 'offer' that encourages secondary spend and dwell time, a reasonable expectation would be the following categories of income:

Income Category	Potential Income (£)
Fitness & Group Exercise	£650,000
Swimming Lessons	£300,000
Other Swimming	£150,000
Café & Vending	£100,000
Retail	£40,000
Misc Income	£10,000
TOTAL	£1,250,000

Costs

Figures available to us from the Council accounts, freedom of information requests and some information supplied by Fusion, indicate the centre currently attracts an annual running cost (including utilities, maintenance and repairs) of £300,000-£350,000.

This excludes staff costs which are by far the biggest expense.

Relating this to future costs there are two areas to concentrate on:

- **Non-staff** – we know that introducing energy saving measures such as power matching and rigid pool covers will reduce these costs; we estimate approximately £50,000 saving. A new build and more efficient plant will reduce repair and most of the maintenance costs, as well as reductions in utility charges. Conservatively we think it is reasonable to assume £200,000 a year for these costs.
- **Staff** – these costs vary according to a variety of factors, including opening times, programming and type of staff scheduled (lifeguards for example being the most costly, particularly with the deep water qualifications required for the diving pool). Without a full programme schedule (again dependent on what facilities are introduced to the centre) it is not meaningful to carry out any detailed calculations but we can take as a guideline the reported staff costs from the Council for 2006/7 of approximately £500,000.

Profitability

Assuming the staff costs of £500k as a conservative minimum to support the fully operational centre, we need to look at how to drive up footfall from the initial 'take-on' figure of approximately 125,000 pa to the conservative expectation of 350,000 a year that would provide a break-even point for the full staffing.

Other community operated leisure centres have addressed this challenge in various ways. The simplest is to use volunteers, suitably trained and with availability to provide cover. Clearly there are costs associated with this, and shortfalls in availability can lead to a combination of reduced opening

hours and unanticipated closures. This risk to reliability is clearly unacceptable for Temple Cowley Pools.

We would take on elements of this approach and combine operation with our selected leisure operator. A full-time manager would be responsible for all day-to-day running, and combine a volunteer body covering administrative tasks, cleaning, admission and so on (where there is minimal training required) with employed fully-trained staff to cover lifeguarding and similar duties in the gym. By careful programming we can then increase the staffing with the increased footfall.

Conclusion

We are not planning to fail. By carefully controlling costs through efficiencies in running costs, and staffing appropriately to match income, we can drive up footfall and increase the userbase through the additional facilities and effective marketing.

Governance

The SaveTCP cic was formed as a vehicle for the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign to exercise a Right to Bid to operate Temple Cowley Pools under the Localism Act 2012.

We propose that in order to operate the centre, the SaveTCP community interest company transitions to a community enterprise through the legal structure of a Community Benefit Society (BENCOM) registered with the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

We believe that this is the most appropriate legal form for running and managing the centre and our delivery partners:

- BENCOMS are incorporated Independent and Provident Societies that conduct business for the benefit of the community
- Profits are not distributed among members or external shareholders but returned to the community
- BENCOMS are set up with the social objective of conducting business and trade, run and managed by their members
- They can raise funds by issuing shares to the public
- They can also be established as charities provided they have exclusively charitable objects that are for public benefit, allowing them to raise capital from public grants and charitable trusts
- Then can be “Exempt Charities” reporting to the FSA not the charitable trusts

This model would result in a service run by Trustees who would not benefit from the Trust individually, but act on behalf of the community for whose benefit the Trust is set up.

We intend to invite people in the community to buy affordable shares in the BENCOM, enabling the community to have a real vested interest in the future of Temple Cowley Pools and a stake in its development. The BENCOM model will also enable us to manage risks by applying to charities and trusts for grants, to fund particular projects around groups of people who are under-served in the community currently, and in order to address long term developments (improved use of plant space when existing plant replaced by much smaller more efficient equipment) and energy consumption in the pool hall.

At present we have an operational board comprising cic Director and members, who collectively make decisions and instruct the Director. The members are a combination of members of the public and people who have a variety of complementary skills relevant to taking over, marketing and operating the centre, including, management/accounting, sales, marketing, construction, social services, campaigning, health service workers.

We are aligning an Advisory Board to oversee the development, transition and then operation. Will comprise appropriate individuals with skills/experience that will complement and guide the main board, along with stakeholder representation for oversight (we will invite appropriate council officers and councillors from both city and county councils).

Serving the Community through Integrated Health Provision

We propose the creation of Community Health Hub that will ensure improved health education for the promotion of healthier lifestyles through community health services and support

An exemplar in Oxford is The Oxford Community Health Hub based in a former GP surgery at West Oxford Community Centre. The Hub offers low cost, affordable treatments and workshops from a wide ranging number of practitioners with various specialisms.

This model of community health care has been previously implemented in the community buildings and leisure centres of other UK cities, making health services more accessible and affordable to the local community resulting in a significant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents.

As part of the proposed Temple Cowley Pools development the expansion of the Oxford Community Health Hub into Temple Cowley would ensure that the same level of support and affordable health care is delivered in the Temple Cowley community which has been demonstrated to be invaluable in the current Health Hub and in other identified Community Health Hubs in the UK.

Strategies and activities to encourage and support individual's people to adopt healthier lifestyles would include:

- stop smoking service
- weight management services
- alcohol advice and treatment
- exercise referral
- cardiovascular risk check
- diabetes risk check
- community musculoskeletal care
- community counselling
- mental health support and mindfulness training

Furthermore, the promotion of outdoor activities, use of the proposed rooftop garden social space to reduce the impact of nature deficit disorder and associated healthcare problems, and an additional benefit of offering a community health service in a leisure and outdoor facility due to both sport, outdoor activities, connection to nature and health are interconnected.

Social Return on Investment in Temple Cowley Pools

The financial saving to the local health services and policing authorities of the operation of leisure and sport facilities with additional community health services in other UK local authorities has been calculated to be into the £100,000's per centre per year, where the social return on investment (SROI) per £1 of investment is between £7-£12 in health and police service savings. This is at the lower end of similar savings reported in other studies (some as much as 1:76). Similar SROI would be expected following the community redevelopment of Temple Cowley Pools following the addition of improved community space and community health services which is similar to the developments in Manchester, Edinburgh and West Lothian. This return in savings illustrates the clear financial as well as social benefit to the local authorities through supporting the Temple Cowley Pools development.

Marketing

Strategy

This marketing strategy aims to increase usage & yield by cross-selling services to existing users of Temple Cowley Pools, increasing communications activity with infrequent and/or lapsed attenders, attracting new users from the transient student population, address barriers to attendance where these can be easily addressed, and engaging new customer markets in support of our attainable growth projections.

The aims of this strategy are:

- To increase the use of Temple Cowley Pools as a sports & leisure facility by local users by responding to market demand with a customer-led, and innovative programme that responds to their needs.
- To attract visits from across the city & tourists to the city to experience Temple Cowley Pools unique combination of features across the county.
- To meet projected revenue targets.
- To communicate a smooth exchange from Council/Fusion-run venue to community-led venue that initially minimises loss of footfall and then builds through renewed confidence and engagement with the facilities.

The objectives are to:

- Retain existing users, building loyalty & vested interest/community ownership.
- Bring back lapsed users who have been deterred by the deterioration in conditions
- Increase use of the services by operating a market-led programme of activities that are cross-sold and up-sold.
- Target new users annually from the transient student population
- Engage new users locally, across the city & beyond through swimming lessons, club sports activities & profile raising awareness of Temple Cowley Pools USP's.
- Engage a wider reach of groups using the centre and for a range of sports, social & business/learning activities.
- Reach a wide local demographic and address barriers to attendance in an area of economic deprivation.

Plan of Usage

In order to accommodate demand for public swimming and fitness, in an area of economic disadvantage, multi-cultural mix and high transient student population, we need to assure financial viability through expansion of dryside exercise facilities complemented by the community space, complementary health offerings and a café. Our consultation with the target communities during the summer of 2014 has clearly demonstrated the potential for growth and sustainability, whether through increasing programming for highly popular activity such as the women's only sessions (more sessions are wanted at different times of day), new activities (Jacuzzi, flumes) or natural consequences (the café can provide somewhere for parents waiting to pick up children from St Christopher's at the end of the school day)

Swimming Pool

- Swimming sessions for adults, children and families at appropriate times.
- Swimming lessons for schools & private lessons for children & adults.
- Children's parties with inflatables – have always been popular
- Fun inflatable sessions each week, offering affordable family activities
- Hire of pool by aqua-sports clubs (canoe clubs, sub-aqua, underwater polo)
- Aqua fitness and 'arm-chair' water-aerobics classes, supported by dry-side activities (ballroom dancing, dominos, lunch-club in the community space, steam room & tailored gym/fitness classes) – for retired people
- Parent & toddler sessions increased to meet demand and complemented with a crèche to enable parents to exercise by themselves. Complement with overall family-friendliness in the building – appropriate food options/choices in the café, float-chairs for babies, stock of water wings for children, play-pen for parents to manage changing their children...
- School holiday activities- working in collaboration with existing providers and council programmes
- Themed events including film screenings, music events and seasonal activities (for example, Halloween)

Diving Pool

- Opportunities to either learn a new skill, or as a first step to competition level
- Diving lessons
- Guided taster/introduction sessions for all ages

Sauna/steam suite

- Open 7 days a week for mixed use, introduce gender-specific sessions to increase footfall

Gym

- Cardio and resistance training equipment available for use 7 days a week with opening times to meet demand and retain/attract commuting gym-users
- Family gym sessions (children accompanied by an adult) to grow use of the gym and introduce families to more services
- Supervised gym-based exercise classes to incentivise visits by young professionals, students, training athletes from other disciplines (for example, a rugby night focused on specific areas of strength training/muscle development), retired groups, post-natal women and young people/children

Exercise Studio/Community Space

- In-house fitness classes including Pilates, kettle bell, yoga, Zumba, boxercise as well as standard national programmes
- Fitness classes geared towards level of commitment and attitudes to fitness – from regular established fitness users, to groups run in association with weight loss and others.
- Hire of space for additional classes, workshops and private events – for example local health/fitness groups, sports clubs and societies, and community groups or business/training networks

- Hire of space for musical performance and social activities (parties, receptions and so on) complemented by the catering activities

Therapy Rooms

- A focus for health related treatments, complementary to and integrated with the NHS (referrals for acupuncture, physiotherapy, sports injuries, Alexander technique and so on)

Innovation through New Activities

- Extend service beyond the physical limits of the building – for example ‘boot camp’ exercise classes and team sports that combine exercise or play in the nearby Florence Park, with swimming/fitness and shower facilities in Temple Cowley Pools.
- Summer events and activities using the community gardens
- Book swaps, reading groups, knitting sessions and other activities using the community space or café/reception areas
- Weekly stalls for local/small businesses (themed catering for example), or discounted haircuts for children (while parents wait in café)
- Affordable markets and indoor clothes or resource swaps (in the car park area or the community space)
- New affordable features to differentiate such as floating chess/board games
- Explore fun-based fitness classes for adults and children, that innovate the way fitness is taught – roller-skating fitness, street hockey, submerged weight training, language fitness (keep fit conducted in a different language), hula hoop fitness... finding ways of attracting more people and providing a focus that energises the area is a key principle for this community-led and inspired centre.

Area Profile and Target Markets

The East Oxford area population contains groups of great contrast. The various neighbourhoods (Rose Hill, Blackbird Leys, Cowley, Cowley Marsh, Barton) are recognised as having a demographic within the 10% most deprived in the UK (Oxford City Council statistics). Yet within these traditionally working class areas 22% of the population are students (2011 Census, ONS, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>) and there is a wide ethnic mix. Not surprisingly then the age range in the area is skewed towards 16-35 year olds and relative to the UK as a whole the population is highly transient. In Cowley Marsh in particular (the area in which Temple Cowley Pools is located) the social demographic, not surprisingly because of the student population, has a higher level of AB than average, balanced by a lower C1 population. Young adults are more physically active across all sports, whereas children and older people make more use of swimming; children as they learn to swim and want more ‘fun’ elements (play sessions, diving, flumes), older people as the best way of keeping as fit as possible for as long as possible.

Temple Cowley as an area has been categorised by the City Council as both a primary district centre and a transport hub. Council policy is to position leisure facilities firstly in the centre of the city (as being the most accessible), then the primary district centres (Temple Cowley is the only area in the city designated as such) and then district centres.

As a transport hub, over 20 bus services from all over Oxford (not just along the Cowley Road ‘spine’) and outlying villages come through Temple Cowley. With the Templars Square shopping centre, and the recently rebranded and redeveloped adjacent retail centre (previously John Allen centre), along

with other services such as the library in Temple Road, the Temple Cowley area is a destination rivalled only by the centre of the city in popularity.

Leisure services complement the retail experience, and our surveys have shown that many people combine a shopping trip to Temple Cowley with a visit to the library and Temple Cowley Pools.

An online consultation survey (2011, Save Temple Cowley Pools online consultation) revealed that 65% of the users at the centre walked or cycled there, 18% by bus. As discussed elsewhere there has been a 31% increase in population in the Cowley Marsh area between the 2001 and 2011 census, and the population growth shows no sign of slowing down as schools either expand (the adjacent St Christopher's primary is at the time of writing expanding by 50%) or are newly created (such as the Tyndale Community School, sited within walking distance of Temple Cowley Pools).

Temple Cowley Pools has a women-only session on Tuesday evening, and this is highly popular both with women generally but also ethnic groups. The centre has a particular advantage in this respect in that the whole centre can be made available as women only, with blinds completely isolating the self-contained facilities for both swimming and dryside (this is not possible at any other city council leisure facility).

Temple Cowley Pools, as a place where people learned to swim, is woven into the fabric of Oxford's tapestry, and is remembered fondly as an exciting youthful experience by the older population, with often several generations of families learning to swim there.

Summary

Temple Cowley Pools is ideally situated to attract the target population. Increasing the facilities to include a café, community space, health outreach, more dryside exercise and 'fun' water (flumes, Jacuzzi) will provide a wider appeal and can increase attendance to continually sustainable levels.

Partners

Key to delivery through the cic/BENCOM vehicle is working with appropriate delivery partners.

Housing Association

A Housing Association with capability for build of new accommodation, and operation of both private as well as social housing is necessary to deliver the proposed business model. The potential partners in this area are limited at present, either because of location (the economics of operating a single site at a distance from others escalates costs) or because of their involvement in bidding in their own right as purchasers/developers of the Temple Cowley Pools site. We have had a number of discussions with Housing Associations that would be appropriate as partners. To move discussions forward we would need the City Council to approve our proposal in principle, and in preference to other options subject to satisfactory detailed discussions. This will enable detailed commercial discussions with the potential partner Housing Associations and the delivery of a financially viable and sustainable business plan.

Temple Cowley Community Health Hub

Replicating the Oxford Community Health Hub model requires liaising with a range of complementary practitioners as well as the local health centres and clinical commissioning group. 'In principle' discussions have been held with all these groups, with very positive feedback. Access to therapy rooms is at a premium, so the introduction of additional facilities would complement those at present in the adjacent URC Church Hall. In particular, we have held detailed discussions about replicating the model with a complementary health practitioner who would organise

More detailed discussion and commercial arrangements with all these partners are feasible, and dependent on the City Council enabling our proposal to progress.

Leisure Operator

As much as the residential housing needs a partner to build and operate, so the focus for Temple Cowley Pools is operating the swimming, exercise and community facilities. Initial discussions have revealed the significant potential for the development of the site and increased usage – despite the 'tired' current look and feel of Temple Cowley Pools, it is clearly still well used and ideally situated to provide the services we are proposing to continue with and develop. In particular we have been working with Active Nation, who are able to provide the following letter in support of our proposal:

HELLO!

ACTIVE NATION

Nigel Gibson
Director
Save Temple Cowley Pools CIC

6th October 2014

Dear Nigel

Re: Temple Cowley Pools

Many thanks for the courtesy extended to me recently and for contacting Active Nation in respect to your initiative in Oxford.

Active Nation is a registered charity committed to its cause led mission, "to persuade the nation to be active". Our organisation cares passionately about the capability of sport and exercise to overcome the increasing incidence of major chronic disease, which itself can be attributed to a reduction in the levels of physical activity undertaken by communities throughout the UK.

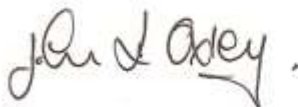
Notwithstanding our acknowledgement of the particular strain faced by local government in significantly reducing public spending, and specifically in a non-statutory service such as leisure, the principle of reducing the opportunity for communities to be physically active, clearly does not accord with our charitable objectives and underlying beliefs.

Our observation is that the community of Cowley is well populated and has a demographic that would both welcome and benefit from a modern and demand led facility mix. It is also our contention, without having an appreciation of the integrity of the building structure, that the facility infrastructure that exists at Temple Cowley Pools, with appropriate creative design treatment and a re-balancing of the facility mix, could provide a venue that would:-

- Be valued and supported by the local community
- Appeal to a significantly increased proportion of the community
- Enhance the health, well-being and physical activity levels of that community
- Be financially independent and commercially sustainable

I confirm that should there be an opportunity to understand the initiative at Temple Cowley Pools further, then Active Nation would be interested in offering to "Save TCP CIC" its insight and experience in consideration of the development of this facility.

Kind Regards



John Oxley
Managing Director

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SUM!
PLAY!
FLEX!
ENJOY!
DIVE!
SWEAT!
SPLASH!
SWIM!
RUN!

Constructing the Facilities

The timeline and general content of how we will enhance the existing facilities are covered elsewhere in this proposal, along with the indicative plans shown in Appendix A.

Detailed 'Next Steps'

With approval to proceed to the next level of detail and beyond, we would undertake the following activities:

- Commission a full measured survey of the site and surroundings
- Update the existing condition survey including the swimming pool plant.
- Commission an asbestos demolition and refurbishment survey of the building.
- Confirm detailed brief with TCP and any partnering organisation (housing association/developer).
- Appoint a full design team including an architect, structural engineer, mechanical & electrical engineer, an environmental consultant and landscape architect plus any specialised consultants.
- Create initial designs (review existing designs) for public consultation, local groups, local authority and organisations like Sports England
- Submit a Planning application
- Apply for Building Control
- Produce full detailed drawings & information.

Environmental Improvements

We would include as many environmental improvements as feasible, including:

- Power matching electrical feed
- Rigid pool covers across all three pools
- Solar PV on the large existing pool hall roof
- Rain water recycling facilities
- UV water filtration for the swimming pools
- Ground source heat pumps (or CHP if space insufficient)
- BREEAM very good/ excellent standard for the building.
- Improved insulation and heating for the existing pool building
- "Green" walls

Schedule of Works

The following information is based on a concept design which needs to be confirmed following full measured surveys and once detailed briefs are confirmed. All building will confirm to appropriate standards, for example DDA for disability and appropriate space standards for housing. There may be additional features for the social housing depending on their intended use (for example elderly/disability groups).

Schedule of Accommodation:

Health, Fitness and Community Facilities:

- Main pool hall:
 - Existing 25m Swimming Pool
 - Existing learners Swimming Pool & new water slide/flume.
 - Existing Diving Pool (repaired)
 - Existing spectator seating (amended)
 - New Jacuzzi Tube.
 - New public gallery/ seating area.
- New male, female and village changing areas including disabled/family facilities.
- New sauna and steam rooms, including relaxation area
- New WC facilities
- Café/ servery with large open seating area including external seating.
- Staff office and staff room
- New lift
- New basement plant room
- New 150m2 gym
- New 190m2 Community hall with removable walls to create a separate fitness/ dance studio
- New community kitchen
- 2no. Treatment/ therapy rooms

Accommodation:

- 9no. 1 Bedroom apartments
- 5no. 2 Bedroom apartments
- 3no. 3 Bedroom apartments
- 2nd and 3rd floor community gardens

Unparalleled Community Support

The Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign has over a period of five years received overwhelming and unceasing support from the public.

This tremendous and impassioned support has been mirrored as a community interest company consulting with the public over recent months. As the public and interested groups have heard about and been made aware of our proposal, they have asked to send in letters and emails of endorsement – we have directed them to the City Council, and have included them in Appendix C to this proposal.

Here is an example of the impassioned and committed comments:

TCP is a family affair

Swimming at Temple Cowley has been part of Brough Family life for over seventy years.

Ron Brough lives in Marston now but learned to swim at the old Temple Cowley Baths in the **1940s** and remembers Esme Harris training for the Women's Springboard Event in the 1948 Olympics. He says "my brothers and I spent hours swimming at Temple Cowley. It was great for my Mother, we could walk or bike there safely from Donnington Bridge Road".

In the **1950s**, Ron's nephew Andrew and his siblings learned to swim at the Cowley Workers' Swimming Club which met at TCP every Tuesday evening.

In the **1960s**, Andrew and his sisters swam for Oxford with the City of Oxford Swimming Club, based at Temple Cowley.

In the **1970s**, Oxford Sub Aqua Club trained at the Temple Cowley Baths every Friday evening and that's where Andrew met his future wife Sue.

Their children, Claire and Robert, learned to swim at Temple Cowley in the **1980s** and the whole family was delighted when the pool was **completely rebuilt in 1987**.

Following the family tradition, Claire still lives walking distance from TCP and goes swimming there every week with her three year old daughter.

Beatrix loves swimming with her cousin, Raphael aged five, son of Robert and they particularly enjoyed being together at the Big Splash event at TCP on Sunday 14 September 2014.

Many families, all over Oxford and beyond, have similar long involvement with Temple Cowley Pools. **It doesn't make any sense to demolish this important community asset.**

Oxford City Council should accept the Save TCP cic bid.

Our Request to Oxford City Council

This proposal aims to provide sufficient information about what the SaveTCP community interest company, the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign and the communities in and around Temple Cowley are trying to do to enable a detailed options discussion on the way forward.

Fundamental to this proposal is that the Council must be willing to co-operate with the communities in Oxford who want to keep Temple Cowley Pools open, communities who have elected the Council, and for whom the Council exists to deliver services that communities want and need, where they want and need them.

Key Benefits

- Our proposal offers zero financial risk to the council – if we are successful in our venture then the Council will have enabled the success; if we ultimately are unsuccessful then the Council will be able to put the site back on the market and generate higher revenue than selling now
- Supporting our proposal will increase the Council's reputation for actively engaging with communities and enabling them to be more self-sufficient and sustaining
- Through the successful bid, development and operation of Temple Cowley Swimming Pool it will ensure that Oxford City Council fulfils its responsibility for community health, leisure and value for money and ensuring equity and social justice for the communities surrounding Temple Cowley Swimming Pool. Furthermore, the associated savings to the local authority through crime prevention and reduced public health requirements makes this option not only one for the benefit of local communities but to the financial budget of Oxford City Council
- Community ownership will drive community inclusion and a self-sustaining momentum, balancing the feeling in the Temple Cowley community in recent years that they have been neglected by the City Council
- A vibrant focus, extending the range of current exercise and fitness activities, coupled with innovative and complementary initiatives will revitalise and energise the Temple Cowley area, in turn complementing (at zero cost to the council) the City Council initiatives for regeneration in nearby communities such as Rose Hill and Blackbird Leys

In summary, we are asking for Oxford City Council to approve in principle, subject to detailed validation, that Temple Cowley Pools may be operated by the community who wants and needs these facilities.

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