

# Community Health Impact Assessment of Save Temple Cowley Pool Proposal



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## Development Proposal

The proposal of the purchase of the Temple Cowley Pool site as a community asset, which will be owned and operated by and for the benefit of the local community involves the development and improvement of the existing Temple Cowley Pool Site. In addition to improving the existing leisure facilities of the 25m swimming pool, the proposal includes the re-opening of the diving pool, upgrade of existing gym facilities, relocating and improving the sauna and steam facilities in addition to providing a dedicated community space with café and rooftop garden and social space. To enable the short and long-term financial sustainability of the community fitness and wellbeing centre additional revenue will be provided through the construction of flat on the TCP building, income from the café and providing community primary healthcare services similar to those provided by the Oxford Community Health Hub in Botley.

This document will assess the social return on investment and local community health benefits of the proposal.

## Benefits of Proposed Development

### Community Profile

The East Oxford Community comprises of Cowley, Cowley Marsh, Rose Hill, Lye Valley, Quarry and the bordering areas of Iffley and Headington. The areas of Cowley, Cowley Marsh and Rose Hill have a high proportion of individuals living in poverty in comparison to the rest of Oxford and the area of Rose Hill is within 20% of most deprived areas in England (Community Area Profiles OCC 2011). Moreover, these areas of greater deprivation experience poorer general health and a significantly lower life expectancy (8.3 years less for men and 6.6 years less for women) than the least deprived areas of Oxford. (Oxford Inequalities in Life Expectancy 2010). Additionally, these regions are less likely on average to have access to a car than the rest of Oxford (Community Area Profiles OCC 2011) potentially with greater limitations on access to leisure and care facilities outside of their immediate community for these populations on comparison to the rest of the city.

### Benefits of Community Fitness Centres

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

There is an overwhelming body of research literature illustrating a significant link between the participation in sport and physical activity and improved physical and mental health (Eime et al 2013, Janssen and LeBlanc 2010, Bize et al 2007). Regular activity can reduce the incidence of: obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, multiple cancers,

psychological stress, and many other health problems. However, for a significant reduction in the incidence of these collective health problems to be achieved, individuals must participate in around 90-120 minutes of moderate to high adherence of physical activity per week. It has been demonstrated by multiple publications that the proximity and ease of access to sports and recreational facilities has a relationship with individuals' participation in sport (Kaufman et al 2014, Karusisi et al 2013, McMormack et al 2006), highlighting the importance of permitting the development and continuation of Temple Cowley Pools due to the reduced accessibility to an alternate sport centre for a large proportion of the previously mentioned communities (Appendix 1), which are in greatest need for accessible and affordable leisure facilities.

## **Participation in Sport and Accessibility**

However, as previously mentioned, the communities which are within closest proximity to the existing Temple Cowley Pool site have higher levels of deprivation. Areas with higher rates of poverty and deprivation have been demonstrated to have lower participation in sport (Sport England 2013, Sport Scotland 2008, Martin and Coalter 2000). In order to improve the health prospects of the individuals of the local Cowley communities it is essential that a centre for health and wellbeing is available and accessible to support and enable active participation in sport and promoting healthier lifestyles through improved, exciting and engaging community space.

Existing research highlights the importance of proximity and accessibility of a sport and recreational space for improved rates of participation in physical activity (Kaufman et al 2014, Karusisi et al 2013, Brownson et al 2007, McMormack et al 2006) and that journey time of 10, 20 and 30 or more minutes has a direct and significant correlation to the likelihood of use of leisure and recreational space for physical activity (Ferguson et al 2013). As highlighted in Appendix 1, the closure of the existing Temple Cowley Pool and Fitness Centre will result in the spatial isolation of the large proportion of south and east Oxford which may have a direct impact on the participation and active involvement in sport and physical activity as suggested by published literature. Subsequently, the closure of the pool is highly likely to have a direct negative impact on the health of the individuals in the Cowley and surrounding communities. Furthermore, not only will the continuation of the existing TCP site ensure an essential link for individuals access to sport facilities, but the proposal for the community development on the TCP is purchased has the potential to greatly improve the level of health in these communities through new multifaceted health and wellbeing facilities.

In addition to providing a space for individual to participate in physical activity, the creation of a Community Health Hub in the Temple Cowley Pool site will ensure improved health education for the promotion of healthier lifestyles through community health services and support

## **Case Review: Oxford Community Health Hub**

The Oxford Community Health Hub is 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 (Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust Report 2013, Edinburgh Leisure Report 2012, West Lothian Leisure Report 2011).

As part of the proposed Save Temple Cowley Pool 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 (Maas et al 2009), 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 Pool**

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 (Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust Report 2013, Edinburgh Leisure Report 2012, West Lothian Leisure Report 2011) where the social return on investment (SROI) per £1 of investment is between £7-£12 in health and police service savings. Similar SROI would be expected following the community redevelopment of Temple Cowley Pool 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 financial benefit to the local authority by permitting the Save Temple Cowley Pool development.

### **Impact of Closure**

In addition to the negative impact of individuals' health, the closure of Temple Cowley Pool is likely to have parallel negative impacts in the increase of crime and anti-social behaviour reduction of community and social interaction and cohesion. This has been previously illustrated in a study where there were significant reductions in local general health and community cohesion following the closure of a swimming pool, even where facilities were not used regularly (Thompson et al 2003).

## Conclusion

The communities surrounding the Temple Cowley Pools site comprise individuals and families which have greater financial barriers in comparison to the rest of Oxford. This barrier limits this population's access to health and sports facilities of reasonable quality, creating an obstacle to whole health. This report has identified that through the on-going operation of Temple Cowley Pool alongside the proposed development by Save Temple Cowley Pool CIC would result in a centre which would have a significant positive impact on individuals' engagement with physical activity and personal health, subsequently improving the health, wellbeing and livelihood of surrounding communities.

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.

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# Appendix 1: Accessibility of Oxford Public Swimming Pools from Winter 2014/15

103

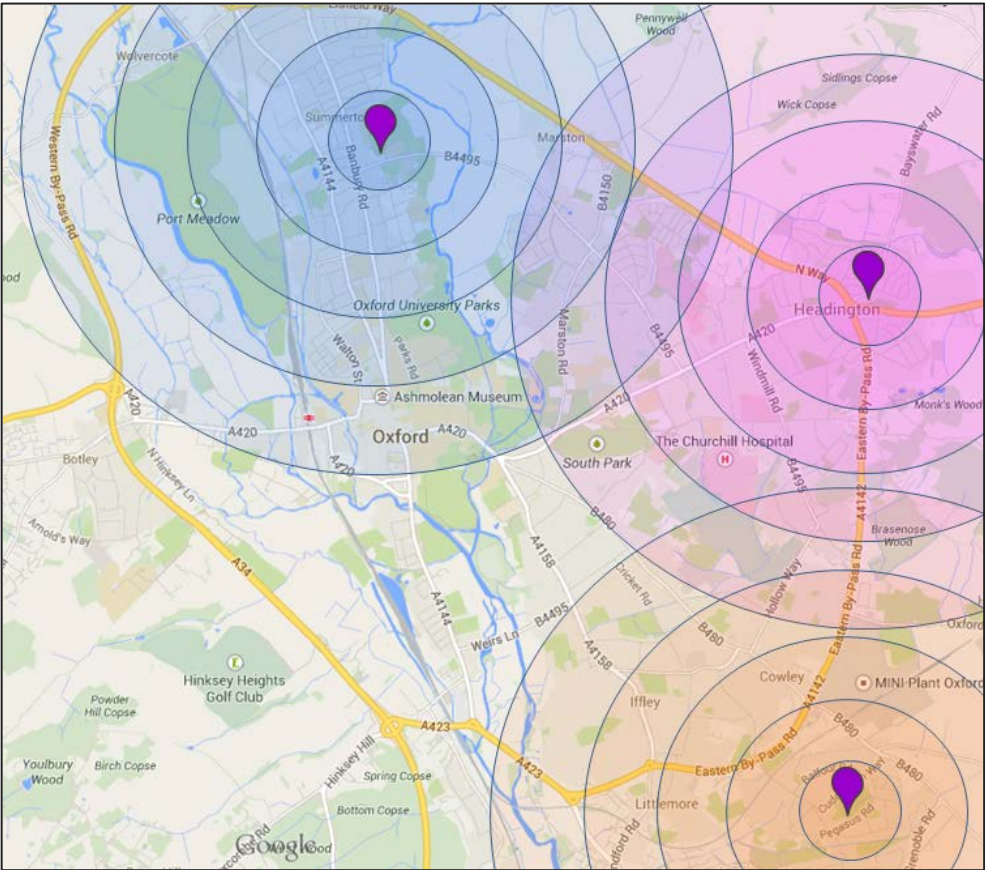






Fig. 1.1 – Proposed Oxford Public Swimming Pool Sites: December 2014

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

Source: Google Maps Estimated Travel Times

The proposed closure of Temple Cowley Pool from winter 2014/15 will result in the communities of South and East Oxford being confronted with longer travel times to their nearest public pool or indoor sporting facility.

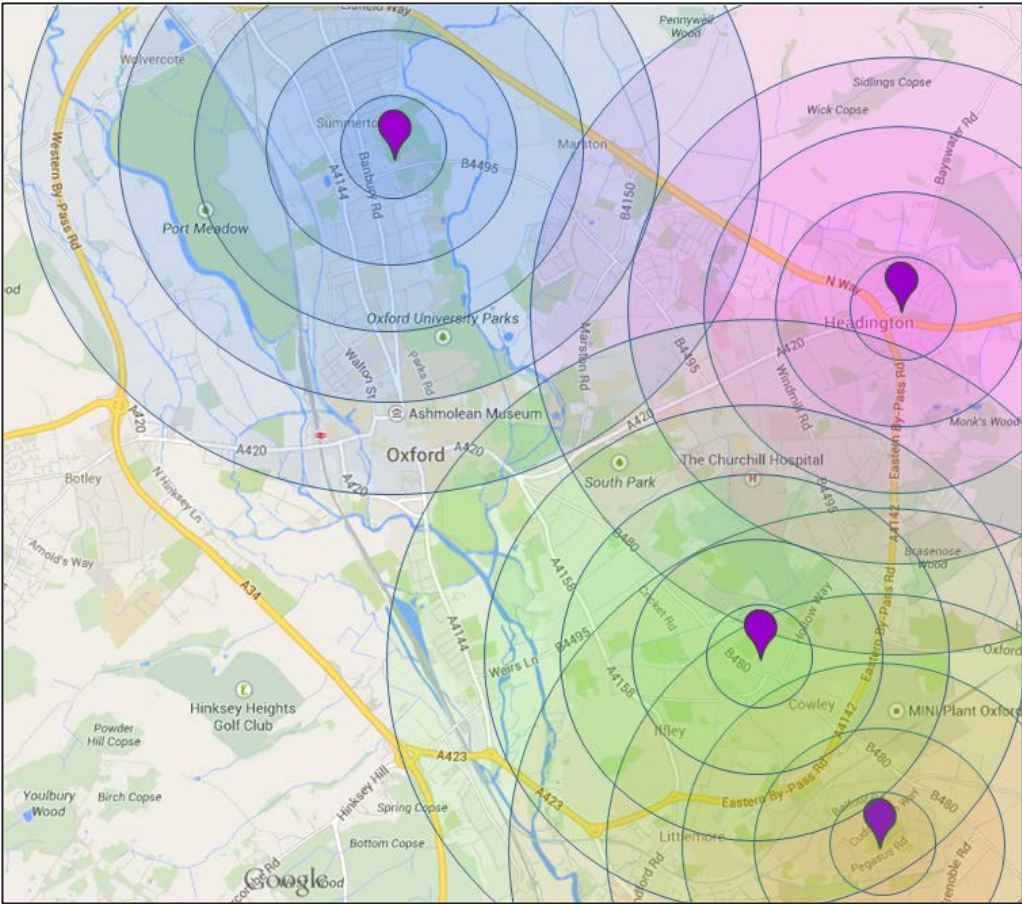


Fig. 1.2 – SaveTCP Proposed Public Swimming Pool Sites: December 2014

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