

Report to: Executive Board - 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2002

**Best Value Review of Community Buildings and Facilities - Phase 2  
Scoping Paper**

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| <p><b>Report of: Business Manager, Corporate Strategy Unit</b></p> <p><b>Report Author: Nicky Atkin</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member<br/>Responsible: PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE<br/>Councillor P. Johnson</b></p> <p><b>Overview and<br/>Scrutiny<br/>Committee<br/>Responsibility: Social Well Being</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision: No</b></p>  | <p><b>WARDS AFFECTED</b><br/>All</p> |
| <p><b>Purpose of the Report</b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to agree the scope for phase 2 of the community buildings review, in particular the full exploration of any procurement options. The structure of the steering group has changed with the emergence of 3 facility based steering groups: the Town Hall and Museum, Leisure Centres and Community Centres. Each group will meet on a monthly basis with the aim of drawing the review to a close in November.</p> <p><u>Leisure Centres</u></p> <p>In order to further investigate the enhanced in-house and other management options, it is necessary to undertake a more comprehensive benchmarking exercise with other local authorities. This information will include advising the steering group on what other local authorities deem to be a reasonable level of subsidy and, if any, expected profit.</p> <p>The requirement for a strategy for leisure will be explored and, if necessary, recommendations for terms of reference for a framework will be decided by the steering group, any future developments concerning leisure centres and the ice rink will relate strongly to the strategy.</p> <p>The recent report from the Audit Commission "Sport and Recreation" will be considered during this phase.</p> <p>Phase 2 will aim to draw staff into the review in a much more interactive way. Leisure facility managers will be consulted on a range of issues including; staffing, marketing, the Slice Card and the potential of their facility. Leisure management will be asked to develop a business plan and development plans for each centre.</p> |                                      |

An analysis of ways in which to maximise income will be considered and will include a detailed look at options for procuring catering, retail and possible fitness suite operations.

There will be an investigation into the potential for securing access to external leisure facilities, particularly looking at the universities and ways of working in partnership with commercial providers.

More detailed and focused work will be carried out on all management options in order to provide information on the advantages of each option as compared with the framework leisure strategy.

### Community Centres

Similarly to the leisure centres, the collection of benchmarking data from other local authority providers is key to recommending a reasonable level of subsidy given by Oxford City Council for community centres.

Based on previous consultation with stakeholders and members of the public and in light of any budget and resource constraints, the steering group will recommend a statement for what services and activities Oxford City Council would expect a community centre to be providing. Such a statement could provide the basis for drawing up a management contract between individual community associations and Oxford City Council.

Following the recommendation of a draft management contract, detailed consultation with each community association will be carried out on an individual basis.

A policy will then be considered to cover any community association that does not wish to sign up to a management contract. Provision will also be looked into for associations who would like to sign up to the contract, but who are unable to do so at this time - improvement packages and support will be recommended, including potential ways of working with other agencies and partners in order to deliver the services that the local community needs.

The steering group will advise on a framework for improvement and monitoring of any management contracts that are approved.

Any recommendations made within phase 2 should be balanced against the management asset report detailed in phase 1.

Research into development trusts will continue. Any interested community associations will be invited to form a working group and, where applicable, implications (financial or otherwise) for Oxford City Council will be considered

### Oxford Town Hall and the Museum of Oxford

Phase 2 will develop a strategy for both the Town Hall and Museum that will enhance community focus and make better use of the available space and income generating potential whilst preserving the civic function element.

Ways of providing capital investment will be explored and recommended.

This could include the negotiation of joint ventures with possible partners, whether that be with hotels, conference centres or food retailers. The seeking of expressions of interest from other organisations or the identification of a

strategy to achieve preferred options in-house.

Ways of developing the main hall with a view to providing an attractive multi-use area, to include concert and theatre facilities, will also be worked on.

Possibilities for the future storage of archives will be looked at.

Any recommendations for future development of the Town Hall will be analysed in the light of the current management structure and, if necessary, suggestions will be made for a future management strategy.

Full feasibility studies for any favoured options will be carried out and an identification of resources needed to achieve this will be necessary.

Any proposed income streams should be looked at in the short, medium and long term capacity to help feed into the unit's budget planning process.

Concerning the Museum of Oxford, the option of combining the Museum with the Town Hall in terms of a joint access and closer working will be developed and future partnership working opportunities with other museums will continue to be sought.

In light of any options that are proposed, the steering group will need to identify the need for any or all of the following:

A fundraising strategy

A tendering process for ancillary services

Contractual requirements

A strong supporting marketing policy

This scope will lead to a detailed appraisal of procurement options and individual papers detailing each steering group's recommendations.

### **Recommendation**

Executive Board is asked to:

- agree the scope for phase 2 of the Community Buildings Best Value Review

**THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:**  
Councillor Peter Johnson, Portfolio Holder for Leisure  
Kathryn Latter, Business Manager Corporate Strategy Unit

Background papers:

Community Buildings & Facilities Best Value Review - Phase 1