

# Oxford City Council

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## Leisure Facilities Strategy Draft for Consultation

May 2005

**This document forms part of Oxford City Council's  
Cultural Development Framework**

*"Culture ... is about improving the quality of life for all, allowing people both to derive pleasure and to fulfil their own potential and broaden their horizons."*

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

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# 1. Introduction

*The City Council retains a firm commitment to playing a full and proactive role in the development of indoor leisure facilities, either provided by the Council or by others, with the key aim of ensuring 'affordable leisure facilities' are accessible to as many local residents as possible.*

- 1.1 This draft strategy will set out a series of options for Oxford City Council in its provision of Leisure facilities across the City. It will also identify some options for additional provision by other partners from the public, private or voluntary sectors as well as identifying some key strategic proposals for improving the leisure facilities within the City.
- 1.2 This strategy should be considered in conjunction with the Council's overall "Sports and Leisure Strategy" as it reflects on how the City Council sees its role as a leisure facility provider as part of a broader strategy for leisure provision. It is also intended to assist the Council in assessing the current levels of provision and to evaluate the effectiveness of delivery to local residents. It will provide a framework for future provision and the development of the Council's own leisure facilities.
- 1.3 The strategy will be used to support external funding applications from such sources as the National Lottery, European funds and other grant giving bodies. It will also inform local planning policies, including the Local Plan and any supplementary planning guidance (SPG) as well as from a basis for planning agreements arising from new developments.
- 1.4 This document is intended to provide information on the strategy process and key findings, together with some general and sports options for policy consideration.
- 1.5 The strategy will take a 10-year view initially, in order to run concurrently with the existing Local Plan and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **The need for and benefits of a Facilities Strategy**

- 1.6 The rationale for undertaking the strategic assessment and developing this strategy is to:
  - identify current levels and quality of provision across the City
  - take account of other providers in the public, education, voluntary and commercial sectors,
  - to compare this with national standards of provision
  - to identify potential priorities for future development
  - to inform a future investment strategy in leisure facilities provided by the City Council
  - to underpin future planning policy and allocation, and to support bids for external funding.
- 1.7 There are a number of key benefits in undertaking a local assessment and developing a strategy for Oxford City. These can be summarised as:

### **a. Corporate and Strategic benefits, which include:**

- Ensuring a strategic approach to facility provision. During times of change for local authorities, a leisure facilities strategy will provide direction and set priorities for indoor

facility provision. The Strategy can add value to and assist the formation of the Council's overarching assessment of Leisure provision (as prescribed as part of the revised Policy Planning Guidance Note 17 – PPG17)

- Providing robust evidence for capital funding. As well as proving the need for developer contributions towards new or improved facilities, a leisure facilities strategy can provide evidence of need for a range of capital grants. Current funding examples include the National Lottery Sports Fund, the Football Foundation and New Opportunities Fund.
- It will help to demonstrate the value of leisure related services during times of increasing scrutiny on non-statutory services
- It will help demonstrate commitment to Best Value. The assessment methodology has included considerable consultation with local sports clubs, schools and stakeholders. It challenges the current supply arrangements, compares some aspects (e.g. Hire fees) of provision with those of neighbouring authorities and as a result can encourage competitiveness.
- It provides valuable links to other strategies and local plans and can support and inform such plans e.g. the Community Plan, Local Cultural Strategy, Sports and Leisure Strategy, Sport and Health development Plan.

***b. Planning related benefits, which include:***

- Providing a basis for establishing new or improved facility requirements arising from new housing developments

***c. Operational benefits, which include:***

- Improving the local authority's asset management by providing detailed audit information and facility user views. This should result in more efficient use of resources and reduced overheads
- It highlights locations and specific facilities where quality can be enhanced

***d. Sports and Health Development benefits, which include:***

- Helping to identify where community facilities for health reasons are most needed
- Providing better information to residents and other users on leisure facilities.
- Promoting sports development by helping to unlock latent demand, for example by filling gaps in provision which may currently be preventing participation in leisure activities and the formation of teams and clubs.

## **The Assessment process**

- 1.8 The strategic assessment of facilities was undertaken by a specialist leisure consultancy practice Strategic Leisure during 2004. The assessment methods used are nationally recognised benchmarking standards provided by Sport England and other accredited market research bodies.








- 1.9 Ascertaining accurate supply and demand information is critical in producing a robust, accurate strategy, which is 'owned' by all stakeholders.
- 1.10 The current supply of facilities was established through undertaking a series of data review, research and consultation exercises. These consisted of:
- Review of information held by Oxford City Council
  - Audit of facilities owned and managed by Oxford City Council, and other providers at local level with identified community use
  - Consultation with key stakeholders (e.g. Governing Bodies of Sport)
  - A postal survey of all schools within the authority
  - A postal survey to all identified Sports Clubs as agreed with Oxford City Council
  - Consultation with neighbouring authorities

## 2. Current Indoor Leisure provision – where we provide facilities.

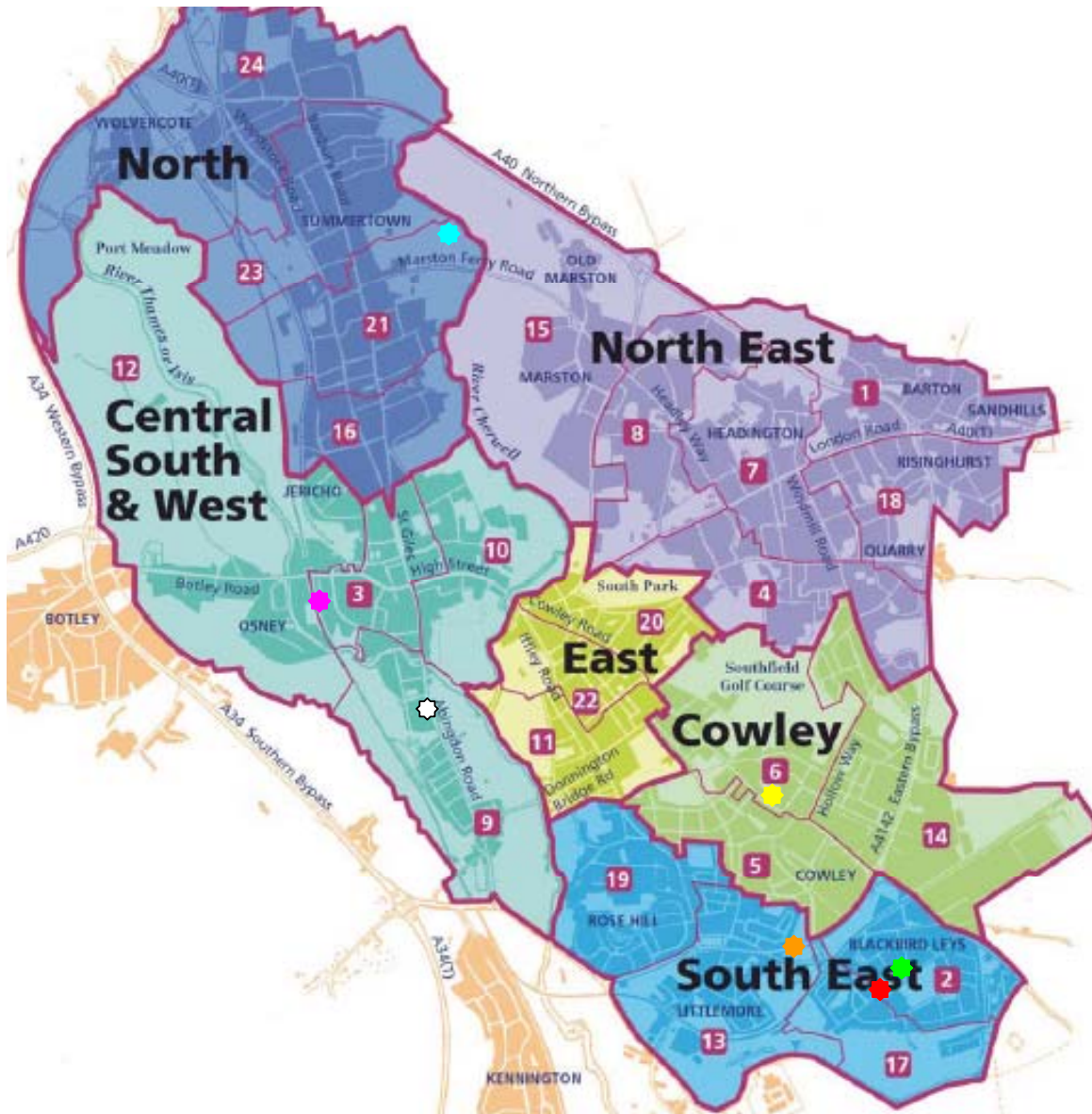
2.1 The provision of leisure and sports centres is not a statutory obligation on local authorities: each authority has the ability to make its own decision on what and how it provides such facilities. Some authorities choose to provide a small number of multipurpose facilities and leave the provision of specialist facilities to others, such as the private sector. Oxford City Council (OCC) currently takes an active role in the provision of a broad range of affordable facilities through its Leisure and Parks Business Unit. The seven facilities currently provided and operated around the City by OCC are:

Ferry Sports Centre  
 Temple Cowley Pool  
 Blackbird Leys Pool  
 Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre  
 Oxford Ice Rink  
 Peers Sports Centre  
 Hinksey Pool (outdoor)

2.2 The current geographical distribution of the OCC indoor sports facilities in the City is as follows:

| FACILITY NAME  | WARD           | COMMUNITY AREA        |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Blackbird Leys Pool</b>            | Blackbird Leys | South East            |
| <b>Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre</b>  | Blackbird Leys | South East            |
| <b>Ferry Sports Centre</b>            | St Margarets   | North                 |
| <b>Hinksey Pool</b>                   | Hinksey Park   | Central, South & West |
| <b>Oxford Ice Rink</b>                | Carfax         | Central, South & West |
| <b>Peers Sports Centre</b>            | Littlemore     | South East            |
| <b>Temple Cowley Pool</b>             | Cowley Marsh   | South                 |

**Political wards within Oxford City grouped by Area Committee**



2.3 These facilities serve the current population of Oxford which, in the 2001 Census, was given as 134,248, of which around 30,000 are full time students at one of Oxford's two universities. The facilities that OCC provide are used by residents of all age groups either on a casual basis or as part of the City Council's membership scheme, the Slice Card.

2.4 Usage between centres varies and in 2003/2004 was as follows:

| <b>FACILITY NAME</b>                        | <b>ANNUAL USAGE – 2003 / 2004</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Blackbird Leys Pool</b>                  | 47,426                            |
| <b>Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre</b>        | 117,805                           |
| <b>Ferry Sports Centre</b>                  | 246,461                           |
| <b>Hinksey Pool (May to September only)</b> | 52,995                            |
| <b>Oxford Ice Rink</b>                      | 174,492                           |
| <b>Peers Sports Centre</b>                  | 54,907                            |
| <b>Temple Cowley Pool</b>                   | 217,711                           |

From the above table, which looks at 2003/04 usage, it can be seen that the most used facility is Ferry Sports Centre followed by Temple Cowley Pool. The least used facilities are Hinksey Pool (which is not surprising as it is an outdoor pool that is only open during the summer), Blackbird Leys Pool and Peers Sport Centre.

### **3. What we provide within these facilities.**

3.1 Each of the centres provided by the City Council offers a range of activities and a variety of programmes to meet our objective of providing a balanced programme that appeals to users of all ages. The type of facility heavily influences the programmes, but they are also developed in accordance with the changing needs of customers, and the City Council is keen to learn what facilities and programmes residents would like us to provide.

3.2 The current facilities and programmes that we provide at each site are:

| <b>FACILITY NAME</b>                        | <b>FACILITIES</b>  | <b>PROGRAMMES</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Blackbird Leys Pool</b>                  | 16m Learner pool and viewing gallery   | Swimming lessons for clubs, schools and individuals  |
| <b>Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre</b>        | 8 Court Sports hall, 50 station Fitness Room, Dance Studio   | Indoor Sports (e.g. badminton, basketball, five aside football, volleyball), Aerobics and Exercise classes, Weight training & Gym based cardio-vascular exercise   |
| <b>Ferry Sports Centre</b>                  | 4 Court Sports Hall, 25m Swimming Pool, Learner Pool, 50 station Fitness Room, 3 Squash Courts, Dance Studio | Swimming lessons for clubs, schools and individuals, Casual swimming, Weight training & Gym based cardio-vascular exercise sports coaching, Aerobics and Exercise classes, Indoor Sports (e.g. badminton, basketball, volleyball, five aside football, squash) |
| <b>Hinksey Pool</b> (May to September only) | Open Air 50m Freeform Pool   | Casual swimming, Sub aqua, canoe classes   |
| <b>Oxford Ice Rink</b>                      | (Regional) Ice Rink with spectator seating and café facility   | Casual Skating, Skating lessons, ice Hockey (club based), specialist sessions  |
| <b>Peers Sports Centre</b>                  | Dual-use (school based) facility comprising 4 Court Sports hall, 16m Pool, 3 Squash Court.                   | Swimming lessons, casual swimming, sports coaching, Aerobics and Exercise classes, Indoor Sports (e.g. badminton, basketball, volleyball, five aside football, squash)   |
| <b>Temple Cowley Pool</b>                   | 25m Competition Pool, Learner pool, Diving Pit, Sauna & Steam Room, 25 station Fitness Room                  | Swimming lessons for clubs, schools and individuals, Casual swimming, Aerobics and Exercise classes, Sauna & Steam, Weight training & Gym based Cardio-vascular exercise   |



## **4. Key Findings of the assessment**

- 4.1 The strategic assessment of facilities was undertaken by a specialist leisure consultancy practice Strategic Leisure during 2004. The assessment methods used are nationally recognised benchmarking standards provided by Sport England and other accredited market research bodies.
- 4.2 The findings are an analysis of what is provided within the City of Oxford, taking account of the City Council's facilities, those provided by the private sector and those provided by the Universities that have some public access.
- 4.3 When comparing this analysis to the average provision across the rest of the country, utilising industry standard benchmarking the findings of these assessments for each type of facility are set out below.

### **Swimming Pools**

- 4.4 There is currently almost double the required level of water space in the City available for community access compared to the average across the rest of the Country. This excess of supply does not include the limited availability of the University pools, existing commercial provision, or the new facility planned for Barton; if these pools were also taken into account, the over provision would be even greater. It may therefore be appropriate to consider the potential for a reduction in the provision of swimming space provided by OCC, without compromising the expressed demand for this type of facility in the City.

### **Sports Halls**

- 4.5 Sports halls are used for many different sporting activities, so demand is measured in terms of the number of badminton courts that could be accommodated. Current provision of easily accessible public sports halls by the council is equivalent to 34 badminton courts across the City, while national averages suggest that demand is for 36. There is limited community access to University sportshall in the city but this does not significantly impact on this assessment.
- 4.6 Based on the prevailing national standards there is therefore a need to provide additional sports hall access for community use in the city. However given that the demand identified only equates to 2 badminton courts, there are many means of addressing this outstanding need. For example, Oxfordshire County Council has recently announced its intention to encourage Oxford schools to open up sports facilities for community use, which may provide the additional space required.

### **Health and Fitness**

- 4.7 The standard benchmark used by Sport England for the provision of health and fitness or "gym" facilities is measured in terms of 'fitness stations'. A fitness station is defined as the number of people that could comfortably use any given gym at the same time. For example, the new facility at Ferry Sports Centre will be a 55 Station facility; this means that up to 55 people could exercise simultaneously with reasonable comfort and safety.

4.8 Analysis of facilities available across the City estimates that current demand for this type of facility stands at 662 'fitness stations'. The City Council, Universities and private providers currently provide 625 stations, so there is a shortfall in provision of 37 stations across the city. This 'gap' in provision has been addressed by the extension to the health and fitness facilities at the City Council's Ferry Sports Centre, which recently re-opened, and by the additional fitness stations provided at the David Lloyd facility, which opened after the assessment was undertaken.

4.9 There is therefore, in purely numerical terms, ample provision of health and fitness facilities. However this assessment takes no account of location, and other issues such as their accessibility.

### **Summary of key findings**

4.10 There appears to be ample provision of the main indoor sports facilities, in purely numerical terms across the city as a whole when measured against national standards developed by Sport England.

4.11 Whilst there is a reasonable geographic spread of indoor facilities across the City, there is a deficiency in the west/north west and east areas of the City of public sector, or affordable, indoor sports provision. In contrast there would appear to be over provision, in comparison, in the south of the City.

4.12 The situation in the east of the city will be addressed by the development of the new pool at Barton (Bayards Hill School). Residents in the west of the city will in the future have good access to the new indoor facility being developed at Matthew Arnold School by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

4.13 Overall, the city is over-provided with swimming spaces, even if no account of public access to privately owned and managed swimming pools is taken into account, however maintenance issues are evident in terms of quality of some of the current provision (see section 6).

4.14 In terms of health and fitness facilities, the newly refurbished facilities at Ferry Sports Centre and the development of private facilities at the David Lloyd club post-assessment indicates an excess of provision to meet current demand.

## **5. The quality of our existing Indoors Facilities**

5.1 The quality of existing facilities is a critical factor in their attractiveness to users, and their ability to operate cost effectively especially when other providers, such as universities, colleges and private sector operators, provide local competition. All seven facilities currently operated by OCC are now in need of significant investment, to improve the quality and range of facilities available for community use. Some of this investment is underway, for example at the Ferry Sports Centre which has just opened, and some are planned to take place this or next year.

5.2 OCC undertook surveys of the condition of its facilities in 2001 and identified the investments that would be necessary to bring each building up to a reasonable standard. This survey recommended the following minimum investments and does not include the development of new or additional facilities with the buildings:

| <b>FACILITY NAME</b>                         | <b>FACILITIES</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Blackbird Leys Pool</b>                   | £30,500  |
| <b>Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre</b>         | £110,000 – this and additional investment of £400,000 planned for 2005, matched by funding from Sport England. Total investment £1m. |
| <b>Ferry Sports Centre</b>                   | £700,000 – recently redevelopment including new facilities at total cost of £3.5m  |
| <b>Hinksey Pool (May to September only))</b> | £40,000 – redeveloped in 2004 with additional expenditure for improvement to mechanical part.  |
| <b>Oxford Ice Rink</b>                       | £250,00  |
| <b>Peers Sports Centre</b>                   | £100,00  |
| <b>Temple Cowley Pool</b>                    | £200,00  |

5.3 It can be noted from the table, since completion of the condition surveys, a major investment in the refurbishment and development of Ferry Sports Centre has taken place, which will enhance the provision of the Ferry Centre into a modern fit for purpose building with a life-span of 30 years.

5.4 In addition to the Ferry investment, a successful bid to the National Lottery Sports Fund has secured a sum of £1.7 million towards the development of a new community swimming pool at Barton, the rest of the funding will be contributed by the City Council. It is anticipated that the building of this new facility will commence in 2005.

5.5 Additional expenditure, totalling £0.5 million has been committed at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre which in turn has been match funded by Sport England in order to improve the facilities and leisure offering at this centre.

5.6 This leaves quite a large sum of investment required to refurbish the remaining existing facilities. However before the City Council commits considerable funds to refurbishing existing facilities, it is important to ensure that it has the right facilities in the correct locations, and that residents have been consulted and their views taken into account.

## **6. How we finance the facilities**

6.1 The City Council spent a net figure of £2,487,521 on providing its leisure and sports facilities in 2003/04. This was made up of total expenditure of £4,473,019, offset by income generated by the facility users of £1,985,498. The breakdown of expenditure by each centre was as follows:

| <b>FACILITY NAME</b>                        | <b>Gross Expenditure</b> | <b>Income</b> | <b>Net Expenditure</b> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| <b>Blackbird Leys Pool</b>                  | 194,759.29               | 84,890.93     | 109,868.36             |
| <b>Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre</b>        | 686,553.87               | 232,538.61    | 451,015.26             |
| <b>Ferry Sports Centre</b>                  | 1,073,184.60             | 422,999.25    | 650,185.40             |
| <b>Hinksey Pool (May to September only)</b> | 296,677.17               | 123,061.06    | 173,616.11             |
| <b>Oxford Ice Rink</b>                      | 862,124.74               | 587,104.04    | 275,020.70             |
| <b>Peers Sports Centre</b>                  | 385,813.04               | 136,622.23    | 249,190.81             |
| <b>Temple Cowley Pool</b>                   | 976,906.59               | 398,282.05    | 578,624.54             |

6.2 When analysing the overall expenditure by OCC in its leisure facilities it is important to look at how that expenditure is distributed. One of the main measures used nationally, which is valid for comparative purposes, is the level of subsidy per user. Applying this measure to the facilities produces the following results:

| <b>FACILITY NAME</b>                        | <b>Net Expenditure<br/>£</b> | <b>Usage</b>   | <b>Net Subsidy<br/>Per visit<br/>£</b> |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Blackbird Leys Pool</b>                  | 109,868                      | 47,426         | 2.32                                   |
| <b>Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre</b>        | 451,015                      | 117,805        | 3.83                                   |
| <b>Ferry Sports Centre</b>                  | 650,185                      | 246,461        | 2.64                                   |
| <b>Hinksey Pool (May to September only)</b> | 173,616                      | 52,965         | 3.28                                   |
| <b>Oxford Ice Rink</b>                      | 275,020                      | 174,492        | 1.58                                   |
| <b>Peers Sports Centre</b>                  | 249,190                      | 54,907         | 4.54                                   |
| <b>Temple Cowley Pool</b>                   | 578,624                      | 217,711        | 2.66                                   |
| <b>CITY WIDE AVERAGE</b>                    | <b>2,487,521</b>             | <b>911,767</b> | <b>2.73</b>                            |

6.3 When we compare these actual figures for 2003/04 with those estimated by other local authorities for 2004/05, both those local to the city and those of similar demographic profiles we find the following:

Neighbouring Authorities' estimated expenditure figures for 2004/05

| <b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>     | <b>Net Expenditure</b> | <b>Usage</b> | <b>Net Subsidy Per visit<br/>£</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>South Oxfordshire</b>   | £200,000               | 592,052      | £0.34                              |
| <b>West Oxfordshire</b>    | £376,000               | 641,849      | £0.59                              |
| <b>Vale of White Horse</b> | £660,000               | 1,258,000    | £0.52                              |
| <b>Cherwell</b>            | Not available          |              |                                    |
| <b>Oxford City</b>         | £2,487,521             | 911,767      | £2.73                              |

Similar Authorities' estimated expenditure figures for 2004/05

| <b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b> | <b>Net Expenditure</b> | <b>Usage</b> | <b>Net Subsidy Per visit<br/>£</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Cambridge</b>       | £1,061,000             | 763,386      | £1.39                              |
| <b>Lincoln</b>         | £508,000               | 298,084      | £1.70                              |
| <b>Ipswich</b>         | £1,780,000             | n/a          | n/a                                |
| <b>Oxford City</b>     | £2,487,521             | 911.767      | £2.73                              |

6.4 These figures need to be treated with caution as it is not entirely clear what different authorities are including in their expenditure figures; for instance some may be including other services such as community centres or matters such as debt charges, and different authorities may well be apportioning overheads in dissimilar ways.

6.5 The apparent divergence in the published figures means that considerable effort has been expended to identify financial savings, which have reduced leisure expenditure beneath budget in 04/05. Further analysis of our current year's budget has identified a number of areas where additional cost savings could be made and early efficiencies have already been implemented, however to assist this process it is recommended that the Leisure Service undergo a comprehensive Best Value Review in the coming year.

6.6 Another important factor in considering the relative cost of leisure provision and how the City's provision compares with other authorities is the price charged for use of facilities. One of the City Council's stated priorities is the "provision of more affordable leisure facilities" and one of the tools in achieving this aim is to ensure that prices charged for use of Council provided facilities are within the reach of all of the City's residents. Where prices could prove a deterrent for those on low incomes the City council has provided access opportunities through its Bonus slice card scheme.

6.7 The following table shows how prices in OCC's facilities compare with those of our neighbouring authorities for 2004/5. The table reflects the prices for those activities that are most commonly undertaken and provided by all authorities. Neighbouring authority prices include any entrance fees and are at peak time prices where specified. Prices are given as an average where different prices exist within the authority.

|   | <b>South<br/>Oxfordshire</b> | <b>West<br/>Oxfordshire</b> | <b>Vale of White<br/>Horse</b> | <b>Cherwell</b> | <b>Oxford City</b>          |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Adult swimming                                    | £3.40                        | £3.40                       | £2.80                          | £2.70           | £3.00                       |
| Junior/ Senior<br>Citiz swimming                  | £1.90                        | £1.90                       | £1.80                          | £1.80           | £1.60                       |
| Junior<br>Swimming<br>Lesson                      | £4.00                        | £4.00                       | £4.35                          | £3.30           | £3.90                       |
| Adult Exercise<br>Class                           | £4.30                        | £4.30                       | £4.20                          | £4.25           | £4.20                       |
| Fitness room<br>Induction                         | £15                          | £15                         | £15                            | £13.65          | £15                         |
| Fitness room<br>user charge                       | £5.30                        | £5.30                       | £5.50                          | £6.30           | £4.70                       |
| Squash Court                                      | £4.50                        | £4.50                       | £6.50                          | £6.20           | £5.00                       |
| Badminton<br>Court                                | £7.60                        | £7.60                       | £8.10                          | £8.30           | £8.80 (£2.20<br>per person) |
| 4 Court Sports<br>hall                            | £36                          | £36                         | £34                            | £33.60          | £32                         |
| Membership<br>(DD monthly)<br>Gym, Class,<br>swim | £45                          | £45                         | £37                            | £36.50          | £31.50                      |

## 7. Managing the facilities

- 7.1 The City Council, as well as being the main provider of the facilities identified as part of this assessment, has also remained responsible for managing the facilities mentioned above.
- 7.2 Since 1988 when Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) was introduced by central government, local authorities have had a duty to show their effectiveness, primarily cost effectiveness, in their management of such services as leisure facility management.
- 7.3 The City Council formed its own 'in house' organisation City Leisure to compete with private sector providers in managing the facilities provided by the City Council.
- 7.4 In 1999 through the Local Government Act of that year, central government removed the need to compulsorily tender services to private sector organisations but introduced a new duty of providing 'Best Value'. This new legislation required local authorities to provide clear standards relating to cost and quality, by the most economic, efficient and effective means available. The ability to deliver this is audited by government through its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), which evaluates a Council's ability to meet key performance criteria as a local authority.
- 7.5 The City Council therefore has a duty to evaluate its services including management of those services in an ongoing manner in support of continuous improvement. In doing so the City Council is therefore able to consider alternative means of delivery and specifically management in achieving these requirements.
- 7.6 Central government, through its financial audit and CPA roles, will assess a Council's willingness and ability to prove 'best value', through its inspection processes. There is therefore a need to consider both levels of service provision and management of that service in order to satisfy those inspections.
- 7.7 At present there are three broad options available to local authorities in managing its leisure facilities however variations exist within each option:
- In house management
  - Public-Private Management Contract
  - Management by a Not for Profit Organisation
- 7.8 Each of these options have respective advantages and disadvantages in terms of service costs, degree of control over the operational management and the length of any arrangements/agreements.
- 7.9 In developing a medium to long term strategy for leisure facilities it is important that the City Council considers the relative merits of each option but also the views of residents in how the facilities are managed.

## 8. Strategic options and proposals

8.1 Before deciding on a specific strategic proposal for current and future facility development there is a need to take account of the findings of the facility assessments.

The following Key issues for consideration arise:

- Facilities are not 'evenly' distributed across the City
- Costs of provision vary between facilities
- User numbers and direct subsidy vary between facilities
- Costs of provision are high compared to other similar local authorities
- Costs of provision are high compared to local neighbouring authorities
- Costs to users are relatively lower than neighbouring authorities especially for membership option.

8.2 Some of these key issues need to be addressed through the developing Sports and Leisure Strategy but in terms of proposing facility developments a number of key options are available.

8.3 In terms of facility provision as it currently stands there are two main options and a number of other strategic considerations. The main options related to level and quantity of provision by the City Council are as follows:

### **Main strategic options**

8.4 **Option 1** – do nothing – retain the current number of facilities

This will maintain the oversupply of some facilities, notably swimming pools. This in turn will require the current net budget for the Leisure Service to be allocated in order to maintain the buildings in their current state, and allow for already approved investment.

It will also require the allocation of additional revenue expenditure to operate the Barton pool facility.

In terms of refurbishment this option will require new capital investment to be found in order to bring those facilities that remain in a poor condition (Temple Cowley, Peers Sports Centre, Blackbird Leys Pool) up to standard.

Benefits of oversupply of course allow for 'growth' in usage however given the current relative scarcity of resource allocated to sports and health development it could be some time before demand caught up with the supply of facilities.

8.5 **Option 2** – Reduce the number of currently operated facilities.

This option will give the opportunity to consider levels of provision against the national standards and how revenue efficiencies could be identified, in turn allowing more funding to be spent on ongoing maintenance, thus maintaining facilities to a higher standard.

Under this option, consideration could be given to the uneven allocation of facilities in the southern area of the City, and a form of rationalisation around Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Blackbird Leys Pool and Peers Sports Centre could be considered.



The closure of the smaller pool facilities has been suggested by the consultants who undertook the strategic assessment as a potential way of bringing our level of provision in line with national standards without affecting the accessibility to swimming space by the public.

Such rationalisation would likely involve a pool extension to Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Peers Sports Centre becoming part of the school site on which it sits and the Blackbird Leys Pool site being allocated for other uses.

It is unlikely that cost savings would accrue from such a rationalisation. However, the standard of the facilities provided could be more easily improved and maintained.

A capital investment would be required to facilitate this option but some of this could be offset by development of the Blackbird Leys Pool site through developer contributions.

Under this option it is assumed that the provision of Barton Pool will address the shortfall of swimming pool space in the east of the city.

## 8.6 Other Strategic Proposals

Whichever option is implemented there are a number of other strategic proposals that need to be considered for adoption in order to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the leisure facilities provided by the City Council.

| Strategic Proposal and Scope  | Rationale   | Implementation Plan   | Benefits of Outcome   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Review programmes currently in place –</p> <p>All sports halls and swimming pools</p>                      | <p>No review since end of CCT in 1998</p> <p>Facilities utilisation is variable</p> <p>New developments support review</p>  | <p>Ferry Centre – complete</p> <p>Barton – planned as part of new development</p> <p>BLLC – under review</p> <p>Other centres to be reviewed during 2005/06</p> | <p>Better utilisation of facilities</p> <p>Ability to balance usage between user types (e.g. club/casual)</p> <p>Improved targeted programmes for sports development.</p> |
| <p>Undertake formal review of programmed and operational options for the Ice Rink</p>                         | <p>Assessment suggest ice rink has sub-regional catchment</p> <p>Potential to identify partners for re-development</p> <p>Occupies prime site in West end of the City</p> | <p>Review programmed during 2005/06</p> <p>Concurrent discussions to be held with voluntary and-or private sector partners to determine future options</p>      | <p>Identify and agree strategic future for the Ice rink by mid 2006 to feed into West End development framework</p>   |
| <p>Implement programming and development initiatives to support the Sport and Health Development Strategy</p> | <p>Effective sports and health development initiatives will require specific support</p>  | <p>Upon adoption of the sports and Health Development Strategy during 2005/6</p>  | <p>City Council support is focused on key sports and key target groups</p>  |

| Strategic Proposal and Scope   | Rationale   | Implementation Plan  | Benefits of Outcome  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  | <p>Effective review of overall programmes should identify opportunities for such support.</p>   |  | <p>Allows flexibility within the service to allocate resources based on changing needs</p>   |
| <p>Review current Joint Use Agreements( JUA) and identify priority projects for the consideration of new JUA's</p> | <p>Existing JUAs are in existence with the County Council (schools) as well as some resultant from planning proposals -- some of which are not presently managed to their maximum potential</p>   | <p>Compile database of all sport and leisure JUAs across Business Units – by end of August 2005.</p> <p>Review content and management arrangements and propose future policy – by end of Oct 2005</p> <p>Renegotiate changes to existing JUAs and identify potential for new JUAs – by end of Dec 2005.</p> <p>Implement new management arrangements for 2006/07</p> | <p>All JUAs can be managed in one Business Unit more effectively through effective resource allocation.</p> <p>Current arrangements are in some cases inequitable and in need of review – this is concurrent with some proposals emanating from the County Council.</p> <p>Potential for new JUAs can be negotiated as part of a 'package of collaboration' between the city Council and other partners.</p> |
| <p>Develop clear Section 106 protocol to assist in addressing investment</p>                                       | <p>Benefits accruing to leisure facilities from S106 agreements have been absent</p> <p>Section 106 discussions have historically been implemented by planning and have been reactive</p>   | <p>Protocol to be formally agreed by Leisure and parks and Planning business managers by end of July 2005</p> <p>Protocol approved by EB as soon as possible thereafter</p>  | <p>Planning officers have clear lines of communication to engage with developers.</p> <p>Leisure and Parks unit is able to proactively seek contribution.</p>  |
| <p>Develop clear investment priorities to improve leisure facilities</p>   | <p>Opportunity to develop bidding initiatives to meet key requirements of specific funders (e.g. BBLC bid to Active England)</p> <p>Opportunity to ensure that priority of Section 106 requirements are on an evidence of needs basis</p> | <p>Priorities identified from strategic assessments as soon as possible after consideration of Main Options.</p> <p>Develop a 'pooled' approach to developer contributions based on catchment analysis</p>   | <p>Investment priorities are focused on those facilities that are part of the future offering provided by the City Council</p> <p>Even relatively small developments that have an impact to facilities will make a contribution to ongoing maintenance</p>   |

| <b>Strategic Proposal and Scope</b> | <b>Rationale</b> | <b>Implementation Plan</b> | <b>Benefits of Outcome</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                     |                  |                            | <p>and development of facilities</p> <p>This will include contributions to the development of new facilities that may be predicted as new settlements are approved and developed across the City.</p> |