

Report of: Strategic Director Physical Environment

Title: Events Strategy

Ward: All

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Key Decision: No

Lead Member: Mary Clarkson

Scrutiny responsibility: Environment

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board agrees to:

1. Approve the Events Strategy for public consultation, in line with the requirements of the Policy Framework

1. Summary

1.1 The Events Strategy, forming part of the Overarching Leisure Strategy, is submitted for Executive Board's approval to go out for public consultation. The Strategy is one of containment relative to the Council's role in events in recent years. It has been developed to clarify our strategic aims in relation to events, highlight areas that we have prioritised for improvement, and reflect on our position within the market and indicate how this will be developed in the future.

2. How does it fit with the Council's Vision and strategic aims?

2.1 The Strategy responds to the aim in the Council's Vision statement of "providing more and improved affordable leisure activities". The nature of the range of events supported by the council also means that this strategy can contribute to the achievement of other strategic aims, including improving the environment, making Oxford a safer city, and improving dialogue and consultation.

3. Background and context

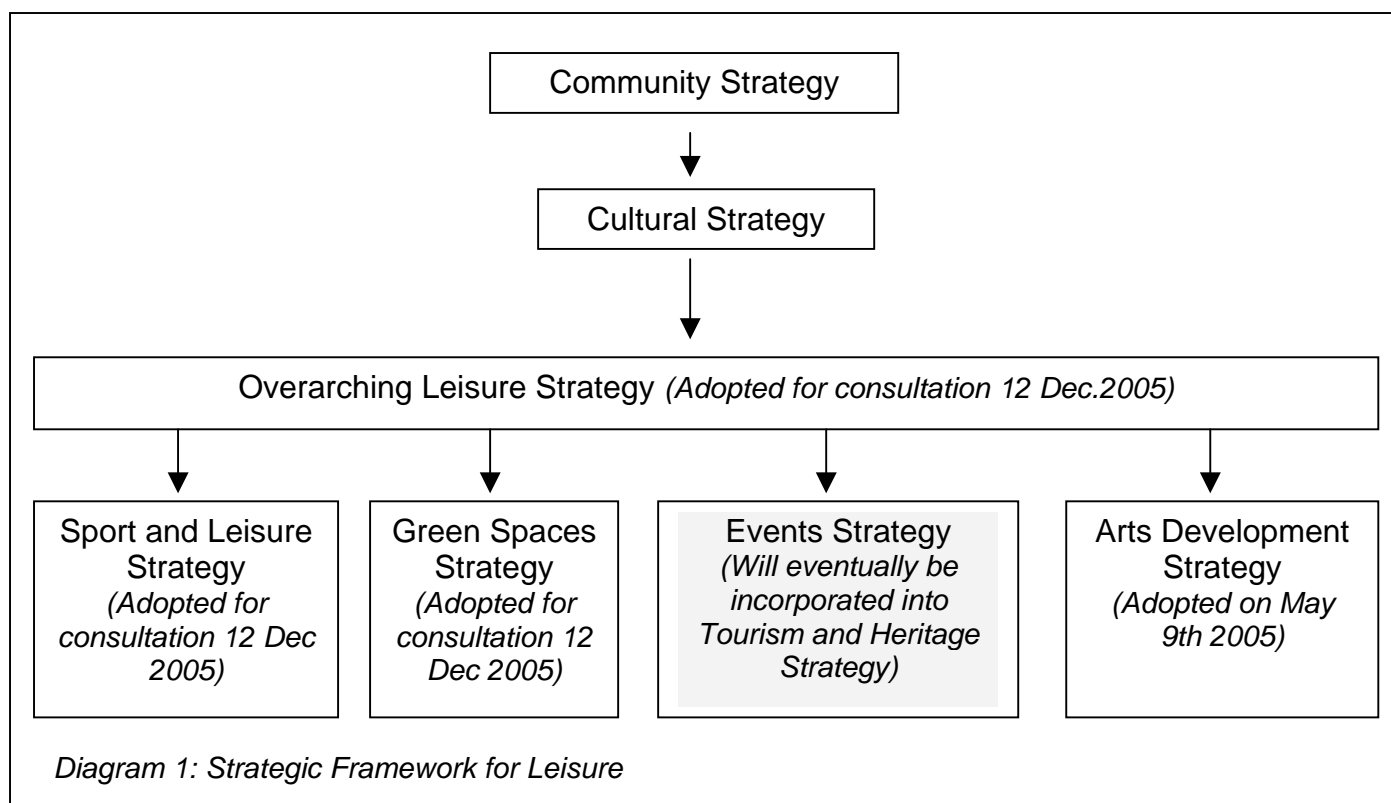
3.1 The Overarching Leisure Strategy, Leisure Facilities Strategy and the Green Spaces Strategy were approved for consultation by the Executive Board on the 12th December 2005.

3.2 The Events Strategy is the next in the series to be submitted for consultation. Whilst it is recognised that this strategy will ultimately form part of a wider strategy including Tourism and Heritage, it is felt that the Events Area requires immediate consideration as to the preferred future direction. This Strategy has been developed by:

- Focusing on high-level strategic intentions;
- Structuring the document around key strategic aims for the events team
- Reflecting more closely how these strategic aims contribute to those of the Community Strategy and the Cultural Strategy, beneath which the Strategic Framework for Leisure sits;
- Ensuring consistency of format and approach between this Strategy and the related Leisure Strategies;
- Basing the stated intentions on evidence of need, whether from performance data, customer feedback, or market analysis and the capacity of the Events Team to deliver the programme.

4. Strategic Framework for Leisure

4.1 The Strategic Framework for Leisure is shown diagrammatically below.



4.2 The Events Strategy outlines, in broad terms, how the strategic aims for the Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit are delivered through the provision of events in the city. This strategy sits alongside three other strategies, which provide more information on how each of the themed areas of the Council's work contributes to the achievement of the strategic aims. These thematic strategies are, in turn, supported by a series of action plans, which detail what actions the Council intends to undertake in order to deliver on those strategic aims. These action plans are contained within each of the thematic strategies.

4.3 The Events Strategy will eventually be incorporated into the Tourism and Heritage Strategy, which is yet to be written. Due to the high profile nature of Events in the city and the need for clarity of direction for the immediate future, it was felt appropriate to submit the Events Strategy for approval prior to the completion of the Tourism and Heritage components. These sections will be submitted for approval later in 2006. Once these remaining sections have been completed, the Strategic Framework for Leisure will be complete, as the Arts Strategy has already been adopted.

5. Details of others who have been consulted

5.1 The Portfolio Holder has seen and approved the report. Consultation with a Cross Party Working Group is currently underway.

5.2 Consultation with members of Scrutiny and Area Committees, the public, stakeholders and interested groups will take place once Executive Board has approved that the consultation draft can be released.

6. Financial implications

6.1 The Events budget was significantly reduced in the 2005/06 financial year and this has limited the capability of the team to fund all but a small core of Council Events. The Draft Strategy proposes that members determine the programme of Core Council Events on an annual basis and fund these accordingly through the Annual budget round. The Programme of Core Council Events is discussed in the separate 'Core Council Events' report later in this agenda.

7. Legal implications

7.1 No immediate legal implications have been identified in relation to the approval of these strategies for consultation.

8. Staffing implications

8.1 The events team currently consists of two full time equivalents. One of these positions is currently vacant and is to be advertised in January 2006. Should the Council wish to adopt all of the outlined objectives, any extra staff would require extra financial resources and be subject to later reports and budget bids.

9. The timetable for action following the decision

9.1 Following Executive Board approval 28 days of public consultation will be undertaken. Responses to the consultation will be evaluated and the documents amended in light of that evaluation. The documents will then be

submitted to Executive Board for final approval on the 3rd April 2006 and to Council the 24th April 2006.

- 9.2 The remaining documents in the Strategic Framework for Leisure (The Tourism and Heritage Strategy) will both be developed over the coming months. The Tourism and Heritage Strategy will incorporate the Events Strategy. Work on these two outstanding strategies will incorporate any work already undertaken and will focus on providing consistency across the Strategic Framework for Leisure.

10. List of appendices

1. Strategic aims of the Community Strategy and the Cultural Strategy

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:
Portfolio Holder: (Cllr Mary Clarkson)
Strategic Director: (Sharon Cosgrove)
Legal and Democratic Services: (Jeremy Thomas)
Financial Management: (Emma Burson)

Background papers: None