

Events Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The ambition of the Overarching Leisure Strategy is to ensure that all cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities enhance the lives of all people in the city.
- 1.2 To achieve this ambition, the Council has adopted a series of aims, which reflect the varied ways in which leisure activities contribute to quality of life for both residents and visitors within Oxford. These aims are:
 - i. To ensure equity of access and diversity of provision.
 - ii. To encourage participation in healthier lifestyles.
 - iii. To advance lifelong learning.
 - iv. To protect and enhance the natural and built environment.
 - v. To enhance the vibrancy of the Oxford brand, both locally and internationally.
 - vi. To nurture community well being and enable the expression of community spirit.
- 1.3 This document, the Events Strategy, outlines how the Council's work in relation to events management ensures the delivery of these aims, and how they contribute to the achievement of wider Cultural Strategy and Community Strategy aims. It clarifies our role in event delivery, facilitation and management, and covers a wide range of events. These range in size from small community events to much larger events organised by a third party.

2. Strategic context. How events fit into the bigger picture

- 2.1 In 2004, partner organisations in Oxford agreed a Community Strategy for the city, which agreed five themes:
 1. Vibrant and inclusive economy
 2. Safer communities
 3. A better living environment
 4. Opportunities for life
 5. Active and healthy lifestyles
- 2.2 While cultural, leisure and recreational activities contribute to all of these themes, the vision statement for the active and healthy communities theme makes specific reference to cultural activities. It recognises that "good physical and mental health, and a sense of well-being require a healthy lifestyle and access to social, cultural and leisure activities".
- 2.3 The Cultural Strategy was agreed in 2002 and has two central objectives:
 1. Ensuring that Oxford remains culturally rich for decades to come

2. Breaking down barriers that restrict access for residents and visitors

2.4 This Events Strategy outlines how the Council intends to deliver events that enhance the vibrancy of the Oxford brand, both locally and internationally, nurture community well-being and enable the expression of diversity and community spirit. All events should be safe, low risk, accessible to all, and protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

2.5 The Events Strategy:

- Sits alongside the Tourism Strategy and the Heritage strategy (yet to be written).
- Outlines how the Council's work in relation to events contributes to the achievement of the aims agreed in the Community and Cultural Strategies.
- Summarises the current status of events provision, and identifies areas that can be improved.
- Highlights the events that the Council has prioritised, and explains why.
- Outlines a series of actions that describe what the Council will do to drive forwards those areas that we have prioritised.

2.6 Responsibility for delivering the actions outlined in this strategy and achieving our ambition in relation to events lies primarily with the events team in the Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit.

3. **Developing the Strategy**

3.1 This section outlines how different aspects of the Council's work in relation to events can contribute to delivering the strategic aims in our Overarching Leisure Strategy.

3.2 Roughly 150 events take place in Oxford's parks and 30 events in open spaces each year, all of which require input from the Council's events team. These events cover everything from small-scale community events to large regional events, such as St Giles Fair and Party in the Park.

3.3 The Town Hall hosts roughly 250 events each year. These are the responsibility of Town Hall staff in the Facilities Management business unit. Other business units within the council may also organise occasional events throughout the year.

Events provide:

- Local entertainment for residents
- Additional recreational opportunities for the users of Oxford's parks and green spaces
- An increase in park use by bringing users into the park in a controlled and safe manner (particularly those who may not normally come into a particular park)

- A revenue stream to provide maintenance and reinvestment in the Oxford's parks and green spaces
- A boost to the local economy from increased visitors to Oxford and increased spending associated with events. Each year, 7.6 million visitors to the city bring over £420 million into the local economy¹
- Positive publicity about Oxford and Oxford City Council in the local, and sometimes national, media.
- A means of celebrating the diverse communities that make up the city

4. What we will focus on

4.1 The council is not a commercial events provider, and with limited resources we need to prioritise our involvement and ensure that the Council's role in events is appropriate.

4.2 In evaluating our priorities, we have considered:

- The current provision of events
- The contribution of events to the Council's aims
- The risks that events can pose, both financial and safety risks

4.3 The council will focus on events that meet the aims of the Overarching Leisure Strategy, and has roles ranging from direct provider to non-involvement. These roles are defined in more detail below.

5. Intended approach

5.1 Given the priorities outlined above, we intend to take the following approach regarding events. Events can be identified as falling into one of four categories, and the Council will take an appropriate role according to each category.

Category of Event	Description	Potential role of council	Examples
Core Council events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central to Oxford City Council's aims and functions ▪ Have a long-standing association with the Council ▪ Are approved through an annual planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provider ▪ Funder ▪ Regulator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ St Giles Fair
Community events	<p>Organised by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community groups ▪ Registered charities ▪ Not-for-profit groups ▪ Voluntary organisations <p>They are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally for 500 people or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate ▪ Enabler (through Grants) ▪ Facilitator ▪ Supporter ▪ Regulator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxsrade Summer Fair ▪ Isis Lions Charity Event

¹ Source: Oxford City Council Cultural Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> less ▪ Organised for the benefit of Oxford residents ▪ Organised by an Oxford based group 		
Commercial events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not involve a registered community, voluntary, not-for-profit group or charity. ▪ Include product launches, corporate events, fairs, concerts, circuses and any other activity that seeks to make a profit from the activity ▪ Take place on City Council land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitator ▪ Supporter ▪ Regulator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zippos Circus ▪ Tango Sampling
Non-council events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are organised by third party organisations ▪ Do not take place on council land ▪ Do not require city council support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not involved ▪ Regulator (for some events) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kassam Stadium Concerts ▪ New Theatre production

5.2 Dividing the Council's role into these categories according to the type of Event enables the Council to facilitate events that are congruent with the Council's aims, whilst ensuring that public money and safety are protected.

6. Strategy into action - what we intend to do

6.1 In evaluating our priorities, we have considered how specific events can contribute to wider corporate commitments and priorities.

6.2 The tables on the following pages provide further information on what the Council has prioritised and the actions it intends to undertake in relation to events.

6.3 These actions are subject to the annual Business Planning process.

7. An evolving strategy - monitoring and review

7.1 This section provides detail about the actions that we intend to take to address the priorities for the city's events over the next 3 years.

Monitoring

7.2 This strategy will need to be monitored regularly to ensure not only that we are completing the actions that we have identified but also that those actions are having their desired impacts and that levels of satisfaction and our performance show continuing improvement.

7.3 To enable effective monitoring and ensure that we achieve our aims, we will need to:

- Identify key performance indicators
- Establish robust and consistent mechanisms for capturing performance data
- Identify comparators, to enable us to compare our performance with other providers both within and outside local government
- Establish targets to help us drive improvements

7.4 These indicators will need to cover several aspects of our events provision, including:

- Usage figures, covering overall participation in events, number of new participants and the number and range of new events, for example provision of events promoting diversity
- Financial information, such as expenditure on events provision, income received from charges, external investment secured
- External recognition, either for Oxford as a brand and venue in regional and national arenas, or for the quality of the events we provide and facilitate
- Satisfaction results, both through standard assessments and through the monitoring of complaints
- Internal management practices, relating to the quality and efficiency of events applications procedures and advice provision.
- Community benefits, from the number of new community events established to the number of educational and recreational events provided.
- Wider benefits, relating to the economic benefit arising from increasing the number of events held in Oxford, or the community safety benefit of reduced crime and antisocial behaviour.

7.5 The frequency and nature of monitoring will vary depending on the specific actions to which they relate. Council event provision and fees & charges will be reviewed on an annual basis.


8. Review

8.1 The strategy will also need to be reviewed regularly as local needs and circumstances change. Numerous factors might affect our strategic approach to event provision, including:

- The appearance or disappearance of major competitors in provision of facilities
- Legislative changes
- Change in the political control of the Council
- Significant changes in performance
- Significant changes in satisfaction levels or customer feedback

Action Plan for Events

Aim 1: To ensure access and diversity

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
Ensure that events provision meets the needs and aspirations of diverse communities	5 3	2	Review range and location of events	Undertake an annual review of events to ascertain citywide provision. Key Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of locations  Usage profiles Customer research and consultation 	Annual	Resources required
			Establish standards for provision that reflect demographic, geographic and user-specific needs	As a result of the events review, develop a plan to promote events in under-represented areas of the city where possible.	2006/7	Within existing resources
			Ensure fees and charges at appropriate levels for different event organisers	Annually review standard fees and the level of discount which may be granted to different event organisers, esp. community groups	Annual	Within existing resources
Reduce the impact of cost as a barrier to participation	5 3	2	Discourage unnecessary costs to event organisers or visitors	Encourage event organisers to make events accessible to people on low incomes	Ongoing	Within existing resources
				License specified parks and open spaces for events, to reduce bureaucracy for community events	2006/7	Not currently resourced
			Seek out opportunities for external funding to help subsidise access	Establish networks within the local/regional/national business community to maximise sponsorship potential	2006/7	Within existing resources
Identify and tackle perceived barriers to access, e.g. fear of crime or cost.	2.1 2.2 2.5 5,2	2 3 5	Eliminate constraints that are seen to prohibit participation in events.	Consult with communities to identify the barriers that negatively affect participation in events.	2007/8	Within existing resources
				Develop a sense of belonging by establishing stronger links between local people and events	2006/7	Not currently resourced

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
	5.3		Develop and implement actions to reduce fear of crime.	Use the good lighting, signage and activity associated with events to encourage more people into parks in the evening	2006/7	Resources not sufficient to cover whole city
				Continue to work closely with relevant agencies, e.g. the Safety Advisory Group	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Address physical barriers to access to Council-owned parks and green spaces in which events are held	3,5 5.3	2 3 4	Ensure that events cater for all abilities (refer to the Green Spaces Strategy)	Continue to ensure that all events sites are DDA compliant	Ongoing	Within existing resources
				Continue to promote accessibility in publicity material, and through local interest groups	Ongoing	Within existing resources
			Review transport options to ensure all Oxford City Council-owned event venues can be accessed by a variety of means	Continue to work with public transport providers, event organisers and the police to develop traffic management plans for each event to encourage the provision of alternative means to access events. Encourage and promote the use of alternative transport to events	Ongoing	Within existing resources
Widen audiences and participation	5.3	3	Increase awareness of events	Produce a Promotion and Advertising Plan and allocate sufficient resources to carry through the plan. Produce, in partnership with Oxford Inspires, an events calendar for the year	2006/7	Not resourced
				Improve the use of Oxford City Council-controlled media to promote events (e.g. intranet, website, tourism office, <i>Your Oxford</i>)	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Engage with local, regional and global media providers to increase potential audience (including local websites)	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Investigate liaison with Oxfordshire County Council to promote events, e.g. on their website, intranet and residents' magazine	2006/7	Within existing resources

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
			Promote the use of venues to attract events to them	Upgrade the information on the Oxford City Council website about venues the Council own and how people can hire them	2006/7	Within existing resources
			Continue working with schools, community and interest groups, and non-users of events to establish and increase patronage	Develop outreach programmes with the potential to utilising facilities at schools, universities and colleges	2006/7	Not currently resourced

Aim 2: To encourage healthier lifestyles

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
Promote and enable opportunities for physical activity	5.2		Use the grants system, where possible, to encourage events that promote healthy lifestyle habits, e.g. sport and physical activity	Link with existing activities, e.g. walking tours run by Oxford City Council, facilities available at Oxford City Council's leisure centres	2006/7	Not currently resourced
			Encourage healthy eating	Continue to welcome stands and stalls providing healthy food at catered events.	Ongoing	Within existing resources

Aim 3: To advance lifelong learning

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
Provide opportunities for lifelong learning	4.1 5.3	1	Maintain and increase links with schools, universities and other educational organisations to encourage the use of sites for	Work with schools & colleges to maximise the benefits of joint use agreements	2006/7	Not currently resourced
				Encourage school holiday events	2006/7	Within existing resources

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
			educational purposes	Encourage schools to consider how parks could be used in teaching the National Curriculum, e.g. science or geography	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Use the grants system to encourage events that promote lifelong learning	2006/7	Within existing resources
Encourage community involvement to increase skills and capacity	1.1, 1.3, 5.3	1	Develop stronger links with interest groups and community associations	Encourage community groups to help run and plan events	2006/7	Within existing resources

Aim 4: To protect and enhance the natural and physical environment

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
Manage the environmental impacts of events	3.3	4 7	Work with the Sustainability Officer to develop and implement an environmental policy to manage a range of issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waste management ▪ Energy and water use ▪ Transport issues ▪ Biodiversity and use of chemicals 	Events organisers to liaise with City Works to provide recycling facilities at all events where feasible. Use clear signage for recycling facilities.	2006/7	Not currently resourced
				Trial a system of adding deposits to drink containers to discourage littering at major events	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Our commitment to sustainability should be outlined in all correspondence and publicity material	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Develop electronic publicity in addition to paper marketing. Work with the Council's media team and partners to develop a promotional 'events email'	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Trial high visibility composting systems at major events	2007/8	Not currently resourced
				Use income from events to upgrade parks – planting trees etc., and publicise this fact	2006/7	Within existing resources

Aim 5: To enhance the vibrancy of the Oxford Brand

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
Seek out opportunities for regional / national events	1.1	3	Continue to promote sites and facilities as attractions and potential venues	Develop links with regional media to increase coverage, and promote previous involvement with big names	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Seek opportunities for the Council to facilitate regional, national and international events	2006/7	Not currently resourced
				Increase links with the Council's tourism officer, and use of the 'Visit Oxford' brand	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Seek to create a central database of all events in Oxford	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Implement a system to calculate the wider economic benefits of event provision	2006/7	Not currently resourced
Celebrate Oxford		10	Celebrate success within Oxford and more widely to build on the city's reputation. Celebrate and promote Oxford's role within the wider world	Work with the University to cross-promote events	2007/8	Within existing resources
				Support events that celebrate the city of Oxford. Inspiration may come from local artists, mini, the University, etc.	2007/8	Within existing resources
				Update the tourism strategy to outline how events will attract more visitors to the city	2006/7	Within existing resources
				Support Oxford Inspires in its programme of events up to 2008	Ongoing	Within existing resources

Aim 6: To nurture community wellbeing

Culture, Sport and Leisure Objective	Links to community strategy	Links to Cultural strategy			Due date	Resource needs
Enhance community engagement	1.3	2 9	Undertake regular consultation to identify needs and drive service improvements	Collect customer feedback on all three categories of events. Feed results into operational plans	2007/8	Not currently resourced
			Encourage new community events whenever possible	Promote details of area committee grants through leaflets and the website	2006/7	Not currently resourced
				Support organisers of new events to enable the event to take place successfully	Ongoing	Within existing resources
				Define and publicise procedures for events organisers wanting to use Oxford City Council-owned venues, and the support that Oxford City Council will offer to event organisers in order to enable community events.	2006/7	Within existing resources

Appendix 1

Strategic aims of the Community Strategy and the Cultural Strategy

Please use this table to identify which of the Community Strategy's aims this Events Strategy helps to achieve.

Numeric reference	Community Strategy Aim
1	A vibrant and inclusive economy
2	Safer communities
3	A better living environment
4	Opportunities for life
5	Active and healthy communities

Please use this table to identify which of the Cultural Strategy's aims this Events Strategy helps to achieve.

Numeric reference	Cultural Strategy Aim
1	To improve engagement with, and access to, formal and informal education and continuing professional development
2	To remove barriers which prevent anyone watching and participating in cultural activities
3	To improve the co-ordination and promotion of cultural activities
4	To protect and enhance the built and natural environments
5	To prioritise and fill gaps in culture facilities
6	To maintain and increase public and private resources to develop Oxford's cultural assets
7	To reduce negative environmental impact and ensure long-term future of cultural organisations
8	To achieve more and better partnerships
9	To improve opportunities for children and young people
10	To develop civic pride through celebration of Oxford's talent