

# 5 Results of the Sequential Assessment

## 5.1 Introduction and Context

This section provides an assessment of the availability, suitability and viability of the potential sequentially preferable sites listed in Tables 4.1a – c. Particular attention is paid to the Oxpens site in Oxford City Centre, which has been identified by the Council Planning Officer as the only reasonable more centrally located potential alternative site for the proposed swimming pool.

In assessing site availability (and viability), an important consideration is the timescale within which a proposal is needed. As discussed in the supporting planning statement, there is currently no modern competition standard pool within Oxford. This is viewed as significant deficiency in leisure provision and hence, there is a pressing need for the proposal. As such, sites whose availability is unduly restricted through issues such as the need to relocate existing occupiers would significantly impact on the necessary planned timing of the delivery of the new facility.

The results of the sequential assessment are included in Tables 5.1a to 5.1c. Further commentary in relation to the Oxpens site is included separately.

**Table 5.1a Sequential Assessment Results: Sites in Blackbird Leys (Proposed District Centre)**

Site Ref (see Appendix 1)	Site Name	Suitability	Availability and Viability	Conclusion
1	Oxford and Chenwell Valley College & Blackbird Leys Library	Sites allocated within the Blackbird Leys Regeneration Zone where adopted Local Plan Policy DS.10 identifies the area as suitable for a range of commercial and community based uses.	Blackbird Leys Regeneration Zone is currently intensively developed and in use for a mix of community, retail, education and other uses. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating and a comprehensive strategy being developed for the phased regeneration of the area.	Discount on grounds of availability and viability
2	Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Public House & Church			

**Table 5.1b: Sequential Assessment Results: Sites in Cowley District Centre**

Site Ref (see Appendix 1)	Site Name	Suitability	Availability and Viability	Conclusion
3	Cowley Centre	Adopted Local Plan Policy DS.18 allocates the Cowley Centre (and Crowell Road car park site) as suitable for retail-led redevelopment together with a range of other district centre type uses	The site is currently intensively developed for predominantly retail use. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped.	Discount on grounds of availability and viability
4	Between Towns Road	Adopted Local Plan Policy DS.8 allocates this site as suitable for small scale retail, residential and health and childcare facilities (leisure excluded)	The site is currently intensively developed and in use for a mix of uses by various occupiers. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped. Likely multiple ownership	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability

**Table 5.1c: Sequential Assessment Results: Sites in Oxford City Centre**

Site Ref (see Appendix 1)	Site Name	Suitability	Availability and Viability	Conclusion
5	Oxford Railway Station	Site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for transport and public space (leisure use excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP)	Current main rail station for the City. Key public transport facility to be maintained and enhanced in existing location	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability
6	Fire Station, Rewey Road and Beaver House, Hythe Bridge Street	Fire Station site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for housing, office and selected community uses (leisure use excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP). Beaver House site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for office use only (leisure use excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP).	Fire Station site is in current active use. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped. Beaver House is a relatively modern building which is part occupied. Available space is currently being actively marketed 'To Let'. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped.	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability.
7	Island site (Park End St / Hythe Bridge Street)	Site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for a range of secondary uses (leisure use excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP). Majority of site is in Flood Zone 3a	In current use (mix of uses including hotel and retail). Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped. Also, likely multiple ownership.	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability.
8	Worcester Street Car Park	Site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for public space and a range of secondary uses (leisure use excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP).	In current use as a public car park. Alternative parking provision may be required	Discount on grounds of suitability.

Site Ref (see Appendix 1)	Site Name	Suitability	Availability and Viability	Conclusion
9	Becket Street Car Park	Site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for residential, transport, office and conference facilities (leisure use excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP).	In current use as a public car park. Alternative parking provision may be required.	Discount on grounds of suitability.
10	St Aldates / Queen Street	Site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for office, residential, student accommodation and museum (other leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP).	In current use for a mix of commercial, institutional, educational and residential uses. Also, application submitted in 2008 for new retail development, student accommodation and office use (the proposal is currently on hold subject to the identification of a suitable development partner).	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability.
11	Oxpens	<i>See separate commentary below</i>		
12	Nursery and Osney Warehouse, Osney Lane and Oxford and Chenwell Valley College (OCVC)	Nursery site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for residential type uses (leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP). Osney Warehouse site is identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for residential use (leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP). College site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for education and public space use (leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP).	The Nursey site is currently occupied by Little Scholars Day Nursery. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped. The Osney Warehouse site is in current use for car park and depot. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped. In current use by OCVC. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped.	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability



Site Ref (see Appendix 1)	Site Name	Suitability	Availability and Viability	Conclusion
13	Westgate Shopping Centre	Site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for mainly retail with secondary food and drink and residential (leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP). Small part of site in Flood Zone 3b.	In current use as shopping centre and car parking. Shopping Centre owners (Land Securities and the Crown Estate) currently considering options for development and enhancing the existing retail offer. The Abbey Place car park (car park west of Norfolk Street) has planning permission for the provision of 127 dwellings.	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability
14	Albion Place, Magistrates Court and Speedwell House, Speedwell Street	Albion Place and Magistrates site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for a range of secondary uses including residential, offices, museum and education (other leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP). Speedwell House site identified in adopted West End Area Action Plan (Annex 2) as suitable for flats and student accommodation (leisure uses excluded as a suitable use in Annex 2 of the AAP).	In current use as a magistrates court with associated parking. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupiers relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped. Speedwell House is in current use as offices by Oxfordshire County Council. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupier relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped.	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability
15	Wellington Square West	Site not allocated in the adopted development Plan for any specific use.	Building in current use with ground floor retail and residential / office in upper storeys. Site availability would be dependant on existing occupier relocating to enable the site to be redeveloped	Discount on grounds of availability and viability
16	St Cross College Annex	Adopted Local Plan Policy DS.83 allocates this site as only suitable for purpose-built student accommodation.	Land owned by college and safeguarded for future student accommodation / education related use.	Discount on grounds of suitability, availability and viability

### 5.1.1 Oxpens, Oxford City Centre

The Oxpens site has been identified by the Council's Planning Officer as the only reasonable site to be considered in terms of a potential sequentially preferable site alternative. The site, which is located within the West End of the City Centre, is approximately 7 hectares and is the only site within the West End Area Action Plan allocated as being acceptable for leisure uses (as part of a wide mix of land uses). More particularly, Annex 2 of the AAP identifies the following uses as being acceptable on the Oxpens site:

Role	Use
Primary	Housing, Public Space, Community Energy, Public Office, Hotel, Conference, Leisure
Secondary	Amenities for Housing, Offices, Museums
Minor	Flats, Food and Drink

It is considered that this site can be discounted as a potential site alternative for reasons connected with its suitability and availability / viability, as explained below.

#### **Suitability**

In terms of 'suitability' there is general policy support for leisure use at this site. It is however important to understand the context within which the Policy was drafted. The main reasoning behind the promotion of leisure at the Oxpens site was in the context of the expectation that the existing major leisure facility at Oxpens, namely the Ice Rink, would cease to operate from the site due to the poor physical condition of the building. Alternative leisure was promoted as a means of ensuring that the site still retained an element of leisure as part of a much wider land use mix.

Since adoption of the AAP the position in relation to the future of the Ice Rink has changed however. Considerable investment has recently been made to upgrade the facility and extend its operational life for a further circa 12 years. The expectation that the ice rink will close and relocate is no longer the case and as such, it will continue to provide a major leisure facility on the site for a number of years and hence, meet the requirements of Policy WE28 of the AAP which requires that "Opportunities for leisure should continue to be provided in the Oxpens area". Other uses promoted through the AAP as illustrated in the table above, such as housing, are viewed as being more important to the envisaged comprehensive regeneration of this site.

#### **Availability and Viability**

In addition to the ice rink, much of the remainder of the Oxpens site is already developed with uses including: the Oxpens public car park; mix of commercial uses fronting the ring road including retail, garage and Royal Mail office / depot; range of business occupiers (including the Oxford Business Centre); and vacant land also including the Oxpens Field (sometimes referred to as Oxpens Meadow) to the south and east of the Ice Rink. It is also worthy to note that part of the Oxpens site is within Flood Zone 3b, including Oxpens Field and also other areas (including smaller plots of vacant and underutilised land) within the site. Much of the Oxpens Field site will be required to accommodate flood remediation works and is also currently the

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subject of a Town Green application submitted by a local residents association. In addition to the Council, the other major land owner at Oxpens is the British Rail Residuary Board and their delivery strategy for the release of land for redevelopment is uncertain. In summary, constraints on bringing forward an appropriate site at Oxpens, within the timeframe required to deliver the proposed new swimming pool, impact on the availability of this site.

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